

Professional selection as a scientific-practical problem

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Abstract. The aim of the research: historical-theoretical analysis of scientific foundation and practice of psycho-diagnostic methodology application in solutions of the tasks of professional selection. Hereby, the complex of questions concerning the problem of professional selection (methodology and methods, techniques, procedures of organization and implementation of diagnostics, preservation and application of empirical data etc.) is discussed. The following hypothesis are brought forward: historically established theory and practice of professional selection don't reflect the conditions and requirements of subject's activity in a real environment of modern organizations; established theory and practice are not aligned with evolution of organizations (stages of their lifecycle, changes of internal and external environments); established theory and practice don't reflect the trends of social objects' evolution and are not aligned with real requirements of modern society.

On the basis of analysis it is assumed that "basic" issues of theory and practice of professional selection are to be integrated and complied with: 1) dynamics of changes of internal and external organization's environment's state, affecting both "norms" of selection and composition of work with personnel; 2) new understanding of tasks of human resources management; 3) development of theory and practice of psycho-diagnostics (ensuring transition to the tasks of selection not "up to profession" but for solution of relevant tasks on specific workplace); 4) understanding of "selection" ideology as "recruitment" and consequent "allocation" of people for relevant workplaces 5) proceed from the concept of not an individual, but of joint professional activity of persons, orienting on selection of candidates in terms of addition of qualities to already employed company's workers by qualities of newbies (that enable the integration of personally and professionally important qualities of all the collaborating subjects of joint activity); 6) feasibility of data banks' creation and formation of "personnel logistics"; 7) redefinition of interrelated tasks of psychological ensuring of persons' professional activity (as transition from a paradigm of evaluation of relevant subject's qualities to a paradigm of actualization of resources of joint activity subjects) and so on.

Key words: *psycho-diagnostics, professional selection and recruitment, empirical data, resources, joint activity of subjects, dynamics, evolution, internal and external organization's environment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychological diagnostics (psycho-diagnostics), as an important sphere of a psychological science, was formed de jure and de facto in the middle of XX century. At the same time, social technologies of implementation of psychological professional personnel selection for organizations (to be exact, large enterprises) were formed and "crystallized". Both scientific "canons" of psycho-diagnostics and technologies of professional selection remain, perhaps, the most conservative areas of psychology, with little exposure to influence of developing discipline's methodology and to dynamics of social objects' historical changes. Due to area's specificity (psycho-diagnostics), specifically-oriented specialists are employed in it, who understand and know well all the aspects of methodically correct work with psycho-diagnostic techniques. They were and still remain more attentive to technical aspects of the problem of psychological professional personnel selection for organizations per se, instead of multiple aspects of dynamic, changing, ambiguous social reality; attentive to complying with technology of techniques' development and implementation of diagnostics procedures, instead of search and suggestions of science methodologists.

II. MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of the research: historical-theoretical analysis of scientific foundation and practice of psycho-diagnostic methodology application in solutions of the tasks of professional selection. Issues of *psychological professional selection* as a scientific-practical problem are addressed in this work – methodology and methods, techniques, procedures of organization and implementation of diagnostics, preservation and application of empirical data etc. *Methods:* 1) Historical-theoretical analysis of scientific, instruction and methodical materials. 2) Analysis of practice concerning application of psychological techniques for evaluation of professional fitness (professional potential) of a person in various spheres of activity (labor, management, sport, in power structures). *Hypothesis:* 1) Historically established theory and practice of *professional selection* don't reflect the conditions and requirements of subject's activity in a real environment of modern organizations. 2) Established theory and practice don't reflect the trends of social objects' evolution and are not aligned with real requirements of modern society.

III. EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY AND SOCIAL OBJECTS, EVOLUTION OF A SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINE

Typical labor organization in the end of XIX – beginning of XX century was far from being perfect in many aspects. Researches and experiments of F.Taylor, L. Jilbrett and other pioneers contributed to improvement of labor organization on enterprises, to growth of management culture and culture of labor in general. Such researches and experiments contributed to establishment of the psychology as scientific and scientific-practical discipline, contributed to formation of “canons” of professional selection of organizations’ employees and establishment of the very concept of a human as a person. Later this idiomeme was called theory “X” by D.Mac-Gregor, that was further replaced by theory “Y” in the middle of XX century. Reflecting on the evolution of labor organization and human as a worker, and comparing working experience in American and Japanese enterprises, U.Ouchi adds to the above-mentioned theories the third one – theory “Z” [see reviews: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5].

Not only technologies and labor organization have changed over the past century, but also people. From the middle of 1920s there has been an increased demand not for a simple “worker”, but for a prepared worker, specialist, therefore the diapason of secondary vocational educational institutions expanded, along with a number of universities, faculties and specializations. The educational level of labor people has increased significantly. Professional selection as a social technology, initially oriented especially and solely on the evaluation of state of psychological, psychophysical and psychomotor functions of large enterprises’ workers has expanded its borders. The selection began to be widely applied for potential evolution of conscripts and military personnel, managers, representatives of technologically complicated professions.

Even a typical family – “social unit” – has changed. Up to the middle of XX century a typical family in developed countries (Russia, Europe, Northern America) had been oftentimes multi-structured (comprising 2-4 generations), multi-children (up to 5-15 children); people had been maintaining close relative and friendly family relationship. Due to these conditions, a child and a young man had been undergoing active socialization from the earliest age, that included exploitation and change of various social roles. “The street” completed person’s socialization (whose role was huge up to the middle of the XX century). One it sorted out to the criminal structures, and another, vice versa, made a reliable “injection” of pro-social behavior. Thus, even before the very working path, a person was undergoing “severe life education”, and complicated relations within a contact working group weren’t a “sealed book” for him.

Many things have changed in modern society. Not only technologies, organizations and labor tools became different, and not only level and content of education and preparedness of a worker, but also typical families (families became “nuclear”, with few children, often incomplete). Consequently, motivation and aspiration for people’s labor has changed, along with their value orientation and so on. Moreover, the tendency of repeated workplace, specialization and position change, increasing from 1970s,

is also forming drastically different mentality of a modern worker [3; 6; 7; 8]. From the end of XX century, a specialist comes to an organization not in order to work there till the end of his working life, executing the same working functions day by day on the same workplace, and not to “exchange his life for career”. Therefore, messages about necessity of stable subject’s properties’ diagnostics [9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; etc.], most corresponding also to stable conditions of social environment, become less and less relevant within the terms of an actual social reality.

Owing to a number of reasons, with time, the former “underlying assumptions” of selection concept are losing their “power”. In particular, former psychologists’ mindset to the diagnostics of extremely *elementary and stable person’s particularities* (properties of a nervous system and a temper, personality, intellect, psychomotor etc.) fixed by means of separate scales and subtest methods is to be critically redefined. Predominantly, in the modern reality joint activity prevails over the individual one; complicated labor types and fast-changing technologies ubiquitously replace simple actions of workers; it is necessary to admit the fact of fast in terms of intensity and protracted evolution of a person as a subject of labor, accompanied by repeated crisis; frequent changes of a workplace, position, specialization also contribute to the structure of professional sustainability of a person. More important role now belongs to holistic psychological formations (styles of activity, communication, management, behavior strategy, structure of “integral individuality” according to V.S.Merlin and others), and not to elementary ones; new forms of labor organization (working groups, teams, virtual workplaces and virtual workers, freelancers’ institution, outsourcing etc.) [3; 4; 7; 8; 16]. Phenomena of high professionalism along with professionalism in creative professions remain a topic of future researches [3; 4; 7; 10; 12; 17].

Regarding the discussion of the issues stated above, the following can be noted: 1. In the process of society and separate social objects evolution even within just XX century, extremely important changes and growth of personal particularities of labor subjects have occurred and still are taking place. 2. Due to increased dynamics, the qualities of social objects change, various social connections are violated along with norms and values that were defining the behavior and activity of people throughout centuries. 3. Increased educational level of a typical actor combines with an increased non-stability and variability of his career. 4. Increasing variability of actors’ individually-psychological characteristics, particularities of organizational culture, dynamic of changes of their development stages or of organizations’ lifecycles, higher specialization of workplaces require relevant tasks’ correction, methodological instrumentation and technology of *conformity* assessment (not “suitability”) of a person to implementation of relevant (“here and now”) specter of professional functions. 5. Problem of professional evolution of a person as a subject and as personality requires additional researches (on the basis of their results it will be possible to solve also issues of methodology and techniques of defining person’s/candidate’s professional sustainability).

IV. EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL OBJECTS AND SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES

Discussing the trends of historical changes, clearly defined in the modern society, we will respectively allocate some aspects of the problem, subject to critical reflecting.

2.1. *The “canons” of classical psycho-diagnostics.* The procedures being discussed are called “*psychological professional selection*”, “*technologies of professional selection*”. However, already in the second half of XX century, professions became strongly differentiated by labor matter and means (i.e., in current historical situation there are many more grounds for speaking about one or another *specialization*, not about the profession in general); by the end of XX century many workplaces have acquired the myriad of special characteristics. Steady trend of governance bodies’ minimization, change of a nature of information presentation might significantly and in a short term change the very composition of many types of professional activity.

2.2. *Non-identity of fragments of social reality and scientific concepts.* At examination of connections of subjects’ individual-psychological particularities and success of their professional activity, the results achieved are always addressed to *perfect empirical objects*, not to *real empirical objects*. Otherwise, there is always a “gap” remaining between perfect “objects” and real people that are subject to evaluation; this “gap” always exists between results and conclusions that were received in the process of scientific and scientifically-practical work “there and then” and solutions that are to be taken in real situations “here and now”. In psychology, at solving of applied tasks the connections between parameters of subjects’ success and their individually-psychological particularities are allocated more often on the level of $r = [0,250 - 0,350]$. Even if sampling was representative and the probability of detected connections reached a level of statistical importance, determination coefficients, thus, stay extremely low (they are equal to square of the correlation coefficient).

2.3. *“Problems” of classical methods of personality and subject examination.* According to results of meta-analysis provided by various authors, the validity of multiple methods and separate techniques, traditionally applied in solution of tasks of professional selection, is persistently not high [4; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 17; etc.]. The most complicated in terms of organization and the most expensive procedures (biographical methods, assessment-centers), demanding high level of professional culture of psychologists and experts, remain the most valid.

2.4. *Basic models, whose analysis resulted in establishment of methodological provisions of psycho-diagnostics.* These were professions of a type “*human – equipment*” and “*human – sign*” (according to E.A. Klimov), that is types of activity with strictly fixed (and at most, even invariant) parameters of organization of workplace, information reception and proceeding, labor modes, working actions parameters and so on.

2.5. *Historically increasing share of various types of joint activity.* The practice of project working forms, *flexible integration of tasks and performers* is expanded and serves as extremely valuable “adding” to multiple former labor types, namely important, and oftentimes, determining

factors are the aspects of *people collaboration* in the processes of professional tasks’ solution.

2.6. *Historically expanding share of professions of the type “human-human”.* These trends are to encourage to redefinition of the former “canons” of classical psycho-diagnostics. Appearance of systems fragments “human-human” in various aspects of activity, in others – essential properties of systems “human-human” as defining the success of professional tasks solution, still remain out of the attention zone of specialists in the sphere of psycho-diagnostics.

2.7. *Ideologeme of professional selection: a person is selected “for good” for implementation of strictly defined labor functions.* The very phenomenon of active change by people of a workplace shall also become a subject of a thorough analysis. It can be expected, that this phenomenon is not a “lack” of modern labor organization.

2.8. *Historical shift of typical worker’s designation (worker – specialist – labor subject – subject of professional activity – professional - ???)* [3; 4]. These shifts reflect moments of qualitatively important person’s changes. They concern not only aspects of new properties appearance for more prepared and more educated labor subject.

2.9. *Age-based person’s evolution and increase in life expectancy.* These issues remain in the area of abstraction for psycho-diagnostics. The principle of development doesn’t find worthy reflection in solution of specific scientific-practical tasks in the area of human resources management.

2.10. *Low “coefficient of efficiency” of psycho-diagnostic techniques.* In the real practice, psychologists apply bigger batteries of techniques, however, in each of them only separate scales (subtests) are “working” at extremely low correlations [see reviews: 2; 4; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14]. Psychologists-practitioners, not only knowing well, but also “feeling” well all the aspects of methodically correct work with psycho-diagnostic techniques, usually have recourse to their modifications and combinations of different types [2; 4; 8; 18; 19; etc.]. However, by doing so, the solution of selection problem is de facto transferred from the science area to the area of diagnostician art (that is, area of introspective “personal knowledge” according to M.Polani, of the poorly formalized knowledge, not broadcasted by means of literature sources).

2.11. *Absence of psycho-diagnostic data banks.* These important moments, along with absence of traditions if scientific publications to execute reviews of descriptive statistics, weak spots of implementation of meta-analysis, in fact, leave a psychologist-practitioner face-to-face with a necessity of important issues solution in the situation of high ambiguity of source conditions and complexity of correlating the prognosis with real results of subject’s activity.

2.12. *Problems of adequacy of conceptual apparatus.* Inadequate definition of the very *subject of research*, wrong problem statement, incorrect definition of concepts can’t avoid having extremely negative outcomes. Multiple historical changes of states and properties of social objects, far not indifferent for solution of the major scientific-practical tasks in the area of human resources management, to date haven’t found their proper methodological analysis. This issue is not secondary. Private

scientific and scientific-practical tasks can't be successfully solved if *the subject* of research is inadequately defined, not understood in the proper content, and his adequate definition is not found [20].

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. In the process of society and separate social objects evolution even within just XX century, extremely important changes and growth of personal particularities of labor subjects have occurred and still are taking place. Increased educational level, variability of socio-demographic and individually-psychological particularities of an actor combine with increased instability and variability of his career, requiring relevant tasks' correction, methodological instrumentation and technology of conformity assessment (not "suitability") of a person to implementation of specter of professional functions.

2. A number of former "underlying assumptions" of professional selection concept is to be critically redefined. Messages of long-lasting person's work on one workplace, consistency of tasks, technologies, means of tasks solution etc. have become history. Source messages of individual activity of people in modern enterprises provide improper orientation to specialists. In more holistic social objects (than 1 person) it is rightfully to expect establishment of new system properties, that can productively arise in solution of organization's tasks.

3. Dynamics of stages change (lifecycles of organizations), increasing specialization of workplaces require relevant operative tasks correction, methodical instrumentation and technologies of conformity assessment (not "suitability") of a person to relevant professional functions. Former definition "professional selection" is to be critically redefined and corrected. In new historical conditions, instead of "professional selection", more relevant might be selection of professionals up to relevant tasks on the specific working place, up to relevant tasks performed jointly with other participants, taking into account individual particularities of all the subjects of joint activity.

4. Further development of theory, practice and conceptual apparatus of psycho-diagnostics is required, that enables shift to new tasks formulation (selection not "up to profession", but for specific workplace; interpretation of "selection" as "recruitment" and consequent "allocation" of people for relevant workplaces). It is feasible to formulate selection task on addition of qualities to already employed company's workers by qualities of newbies, that enable the integration of personally and professionally important qualities of all the collaborating subjects of joint activity. It

is necessary to redefine the interrelated tasks of psychological ensuring of persons' professional activity, enabling the transition from a paradigm of evaluation of relevant subject's qualities to a paradigm of actualization of resources of joint activity subjects.

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