ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AS A KEY FACTOR IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Annotation. *This article examines the scientific and practical foundations of assessing professional competencies in the context of modern human resource management, management psychology, pedagogy and labor economics. The study analyzes the contributions of leading scholars such as David C. McClelland, Richard E. Boyatzis, Lyle M. Spencer, Signe M. Spencer, Michael Armstrong and Daniel Goleman to the development of competency-based assessment approaches. Particular attention is paid to the importance of behavioral indicators, emotional and social competencies, 360-degree assessment, Assessment Center methodology, interviews, simulations and practical tasks in evaluating employees' professional potential.*

Keywords: *professional competencies, competency assessment, human resource management, Assessment Center, 360-degree assessment, emotional intelligence, employee development.*

The issue of assessing professional competencies is one of the important research areas of modern human resource management, management psychology, pedagogy and labor economics. Scientific research conducted in this area shows that assessing an employee's professional potential is not limited to determining his theoretical knowledge. Rather, his behavior in real work situations, problem-solving skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, leadership potential and result-orientedness are also deeply analyzed.

The scientific work of the American psychologist David C. McClelland plays a special role in the formation of the theory of professional competencies. In his article "Testing for Competence Rather Than for Intelligence", published in 1973, he argued that traditional intelligence tests cannot always fully predict an employee's future professional success. According to McClelland, when assessing a person's performance at work, it is necessary to pay attention not only to knowledge or IQ indicators, but also to his competencies manifested in real activities. Therefore, he interpreted competence as an important behavioral factor that distinguishes high-performing employees from average-performing employees. This approach was later widely used in personnel selection, assessment and development systems. It is emphasized in the scientific

literature that the concept of modern competency-based human resource management is strongly associated with McClelland's work. Another scientist who made a significant contribution to the development of this direction is Richard E. Boyatzis. In his work "The Competent Manager" and subsequent studies, a system of competencies was developed that determines the effective performance of managers. Boyatzis interprets competencies as a set of knowledge, motivation, personal qualities, social and emotional abilities that ensure the achievement of high work results by an employee. In his scientific work, the issue of assessing emotional, social and cognitive competencies occupies a particularly important place. Boyatzis justified the use of 360-degree assessment, Assessment Center, simulation, interview and behavioral indicators in assessing competencies. He emphasizes the need for educational programs aimed at developing competencies to become effective leaders and specialists in the 21st century.

The scientific work of Lyle M. Spencer and Signe M. Spencer is also of great importance in the development of the methodology for assessing professional competencies. In their work "Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance", the competency model, behavioral indicators, and criteria for determining high performance are systematically covered. Spencers link competencies with the employee's deep personal characteristics, motivations, values, knowledge, and practical skills. According to their approach, when assessing competencies, job requirements should be clearly defined and each competency should be measured through observable behavior. This approach is widely used today in the methodology of interviews, tests, practical assignments, certification, and assessment centers. In scientific sources, the work of Boyatzis, McClelland, and Spencer and Spencer are listed among the main studies that interpreted professional competencies as a predictor of work performance.

In studying the practical aspects of assessing professional competencies, the work of Michael Armstrong on human resource management is of great importance. Armstrong sees competency-based management as a single system related to the selection of employees, performance appraisal, motivation, training and career development planning. In his approach, assessment is interpreted not only as a control tool, but also as a means of developing the employee, harmonizing personal potential with the needs of the organization. Armstrong's research on human resource management had a great influence on the formation of HR systems based on a competency approach.

Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence also plays an important role in the development of psychological approaches to assessing competencies. Goleman showed that the successful performance of an employee is associated not only with professional knowledge, but also with self-awareness, self-management, motivation,

empathy, and the ability to manage social relationships. His views, in harmony with Boyatzis's work, are used in the practice of assessing emotional and social competencies. Emotional intelligence, stress resistance, team building, and constructive communication skills are considered important criteria, especially when assessing candidates for leadership positions. Scientific sources note that the work of Goleman and Boyatzis has strengthened competence as a predictor of high work efficiency.

As a separate direction in assessing professional competencies, the Assessment Center methodology has also been studied by many scientists. The essence of this method is to model real work situations, observe the behavior of a candidate or employee in the process of situational tasks, group discussion, presentation, problem solving, negotiation, and decision-making. The Assessment Center method allows you to determine the professional behavior of an employee in real conditions, rather than his theoretical knowledge. In the scientific literature, 360-degree assessment and Assessment Center methods are interpreted as mechanisms for assessing competencies based on multi-source and behavioral factors.

Studies conducted on the 360-degree assessment method have substantiated the need for the employee's performance to be assessed not only by the manager, but also by colleagues, subordinates, customers and the employee himself. This method helps to comprehensively identify the employee's strengths and areas that need to be developed. This approach is especially effective in assessing competencies such as leadership, communication, teamwork, customer relations and initiative. However, researchers also emphasize the risk of subjectivity in 360-degree assessment. Therefore, questions should be based on clear criteria, and the assessment results should be processed based on the principles of confidentiality and objectivity.

In general, scientific research on the assessment of professional competencies has developed in several main directions. The first direction is the study of competence as a determinant of high performance, in which the work of McClelland, Boyatzis and Spencer is the main theoretical basis. The second direction is the application of competencies to the human resource management system, which is associated with the work of Armstrong and other HRM researchers. The third direction is the assessment of psychological and emotional competencies, which is widely covered in the studies of Goleman and Boyatzis. The fourth direction is the development of practical assessment methods such as Assessment Center, 360-degree audit, tests, questionnaires and simulation. Thus, the issue of assessing professional competencies is a multifaceted scientific and practical direction, which requires a comprehensive study of the employee's knowledge, professional behavior, personal qualities, psychological characteristics and real effectiveness. The scientific work of these scientists shows that an effective evaluation system is not only a means of selecting or controlling an

employee, but also an important mechanism that ensures his professional development, increases the efficiency of the organization, and serves to manage human capital.

In conclusion, the assessment of professional competencies is an important scientific and practical direction that plays a significant role in improving the effectiveness of human resource management. Modern approaches show that an employee's professional potential cannot be evaluated only through theoretical knowledge or intelligence indicators. It is also necessary to analyze behavioral qualities, practical skills, emotional and social competencies, leadership potential, communication ability, teamwork and readiness to solve real professional problems.

The scientific views of McClelland, Boyatzis, Spencer and Spencer, Armstrong and Goleman demonstrate that competencies are closely connected with high performance, professional development and organizational effectiveness. Methods such as 360-degree assessment, Assessment Center, behavioral interviews, tests and simulations make it possible to evaluate employees more objectively and comprehensively. Therefore, an effective competency assessment system should serve not only as a mechanism for selection and control, but also as a tool for developing employees, improving organizational performance and managing human capital more efficiently.

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