

Artículo de investigación

Situational and Normative Approach as a Method for Identifying and Improving Business and Personal Qualities of a Manager

Ситуативно-нормативный подход как метод выявления и совершенствования деловых и личностных качеств управленца

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Written by:

Ludmila Sadovnicova⁶⁰

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7599-3623

Andzej Kokieli⁶¹

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2039-4652

Abstract

Using the most capable people in a management system is a problem of the state, strategic, and social importance. The identification of business and personal qualities of applicants for senior positions, as well as the creation of a system for selection and training of managers, are among the major tasks connected with improvement of personnel policy. The so-called "scientific management" assumes the introduction of special techniques developed by sociologists and psychologists for determination of business and personal qualities of a future manager. The situational and normative approach entails taking into account the situation in a wide sense (socio-economic situation of a country) and a more specific use of this concept in the study of the manager's personality in a specific professional environment of a particular enterprise (specific position), as well as a subjective response of the person to the influence of the external environment: to what extent the manager can (and should) not only anticipate the situation, but also control it, manage it, using the necessary and sufficient business and personal qualities.

Key Words: situational and normative approach, individual and psychological qualities, optimum model, real model, psychodiagnostics, psychocorrection.

Аннотация

Проблема использования в системе управления наиболее способных к этому виду деятельности людей, - это проблема государственно-стратегической, социальной значимости. Выявление деловых и личностных качеств у претендентов на руководящие должности, создание системы отбора и обучения управленцев, - одна из важнейших задач, связанных с совершенствованием кадровой политики. Так называемое „научное управление” предполагает внедрение, разработанных социологами и психологами специальных методик для определения деловых и личностных качеств будущего руководителя. Ситуативно-нормативный подход заключается в учете ситуации в широком (социально-экономическая ситуация страны) и в более конкретном использовании этого понятия при исследовании личности управленца в конкретной профессиональной среде конкретного предприятия (конкретной должности) и в субъективном реагировании личности на влияние внешнего окружения: насколько управленец может (и должен) не только предвидеть ситуацию, но и контролировать ее, управлять ею, используя для этого необходимые и достаточные деловые и личностные качества.

Ключевые слова: ситуативно-нормативный подход, индивидуально-психологические качества, оптимальная модель, реальная модель, психодиагностика, психокоррекция.

⁶⁰ Higher School of Economics, Poznan, Poland

⁶¹ Higher School of Economics, Poznan, Poland

Introduction

The origins of our work on the methods of identification and improvement of business and personal qualities of a manager go back to the 1980s. Initially, it concerned not the Polish, but the Soviet experience acquired by one of the authors of this paper as a practicing psychologist. We are talking about the time when special sociological and psychological services created in several industries, associations, and enterprises of the USSR dealt with the solution of many practical issues of social management in enterprises. The activity of such structures was extremely important in those years because it influenced the implementation of the policy on the intensification of production and expansion of the rights of enterprises and organizations, as well as the increase in productivity and the creation of a favorable psychological climate (Shcherbina, & Sadovnicova, 1989).

"About 3,000 sociologists and psychologists whose activities through the use of social factors brought a certain economic and social effect were employed in the national economy of the USSR back then" (Zaslavskaya, 1987; Kokiel, 2008).

A systematic view of management is associated with an interdisciplinary principle, where the achievements of sociology and psychology play an important role, as psychologists have accumulated a number of tools developed over several centuries for the diagnosis of personal traits and qualities and sociologists have access to scientific developments in the field of human management, dealing with the individual included in society.

The purpose of this paper is to present (to give the analysis of) one of the psychological and sociological diagnostic techniques for the identification of characterological features of the applicant for a managing position. For a fairly complete psychodiagnosis, depending on the situation, we use a block of psychological tests. It should also be noted that our methods related to the identification of business and personal qualities of the manager have been successfully implemented by us for 25 years at enterprises and organizations in Poland.

Materials and methods

To solve the problems of the success of the manager in the management system, in addition to the high level of professionalism associated with the industry they are managing, it is extremely important to identify their personal qualities. Successful professional and managerial activities of a manager are a problem that should be evaluated from the social and psychological points of view. It should be connected with scientifically justified and competent management of (influence on) people, taking into account the social and psychological features of each person, introducing specially developed social technologies into the management system to promote the improvement of the management system and the people within it. Under social technologies, we understand

algorithmized ways to solve typical management problems that are associated with the interdisciplinary design and technological activities of social technologists, based on the development (provisions) of various science fields aimed at improving human activities.

One of the creators of industrial psychology was H. Munsterberg, who in his books "Psychology and Industrial Efficiency" (1913) and "Business Psychology" (1918) (Munsterberg, 2010) tried to answer three questions that are still relevant in the business management system:

- How to find people whose intelligence would allow them to perform a certain job in the best way;
- Under what psychological conditions it is possible to achieve the best results from the activities of each person;
- How to influence the direction of human thought to gain profit and interest in a business environment.

These questions can be answered by the modern sociologists and psychologists engaged in improving the management system and the individual within it.

In connection with the problem of assessing the leader, psychologists often rely on the provisions of the theory of leadership and the desire to identify and describe, as well as to predict, what personal characteristics will be more effective in certain situations and why. Some scholars apply three approaches to "determining the significant factors of effective leadership: the personal qualities-based approach, the behavioral approach, and the situational approach" (Mescon et al., 2017).

According to one theory, which is also known as the "theory of great people", the best leaders have a certain set of qualities. These qualities can be, for example, "the level of intelligence and knowledge, impressive appearance, honesty, common sense, initiative, social and economic education, and a high degree of self-confidence" (ibid.). Many of these personal qualities can be improved. However, to become a successful manager, one first needs to identify a certain potential in one's character and then develop it into the aforementioned qualities. Certain studies have been conducted in this field, with conflicting results. For example, Stogdill noted that in different situations, "effective leaders revealed different personality traits". However, after analyzing the situation, the researcher came to the following conclusion: "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits" (Stogdill, & Bass, 1981). The author believes that the effectiveness of management has a situational character and is not related only to the presence of a certain combination of traits that could be typical only for "effective managers". However, Stogdill notes that his view insufficiently displays the "personal nature of leadership" and argues that different situations require different skills and

individual psychological qualities and the structure of personal qualities of a manager should be related to the activity entrusted to them by the organization.

Another approach to the study of leadership in management is the so-called "behavioral approach", which created the basis for the classification of leadership styles and management behaviors. According to the behavioral approach, the effectiveness of management is determined by the ways of the leader's behavior concerning their subordinates. The identification of behavioral approach in the theory of leadership helped to analyze and classify leadership styles, i.e. the "habitual" behavior of a manager concerning their subordinates to influence them in such a way as to encourage them to productive activities. Various types of behavior are merged into a certain style or type of power that characterizes this particular manager and their type of behavior, depending on the situation. If we assume that each management organization is unique and inimitable in the sense of peculiarity and uniqueness of its individuals, goals, and objectives that they solve, then each manager is no less a unique personality with such qualities that create their unique type of behavior. According to the traditional system of classification of leadership styles, the style of behavior can be autocratic, liberal, or democratic, depending on the individual psychological characteristics of the individual, i. e., strictly speaking, it can be focused on work, business, or the person.

Under personal characteristics, we understand (in the professional sense) an individual style of activity, in the structure of which E.A. Klimov (2004) distinguishes two components:

- The "core" of the style, which includes the qualities of the person, based on the properties of the nervous system, which are manifested involuntarily or without noticeable effort; this core includes two groups of natural features of the human personality, some of which are favorable to success, while others act against it;
- The "extension" to the core, which includes the qualities that are produced by a person as a result of their conscious or spontaneous search; the "extension" also includes two groups of features: some of them are associated with the use of positive qualities of the person, while others are aimed at overcoming the person's negative qualities and have a compensatory nature.

Personal characteristics consciously regulated by a person allow them to make flexible decisions related to the current situation.

For the manifestation of the individual style of professional activity, one requires a specific set of certain individual psychological characteristics, which help the individual to demonstrate the right behavior in specific conditions of management (Kozhushnik, 2005).

The personal, individual, and psychological features of the future manager can be revealed using special psychodiagnostic tests and innovative methods designed to work with the tests. The specific character of the use of psychological diagnostics in the management system is demonstrated not only in the study of certain properties and qualities of the individual but also in the identification of psychological problems arising in the process of the manager's professional activity.

The subject of our study is the personality as specific integrity and individual uniqueness, which uses the management environment as the sphere of its activity.

Our situational and normative approach is associated with the existence of its different versions. The problems that arise in solving management problems are associated with the search for a constant relationship between the management style, satisfaction with the work felt by the employees, and productivity. At the same time, attention is drawn to both internal and external factors that affect the behavior of the manager, i.e. the situation as a whole. To this end, Fidler (1983), for example, developed situational models that helped to understand the complex processes of management. The model takes into consideration the following factors influencing the manager's behavior:

1. The relationship between the manager and the team members (the loyalty and trust showed by the subordinates to the leader, the attractiveness of the leader's personality);
2. The structure of the tasks (their clear formulation);
3. The official power (the amount of legal authority associated with the position of the manager).

Modern Western scholars, turning to a situational approach, tried to determine, which styles of behavior and personal qualities most closely correspond to certain situations. In principle, they concluded that the manager should show various kinds of behavior and apply different methods of working with people, depending on the nature of the particular situation. In turn, different situations require different organizational structures.

A continuation of the version of the solution to the problem of identifying (diagnosing) a set of desirable individual psychological qualities concerning a managerial "situation" is the principle of a situational norm. In works of some sociologists, several versions of situational standards are identified for solving such problems (Shcherbina, 2018). The principle of "norm" proposed by this scholar is considered to be universal, based on the principle of interdisciplinarity, a regulatory process, the purpose of which is to constantly maintain a fairly high level of organization in social systems (Shcherbina, 2018) (that is, to ensure predictable behavior or activities of people interacting with the person).

From all the above, we can conclude the following: different situational models help to create more flexible approaches to solving management problems. In the manager's work, as in no other, one's personality features (to varying degrees of severity) are manifested. In professional activities, they can appear as fragmentary or episodic in behavior in general and also manifest as an individual style of behavior that is persistently maintained for a long time. In this case, an important role is played by the identification of personality traits through psychodiagnostics. From our point of view, psychological diagnostics in management is a type of applied research related to making a diagnosis and identifying problems that arise during the professional activity of the person being examined, in which empirically detected behavior is described and interpreted and the information received is analyzed from the point of view of compliance or inconsistency of the subject of the study with a certain optimal state.

Our situational and normative approach not only helps to assess the psychological state of the personality of a manager or applicant for a managerial position but also provides an opportunity to determine the degree of correspondence of its psychological components to a certain "optimum" necessary and sufficient for successful professional management activities in specific socio-economic conditions (Sadovnicova, 2004; 2007; Sadovnicova, 1999a,b).

The fundamental point of the situational and normative approach is a change in the conceptual orientation and interpretation of the obtained psychodiagnostic data, which is expressed in the need to compare the individual psychological qualities of the manager's personality in the proposed concept with three main elements: reality – virtuality – optimality (Sadovnicova, 1991; 1997).

Based on the psychological and philosophical concept formulated by us, the terminological tools are presented, where the optimal zone is the space limited by graphic markup with the definition and designation of the optimally preferred upper and lower limits of indications of factors, traits, and qualities of the manager's personality; the virtual (expert-defined) model is built on the basis of ranking (selection) by experts of the most significant digital indicators of each factor for successful management activities; the real model is a graphic display of the personality traits of a particular subject. An integral professional and characterological modulation of the manager's personal qualities can be constructed based on a block of psychological tests used in psychodiagnostics of applicants for work in the management system.

When comparing the real model with the virtual one and with the requirements of the "optimal zone", an analysis (calculation) is carried out to determine the correspondence of the data of the real person being tested with the demanded (optimal) personality-related and characterological traits that are necessary and sufficient (from experts' point of view) for performing successful managerial activity in this particular position. Practice shows that if the tested person has

more than 50% of the required qualities, then in the future it will be a fairly successful manager (in terms of character traits). We emphasize once again that psychodiagnostic work is only one of the elements of work related to the selection of personnel. The priority should be given to such components as a high level of expertise in the field (professionalism) and (in Poland) knowledge of the fundamentals of labor legislation. Psychodiagnostic methods help to more fully evaluate the capabilities of a candidate for a managerial position in a particular organization, i.e., in each case, it is necessary to monitor the situation, in which the individual psychological characteristics of a candidate for a managerial position meet or do not meet the requirements of the conditions of activity formulated by the specific organization and system as a whole. We have developed and implemented a block-zonal principle, in which block factors and test blocks provide sufficiently comprehensive information to obtain objective data on the analysis and prediction of the success of the applicant's managerial activity. An important element of the work of the diagnostician-psychologist is the interpretation of research results, the analysis of which can be aimed at changing the state of the subject of the study in the management system and at describing ways and methods of influencing the personality being studied. The problem of using the results of psychodiagnostics in management also consists in the fact that they, as a rule, were considered only for studying, "calculating", and making a "diagnosis". At the same time, most psychologists perform purely consultant and diagnostic roles in the field of management. There is no comprehensive approach associated with the improvement of the identified managerial abilities or the formation of managerial skills.

The specific character of the situational and normative approach lies in the fact that it was created based on the traditional natural scientific methodology, the possibilities of which in psychology, in our opinion, have not yet been sufficiently used.

The tools used or created within the framework of this approach, of course, are among the proper psychological diagnostic tools, while we consider psychological science and management practice as a single interdependent system, where a change in the state of one link suggests the level of development of the other. Besides, these tools are implemented in the framework of traditional subjective-objective logic.

The situational and normative approach in terms of the use of the means of psychodiagnostics applied to the manager's personality is focused on the description of the objective state of the subject, recreation and description of their specific properties, and prediction of their behavior.

The situational and normative approach is characterized by an attempt to synthesize, on a theoretical and methodological basis, individual elements of existing approaches to the use and development of psychodiagnostic tools, which were based on one of the modifications of the subject natural scientific approach to the description of the state and

properties of the subject of the study. This version of the view on the nature, properties, and ways of describing the subject of the study is referred to in the West, in its most developed form, as a socio-ecological approach in the organizational theory. In this case, the subject of the study was considered in terms of its functions, place, and structure.

On the other hand, the approach was based on the principle of limited rationality of the control subject in the organization, which was formulated by G. Simon [Simon, 2000]. The specifics of the position of the manager in a given organization in this approach were associated with an active innovative role, its rationality, aimed at ensuring effective functioning. In addition, this position was caused by often unpredictable consequences, poor knowledge of the nature of objects, the time limit of the manager, and what the scholar [Simon, 2000] collectively called "limited managerial rationality".

In accordance with the aforementioned principle, the collective or individual subject of management in the organization was considered as fundamentally incapable, due to their human nature and the complexity of the object that they control, of taking optimal decisions in terms of the effectiveness of the organization's functioning, in connection with which, they are forced to settle on the acceptable option, as they do not have the entirety of information about the system and constantly work in a shortage of time, unable to take into account all possible alternatives when solving particular problems and to evaluate all the possible consequences of their decisions.

According to the second principle, closely related to the first one, the entire complexity of the management system, the uncertainty of the mechanisms of its functioning, and the unpredictability of the consequences of decisions made by the manager, especially radical ones, related to the active, transforming position of the manager, dictate, as optimal, a strategy of cautious, limited, reversible, and local management decisions. This logic of managerial influence was aimed at not introducing global changes and dysfunctions into the organization that cast doubt on the very existence of social education as a whole. It is quite obvious that a look at the nature of the interaction between the managerial environment and the active manager largely determines the logic and specificity of using the method of psychodiagnostics.

The situational and normative approach uses theoretical and instrumental developments created in the framework of psychology and its special disciplines (differential psychology, personality psychology, psychodiagnostics). Using the concept of situation, most often people refer to something static, some immediate environment of a person that is what creates the conditions for the activity of the individual. The analysis of the term "situation" from the psychological point of view indicates a deep dynamic process taking place in the situation surrounding the person and in their thinking from the moment the person faces the situation until they make a final decision (reaction to the problem situation that has

arisen). In the psychological sense, the concept of situation is a combination of the individual's mental activity and the environment situation, i.e. two closely related spheres of the phenomenon. In this case, the stimulus, the signal is an information structure located in the environment that affects one, affecting the conceptual thinking that belongs to the category of influence, i.e. it is a corresponding reaction that helps to orient oneself on the goal and style of activity. Here the crucial role is played by conceptual thinking and the level of preparedness of the manager, based on which the situation is classified by them in terms of its content and which depends on general individual psychological characteristics of the person. For further analysis, general features of the personality are primarily important, because they determine whether the situation will be viewed through the prism of a combination of the individual psychological characteristics of the manager's personality as a solvable problem or an insoluble problem. The first phase is associated with the process of identifying the problem, during which the second phase begins, based on the search for methods to solve it. Given these two categories (the situation in the management organization and the way the manager responds to it), we can distinguish the following:

- The typical, most repetitive response methods;
- The atypical, less repetitive response methods associated with the degree of preparation and personality traits of the person making the managerial decision.

When using the situational and normative approach, it is supposed to take into account the specifics of the situation and the context of the activities of the management organization, in which the subject of the research was included. Besides, when describing the state and behavior of the object of management activity, environmental factors were taken into account. Characteristic of this approach to psychodiagnostics is the desire for change, improvement of the management organization in the context and through the prism of goal setting, the desire to set clear guidelines and criteria for the positive changes and to maximize the algorithmization and standardization of the diagnostic process and the associated management process. The logic of this approach was aimed at a natural understanding of the development of the subject, oriented, by its psychological characteristics, at local and reversible changes that guarantee the integrity of the management system and improve the mode of its functioning.

The main features of the situational regulatory approach are the ideas on the following:

- The type and nature of psychological objects;
- The logic, mechanisms, and criteria of their development (or evaluation);
- The optimal strategy and position of the manager as a person making changes to the

mode and structure of the management system, in which they operate;

- The cognitive position of the diagnostician working with this subject of the study;
- The logic of the diagnostic process characteristic of this approach;
- The principles and specifics of the real process of subject description;
- The principles and method of determining the proper state of the subject;
- The specifics of the process of definition of mismatch between real and ideal that can be a basis for the preparation of the administrative decision;
- The predictive ability of this type of research.

The use of the situational and normative approach helps to determine the nature and types of diagnosed psychological objects, makes it possible to consider the values included in targeted management activities within a specific management organization. The individual psychological characteristics of the manager or candidate for the position are considered, on the one hand, as integrity and individuality and, on the other, as an element of the socio-managerial system, concerning which certain functions are performed. These formations are considered as carriers of certain, fairly stable personality traits, as a subject predisposed to a certain type of behavior in a certain situation, and as a system, the manifestations of which are largely determined by the state of a wider system, in which they are included and should be adapted as elements, possessing the properties of spontaneous activity, endowed with a certain freedom of choice of a behavior strategy within the framework of this organization. Besides, they were considered as entities whose behavior was largely based on rational principles, i.e. as systems where the functional (ontological) consequences of managerial decisions taken at a rational level did not always coincide with the logic of the organization. All of these entities were considered in the situational and normative approach as a complex, multi-factorial, and poorly recognized psychological entity, the functioning mechanisms of which, in principle, could not be fully understood. Due to this, the ability to predict their behavior, even to some extent specific situations, was limited. However, the ability to predict personality behavior could be defined as something probable. At the same time, in the situational and normative approach, management objects were considered as dynamic sociocultural included in a moving managerial environment. Such a look at the subject sets certain boundaries for the choice of strategy (diagnostics and management).

Characterizing the idea of the logic and mechanisms of the development of the subject of the study, we note that this process occurred quite naturally, based on the internal logic of its development. At the same time, it could not be considered as a programmed system, the stages of improvement and development of which are obvious and the final state is known. That said, it could not be considered as an artificial system, the stages of development of which could be determined and the

state was redesigned based on a certain "norm" or a certain project appealing to certain values, rational constructions, or psychological perfection.

In the situational and normative approach, the development and improvement of the subject of the study were understood as a natural process associated with the development of new patterns of activity and interaction, providing the best conditions for its functioning in changing external conditions compared to the previous phase of development. The mechanism of development of this formation could be understood only at the level of the sociocultural population of objects of this class. The logic of their development is associated with natural selection and selection, created at the rational level of patterns of behavior, interaction, and activity.

As the optimal strategy for the manager's activity, to which psychodiagnostics was aimed, we consider the position, in which local changes that are inevitable in managerial activities could be based on already created social and psycho-cultural patterns.

An important (inextricable with psychodiagnostics) stage in the development of a professional manager is the psycho-correctional work associated with the continuous training and improvement of business and personal qualities, which in general helps to increase the competence of management personnel. Taking into account the achievements of such sciences like sociology, psychology, pedagogy, ergonomics, ethics, etc., one can successfully solve these problems in the control system.

Further training of managerial personnel is a public problem but, at the same time, a personal one. It is caused by practically significant requests. (In Poland, for example, there is ongoing work on the continuing education of managers. For career growth, a second (managerial) degree is required, as well as continuous improvement of managerial qualifications in sociology and management psychology at universities or other educational institutions).

Conclusion

Our long-term studies have shown the reliability and validity of the methods we have developed and used to work with managerial personnel and have yielded positive results in predicting the success of managers at various levels. We have conducted numerous studies on the managerial abilities of students of management faculties and managers in Russia and Poland. The analysis of management abilities of students at the Faculty of Management and Marketing of the Opole Polytechnic Institute (Opole, Poland) in 1998-2014, at the Faculty of Management of the University of Silesia (Katowice, Poland) in 1995-2018, and at the Higher Banking School in Poznan (Dep. in Szczecin, Poland) in 2017-2019, gave us rich empirical material. Research and implementation were also carried out during the selection and psychological correction of managers at various levels of the Association of Power Plants in Bytom, Metallurgical Plant in Katowice, various managers of the Bytom

Coal Association, managers of private companies (Energotech, Laser Med, Gazoplast, and others). The Psychology and Sociology in Management training program was tested in practice for many years (1995-2018) to improve the skills of working managers at various levels. Training (including with our participation) has been carried out at the University of Economics in Katowice for 25 years under the specially developed program called "Kolegium zarządzania" where students receive special certificates that give them more opportunities for career development.

First, in the course of psychological diagnostics, the subject of the research is gradually developing and improving, when the transition to each new phase of development simultaneously means a shift in emphasis to improve the mode of its activity.

Second, the emphasis of this type in psychological diagnostics has shifted from the problem of ensuring conventional agreements, orientations, and individual goals to the problem of the functional consequences of the action taken.

Third, according to the logic of the approach, a psychological object included in purposeful activity and performing certain functions concerning a broad (in our case) management situation could be described as an objectively existing and fairly autonomous entity living according to its laws. The description of the subject of the study and its proper state is determined both by a description of its real-life properties and based on its resulting behavioral characteristics in society. Moreover, the list of the real properties of the former could be set indirectly, based on the initial conceptual models of functioning, and the manager's performance is determined by the performance indicators of the organization they head.

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