

Success Criteria for the Managers' Professional Activity as an Expression of Capacity for Leadership

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Abstract. *Purpose (mandatory).* The purpose of the study is to develop a set of criteria for assessing the level of significance of person's life for the management-level representatives in the organizations and their formation of personal values.

Design/methodology/approach (mandatory). Research methods: «Existence scale» test, standardized multifactorial method of personality research, Luscher's colour test, nonparametric statistics, factor analysis. The study was carried out within a group of public civil servants aged 30 to 50 years working in the sphere of administrative and government control.

Findings (mandatory). Results of the study: 1) It is revealed that one of the main factors for achieving utmost success in the manager's activities was the meaningful management - having conscious, meaningful values when it comes to their professional tasks. 2) On the whole the criteria for assessing the life meaningfulness by the managers and their formation of personally significant values, they included such indicators as «Realization of the manager's personal values», «Managerial coping reactions to the threat situation», «Conscious management of their aggression», which allows to determine the level success of the professional activities for the management-level representatives in organizations.

Practical implications (if applicable). The results of the research can be used to solve the challenges of personnel management in present-day organizations.

Originality/value. Three psychological criteria of leadership abilities are defined: the realization of personal values; coping reactions to the threat situation; conscious control of their aggression. The most significant criterion for the progress of managerial abilities is the importance of the objectives of professional work; only due to the importance of goals the leader can achieve the highest efficiency.

1. Introduction

At the moment the development of innovative mechanisms of personnel management is becoming vital. This is due to a variety of different reasons, including accelerating innovation processes in the economy, increasing number of crises, changing mentality of modern people (Grossman & Helpman, 1991; Forsgren, 2013).

In the context of high instability of external conditions, the effectiveness of organizations' functioning to a large extent depends on their human resources, and, therefore, on the success of the employees' professional activity (Huselid, Jackson & Schuler, 1997), (Delaney & Huselid, 1996).

This determined the need to solve the problem of assessing the achievements of an individual professional activity, as well as identifying the factors that affect it.

The investigations of many scientists (Bakanov & Zelenova, 2015, Boyle, While & Boyle, 2004; Garet, Porte, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Zakirova & Gilmiyarova, 2016; Vlasova & Vakhidova, 2016; Vlasova & Vakhidova, 2016) are devoted to solving the problems of researching the achievements of an individual professional activity under different conditions.

According to the bibliographic search, in modern science there are two types of criteria to evaluate the activity success in any professional field:

- objective, characterizing the degree of activity success in terms of productivity indicators, the quantity and quality of products produced, the number of accidents, etc., usually specified in regulatory documents, and not involving subjective evaluation.

- subjective, including both personal judgments of other people (the boss' about the subordinate, etc.), and self-evaluation (the degree of satisfaction a person gets after the work done, attitudes toward oneself as an expert, the level of claims, etc.) (Panteleev, 1992; Sobchik, 1998).

The objective criteria for assessing the success of a professional activity do not always correspond to the content of this professional occupation, since not every professional activity can be clearly described and formalized, so it leads to a poor quality evaluation of the organization's staff performance and makes it difficult to develop technologies to stimulate it.

At the heart of the subjective criteria for the activity success are estimations of the employee's work success, assessed by supervisors with the help of ranking score. This also does not allow to assess the employees' professional activity accurately enough, as the researches show (Langle, 2015), because different experts understand the substantive aspects of the indicators for the employee's professional performance following no particular pattern.

Thus, neither objective nor subjective methods of assessing a person's contribution to the labor results are relevant for determining the degree of expressing their potential capabilities.

Moreover, even if within the research we establish a correlation relationship between the objective indicator of the professional activity progress and psychological indicator, this will only testify to the fact of a general psychological readiness for the work as a whole, current proficiency, the specialist's initial capabilities, but not to the indicators of the quality dynamics and the ability to obtain new knowledge in a particular profession, which are the most informative in terms of forecasting the maximum achievement for the performance success.

From our point of view, in order to find possible prognostic criteria for the dynamics of a specialist's qualities, and, as a result, a more accurate prediction of his future success in the profession, one should turn to the interpretation of the category of «abilities» by B.M. Teplov, because this concept includes the mechanism and speed of knowledge acquisition by an individual at a particular workplace in the course of his particular professional activity.

B.M. Teplov introduces the notion of abilities as individual psychological characteristic that predetermines the success of the person's activity (Teplov, 1985). At the same time, he specifies that the lower threshold of the abilities is determined by the minimum achievements (knowledge, expertise, skills, etc.), and the maximum - by the specialist's development. The specialist's achievement, or the maximum manifestation of his abilities, in its turn is characterized by the meaningfulness, breadth, strength, flexibility, depth of individual professional qualities, and shows primarily in precise, faultless movements and actions, not in the ordinary professional environment, but in changing situations of everyday working activity, in conditions of uncertainty, unpredictability of the event outcome, in the ability to highlight and focus on the major aspects in the multivariance of choice and external interference, in a creative use and implementation of the expert's readiness, which allows us to achieve high quantitative and qualitative indicators under any working conditions (Teplov, 1985; Rubinshtein, 1998; Platonov, 1972).

B.M. Teplov distinguishes three main attributes of abilities as personal psychological features: firstly, they distinguish one person from another; secondly, they are referred to the activity success (special abilities) or several of its types (general abilities); thirdly, they are not limited to the available knowledge, expertise or skills, but can explain the ease and speed of their acquisition (Teplov, 1985; Rubinshtein, 1998; Druzhinin, 1999).

Pointing out that, in addition to success in activities seen and recognized by the professional environment, the ability determines the speed and ease of mastering a particular activity, B.M. Teplov indirectly introduces the concept of «subjective activity value » (the degree of experiencing the difficulty of the activity and the effort made to overcome this difficulty), which is inversely proportional to the motivational tension in terms of quantity. The more developed this person's ability is, the more successfully person performs, the faster he or she acquires knowledge, and the process of activity mastering and the activity itself are subjectively easier for a person than training or working in the sphere which the person is not capable of (Rubinshtein, 1998).

On the basis of the above, we can draw the following conclusions.

The success of an individual's professional activity can be assessed by using two groups of criteria:

- criteria, determining the development of special abilities components;
- criteria, characterizing the level of meaningfulness of a person's life by an individual and the formation of his or her personal values.

A group of criteria that determine the development of the special abilities components of an individual creates a resource potential and determines its use with a view to solving the tasks set, overcoming difficulties in the framework of improving skills and moving up the career ladder. The values of these indicators largely depend on the person's individual characteristics. The initial values of these indicators are detected at the stage of entering the career; the maximum values are manifested, as a rule, in the context of the external environmental obstacles.

A group of criteria, characterizing the level of meaningfulness of a person's life by an individual and the formation of his or her personal values, creates conditions for the manifestation and development of special abilities. These criteria reflect the subjective value of efforts to achieve the highest level and demonstrate the degree of ease to overcome the difficulties of prevailing in the professional environment. The basis of these criteria is set by the implementation indicators for personally significant values. These values act as meaningful vital goals in people's lives, having a significant incentive for achieving the maximum possible labor results (Langle, 2013; Krivtsova, Langle & Orgler, 2009; Magomed-Eminov, 1998; Markova, 1996).

According to the existential psychology (V. Frankl) «striving for a purposeful search for meanings and values» is the primary motivation of a mentally sane person and it determines the quality and consequences of the events in the person's life (Langle, 2013).

Within the theory of the existential analysis (Langle, 2013; Langle, 2015), the concept of «existential fulfillment» was introduced, meaning a subjective experience of a person's life quality. The indicator of this «fulfilled existence» is the realization of personally significant values, manifested in the ability to harmonize your own values of life with the demands and proposals of the external environment. The subjective emotional state of «existential fulfillment» is experienced by a person as a state of significance of their life, its fullness, contentment, inner harmony, internal approval of their own behavior and their way of dealing with reality, ease of decision-making and lack of emotional tension and anxiety.

The results of the experiments conducted by V. Frankl follower, A. Langle, showed (Langle, 2013; Markova, 1996) that all the information coming from the external environment is filtered, perceived and assimilated by a person in accordance with his or her formed semantic values, which are the basis of person's decisions and actions and subsequently have a significant influence on his or her behavior and objective physical state.

For the foregoing reasons, it can be assumed that the state of «existential fulfillment» is an indicator of the subjective sense of success and maximum realization of person's abilities at the previous stages of his or her professional activity. Experiencing the realization of significant values in the past eases the decision-making process, gives an opportunity to overcome obstacles and rise through the career ladder (professional development) despite the interference and «pressure» of the external environment and internal discomfort. The subjective experience of a successful action has the properties of reflection (an adequate understanding of the task), imprinting and memorizing (a successful way of solving a professional challenge) and mobilization (recalling a successful way of

solving a problem in a current situation), which allows to reproduce a successful result in the future (Markova, 1996; Magomed-Eminov, 1998).

And, conversely, a sense of failure in their profession impedes the realization of semantic values, makes decision-making difficult and creates prerequisites for a state of depression, anxiety and apathy. The level of positive emotional experience is blocked and affective defensive reactions begin to dominate in the behavior control, the purpose of this is to maintain good health and protect vital values. Psychological resource in this case is spent not on solving professional problems, but on protecting person's «Self».

These groups of indicators are essential for the professional activities of the management-level representatives in organizations, since it is precisely the adoption of optimal managerial decisions that effects not only the achievement of the goals set by the organization, but also the professional activity success of each of its employees (Langle, 2013). And at the same time, the second group of indicators is leads to the increase in the managers' professional level, as it creates a motivational background for the development of special abilities.

If the first group of criteria characterizing the managers' special abilities can be formed on the basis of their professional activity peculiarities within the framework of the organization functioning, then the development of the criteria structure of the second group causes difficulties and is not currently solved in modern science (Markova, 1996; Magomed-Eminov, 1998).

Thus, this determined the purpose of this study.

The aim of the study is to develop a set of criteria for the second group to assess the level of significance of person's life for the management-level representatives in the organizations and the formation of their personal values.

2. Materials and methods

As a research object we have chosen a group of public civil servants who have reached different levels in their professional career in the field of administrative and government control.

The study involved 275 people aged 35 to 50 years. The entire sample group was divided into two outermost groups:

- those who have reached the top level of the structural unit in their career - with the working experience of 10 or more years in managerial positions (97 people) (hereinafter referred to as «managers»),
- those having working experience of 10 years, who do not have any career growth at their work and who have undergone a professional and psychological selection in the competition to fill the vacancy (hereinafter referred to as «applicants for service») (178 people).

This is due to the fact that the specificity of the managers' professional activity is determined by two leading factors of labor conditions that require the heads of the structural units of the state organization to maximize their professional abilities in performing their professional duties, such as:

- the need for broad interaction with external and higher authorities, subordinates;
- the need for prompt decision-making, which includes situational and strategic, in extreme, non-standard conditions (regulatory uncertainty, conflict of interest, time shortage, the necessity to take risks, innovations, etc.).

The 10-year tenure of a manager and more in one organization with the above mentioned factors of labor conditions can be regarded as an objective criterion of a managing ability, requiring a high professional psychological resource. The inadequacy of such resource does not allow to withstand long stress loads associated with the manager's above-mentioned labor conditions and determines the desire to change this job as soon as possible.

In our investigation we used the «Existence Scale» test, the standardized multifactor method of personality research, Luscher's colour test.

The «Existence Scale» (SHE) test by A. Langle and K. Orgler was used in the study to diagnose the subjective estimate for the formation of personally significant values, the significance degree of

person's life, experienced as an internal consensus with a decision based on the correlation of external conditions, that are assessed, with person's own attitude towards them (Langle, 2015).

This methodology was chosen due to the fact that it measures the degree of realization of the person's value in the two most important for the manager's professional activities areas of carrying out their job duties such as interaction with people and decision-making.

The test contains four subscales and three integral indicators:

- «Self-Distancing» (SD) scale. It measures the individuals' ability to distance themselves from their desires, ideas, feelings and intentions, if it's necessary in order to internally get free from the burden of affects, prejudices and desires and to consider themselves and the situation from a certain distance.

- The «Self-Transcendence» scale (ST). Measures the degree of emotional responsiveness, empathy, emotional involvement, trust in one's feelings, experiences, the ability to perceive the existential significance of what is happening.

- The «Freedom» scale (F). Measures the ability to find real opportunities for action, create their hierarchy according to their value, and thus, arrive at a personal decision.

- «Responsibility» scale (V). Measures the ability to come up with the decisions made on the basis of personal values.

- Integral indicators: «Personality» (P), which determines cognitive and emotional accessibility for oneself and the world; «Existentiality» (E), describing the ability to find person's way around in this world, to come to decisions and responsibly implement them; «The general indicator of existential fulfillment» (G), implying the ability to cope with oneself and the world, meet the internal and external demands and proposals, correlating them with the person's own values.

The standardized multifactorial method of a personality research (SMIL) (Teplov, 1985) was used to identify stable personality traits that form the basis of professional behavior.

Luscher's colour test (Lüscher, 1985) was used in the study to determine the unconscious emotionally significant aspects of self-awareness for a given professional sample, reflecting the level of emotional attitude toward oneself and the degree of overall emotional satisfaction with the professional performance. Based on the position of the color in the color series, the following interpretative coefficients were calculated: (heteronomy-autonomy (G), distinguishing propensity to dominate and independence or being in a dependent position; balance of the vegetative system (VB), detecting the level of mobilization activity, or setting the subject for dominance of a sympathetic or a parasympathetic sphere in the autonomic nervous system; the balance of personality properties (LB), indicating the balance or inconsistency of personal qualities; the vegetative coefficient (CV) characterizing trophotropic or ergotropic response; the total deviation from the autogenic norm (SD), which is an indicator of a psychological self-satisfaction; working capacity (R), reflecting the ability to perform the largest possible amount of work within a definite time and with a certain efficiency, etc.).

To process the results of the study we used nonparametric statistics (the Mann-Whitney U criterion), factor analysis (Varimax rotation method).

3. Results of the study and the discussion

In order to identify individual differences in the degree of a personal values formation, behavioral manifestations and the degree of emotional satisfaction with a person's professional performance we carried out a comparative analysis of such groups as «managers» and «applicants for employment» applying the «Existence» scales, SMIL and the interpretative coefficients of M. Luscher's test with the help of U Mann-Whitney criterion.

The results of the comparative analysis showed in the «managers» group all the SHE-indicators SD (self-distancing) $U < 206$ ***, ST (self-transcendence) $U < 190$ **, F (freedom) $U < 200$ ***, V (responsibility) $U < 208$ ***, P (personality) $U < 200$ ***, E (existentiality) $U < 206.5$ ***, G (general exponential performance indicator) $U < 206$ ***, and also the parameters of control subscales – reliability (F), $U < 334$ ***, correction (K) $U < 557$ ***, and the basic scales - impulsivity (4) $U < 557$

***, femininity-masculinity (5) $U < 571$ ***, rigidity (6) $U < 546$ ***, anxiety (7) $U < 463$ ***, introverted I (0) $U < 435$ *** SMIL methodology.

To clarify the obtained structure of the comparative analysis we processed the variables of the SMIL scales and the indicators of the SHE questionnaire with the help of the factor analysis, which revealed differences in the groups «managers» and «applicants for employment».

As a result of the calculations, three factors were identified (62.6% of the total variance). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor structure of indicators for the existence scales effect produced on stable types of personality according to SMIL.

| 1 factor | 2 factor | 3 factor |
|---|---|--|
| Realization of the manager's personal values | Managerial coping reactions to the threat situation | Conscious executive's management of aggression |
| Weight – 5,0 | Weight – 2,0 | Weight – 1,1 |
| % of dispersion – 38,0 | % of dispersion -15.8 | % of dispersion 8,8 |
| 1.Consolidated figures of existential fulfillment (G) (0,975) | 1. Impulsivity (4th SMIL scale) (0,800) | 1. Credibility (F-SMIL scale) (– 0,753) |
| 2. Existence (E) (0,910) | 2. Anxiety (7th SMIL scale) (0,774) | 2. Introversion (0-SMIL scale) (– 0.674) |
| 3.Personality (P) (0,865) | 3.Rigidity (6th SMIL scale) (0,623) | 3. Correction (K-SMIL scale) (0.595) |
| 4. Freedom (F) (0,849) | 4 Masculinity (5th SMIL scale) (0, 476) | |
| 5. Responsibility (E) (0,813) | | |
| 6. Self-transcendence (ST) (0,752) | | |
| 7. Self-distancing (SD) (0,675) | | |

To assess the overall emotional satisfaction with the professional performance studied, Luscher's color test was used for the representatives of both groups, which showed that the following indicators were authentically more pronounced in the «managers» group: «autonomy, independence, self-sufficiency, domination» (G) $U < 208$ ***, «inconsistency, instability of personality properties» (LB) $U < 195$ *, «predominant activity of the sympathetic department of the nervous system" (VB) $U < 214$ ***, high «performance» (R) $U < 328$ **, «predominance of ergotropic type of response» (KV) $U < 208.5$ *, «decreased neuro emotional stress» (CO) $U < 200$ *.

The analysis of the obtained research results made it possible to draw the following conclusions.

1. The first factor, «Realization of the manager's personal values» included all the indicators of the «SHE»-questionnaire, which implies the significance of the manager's professional activities, the formation of personal values and their consistency with external requirements and, consequently, the psychological sense of stability, security, a more realistic perception of the external situation and a conscious and responsible control over their behavior in it. Professional goal-setting spontaneously easily reaches the level of a personal value, which creates a resource for making effective managerial decisions. The availability of meaningful management activity reflects the executive's personal and professional maturity, or the degree of harmonization (synergy) of the basic motivations at the personal and situational level. This is the basis for new career prospects, implementation of new plans and intentions and, as a result, it leads to the best of their managerial capabilities.

2. Variables of the second factor, «Managerial coping reactions to the threat situation» have common characterological behavioral traits associated with a reduced self-control, asociality, irritability, unmotivated stubbornness, increased level of criticism, suspicion, anxiety and frustration, a

tendency to compete. The combination of all the signs can be considered as a factor of the coping reaction of aggression to the threat situation, experienced as an emotional arousal with increased readiness for self-defense and attack. The choice of the aggressive reaction, from the point of view of the existential theory, is occurs due to the dissatisfaction with one of the basic sense-making motivations that aggression is mobilized for. The ineffectiveness of this coping strategy causes an increased anxiety and emotional tension and is the most energy-consuming or hyperactive protective mechanism. Thus, the components of this factor indicate that the first manager's reaction to the threat from the external environment, depending on the subjectively perceived value of the situation, is an aggressive reaction (malice, anger, rage) that performs a mobilizing and protective function to achieve existentially significant goals.

3. Variables included in the third factor, «Conscious executive's management of aggression», describe the syndrome of an emotional and behavioral self-control, emotional stability, commitment to social norms, natural and easy behavior, extraversion. In accordance with its content, this factor can be interpreted as a mechanism to cope with the aggression, anxiety and attempts to gain an emotional stability and self-control through establishing a dialogue with the external environment. Awareness of their actions inefficiency leads to an attempt to control their aggression consciously, to find ways to cope with the situations, realizing their realism and accuracy of perception.

4. The results of a comparative analysis of the interpretative coefficients of the M. Lüscher's test showed that in the «managers» group there is a significantly higher level of mobilization activity, aspirations for a spontaneous activity and energy expenditure, high efficiency, domination, independence, self-sufficiency and self-confidence, emotional stability, optimism, satisfaction (a feeling of neuro-psychic well-being), which, according to the literary data (Rean, Kudashev & Baranov, 2006), characterizes the general positive attitude to oneself (high self-acceptance, self-esteem), a high level of self-efficacy (confidence of abilities, success in professional activities) in stressful situations.

5. It is also remarkable that indicator values of «instability and inconsistency of personal properties» in the «managers» group are higher than in the group «applicants for employment». Basing on the results of the factor matrix described above, this is apparently due to the fact that managers have such opposite traits of character as aggressiveness and behavioral flexibility. The ability, in the process of managing other people, to take into account their individual characteristics allows, on the one hand, to reduce anxiety and emotional tension, to subordinate the executive's typical aggression to the motive of achieving the result their organization looks for, and, on the other hand, to preserve people's own individuality.

Therefore, to assess the level of life significance of the management-level representatives in the organizations and their formation of personal values we can use the criteria formed as a result of applying factor analysis, such as «Realization of the manager's personal values», «Managerial coping reactions to the threat situation», «Conscious executive's management of aggression», which make it possible to determine the success of a manager's professional activity at different levels with a sufficient accuracy.

4. Conclusion

One of the main factors for achieving the utmost success in the manager's professional activity is meaningful management, i.e. possession of conscious, meaningful values in relation to the forthcoming professional tasks, which results in the realism and accurate perception of professional situations. Effective managerial decisions and their implementation depend on the extent to which the management's goal is the manager's individual (personal) value.

The availability of personal values is a point of a psychological support, which allows you to find your way around in life, make a conscious decision, take into account the factor of resistance of the external environment and find optimal solutions in non-standard situations. If there is no such support, the executive is not able to manage the organization he is entrusted with consciously and responsibly as well as his own life. The behavioral style of such a manager will be evident as an excessive

dependence on the external circumstances (directions, instructions, other opinions, etc.) or on the impact of the internal circumstances (his own affects), which as a result can lead to destructive work of the personnel in the organization and to the psychological health deterioration.

Thus, the results of the conducted research determined that the manager can achieve a maximum effectiveness only when understanding the significance of the goals set within their professional activity.

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