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BEHAVIOUR MODELS – INTERACTION OF CIVIL OFFICERS, AS ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND THEIR CLIENTS ON THE EXAMPLE OF UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article proves the possibility and terms of applying the well known Thomas-Kilmann model and research methodology to identify individuals assuming dominating behaviours in conflict. The objective is to solve problems in recruiting top candidates for civil officers called “service providers” in response to the needs of “clients” and to formulate recommendations for decision making based on the relevant test results.

Key words

management, public officer, client, service provider, model, dominating behaviour, personality, research methodology.

1. Introduction

According to O.W. Karpenko “Modernisation in providing public administration services may base on optimising management resources, and favourable client oriented management of organisation processes”, i.e. transferring Customer Relation Management (CRM) to services provided by the authorities” (Карпенко, 2013, p. 116). However, every concept is implemented by people and it is their behaviour that plays the decisive role in ensuring quality of the service processes.

Positive examples of applying the business model referred to above in western management (e.g.: Bates, 2014; Marsden, 2014), and early Ukraine experience (Карпенко, 2013; Машкаръов, 2011;

Клименко et al., 2010), were surely conditioned by the fact that service providing in the administration sector to the benefit of society, represented by a specific number of clients, is superior in moral and ethic terms to specific private matters. As the term ‘serving’ is to a certain extent contrary to the economic term ‘working’, traditionally higher moral and ethical (spiritual) standards are required for discharging civil duties to avoid using power for personal purposes.

Difficult and diversified aspects of civil officers work in the complicated interaction between authority representatives and society continue to remain the subject of scientific studies in the strive to adapt to world and European management standards (Серьогін, 2007) and organisational culture (Сергієнко, 2011). Well known positive European

examples and good practice of effective management, as well as lack of corruption, do not stem from a secret mental organisation structure of the western world but are rather the result of applying a set of techniques and instruments to reach transparency and power effectiveness.

One of the, no doubt, positive trends affecting reduction of improper (corruptive, irresponsible, impolite, etc.) behaviours of state and local civil officers in their interactions with citizens is upgrading both the technology of providing services and administrative services themselves, as well as social monitoring mechanisms of their quality, completeness, timeliness, etc.

Ukraine research studies fail to provide practical technological and instrumental recommendations for shaping staff providing administrative services for residents, thus the search for innovative solutions is definitely a current issue.

2. Analysis

Reference in this context to client oriented CRM is understood as internal standards and client services business processes. It should be emphasised that the majority of Ukraine studies in the field focused and remains focused on the options provided by applying e-governance, software including algorithms, implementation of these or those IT-technologies, etc. in providing services (Клименко et al., 2010; Технології для..., 2009; Кандзюба, 2007; Серенок, 2010).

It is purposeful to refer to studying the most specific moments of simple and direct participation in processes and procedures related to providing administrative services to people – ‘clients’ and administrative officers – ‘service providers’. This is conditioned in the opinion of N.R. Nyžnyk (Нижник, 1995, p. 98) “if people continue to feel as the object of influence and not participant shaping life there will be no effective relations in state management”.

Authors of the research study (Серьогін, Письменний, 2008, p. 28) proposed “to synthesise the best methodology to a uniform system of self rearing and self organisation of individuals, development of intuition and creative thinking, transformation of personal attitudes and stereotypes to meet contemporary needs”.

As at least two equally entitled parties interact in generating a positive result in providing administrative services, it seems adequate to review known models, recommendations and technologies ensuring successful interaction based on the self

organisation and self rearing methodology referred to above (Серьогін, Письменний, 2008).

The present drive to eliminate all contacts between a civil officer and a petitioner, between the clerk and the visitor, between the briber and the bribed, and finally the service provider and the client cannot be enacted to the end.

Fundamental social and psychological research on interpersonal collaboration led to the development of theoretical models and practical recommendations for effective collaboration processes (e.g. Крутій, 2007, 2008; Кулешов, 2011; Ложкин, Рябокони, 2000; Селютіна, 2013; Науменко, 2004), where “Real business relations ethics does not mean formal respect of moral standards but revealing in everyday practice authentic intelligence, collective experiencing and active influence on circumstances, and helping people in scope of own competencies” (Науменко, 2004).

Nevertheless, according to O. Krutij (Крутій, 2007, p. 47-55) “have insufficiently studied interpersonal collaboration of subjects” because of what he suggests should be used to “shape the readiness of state management subjects to dialogue and collaboration”, i.e. the known Thomas-Kilmann concept and model to characterise behaviour of both sides, specifically transformed to “theoretical analysis of interpersonal strategic collaboration of subjects managing the state”.

It should be noted that this is not the first application of the Thomas-Kilmann (TKI – Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument) tool by Ukraine researchers to define and introduce ways of efficient collaboration of both parties. Examples of successful application of the model elements and modification of these elements were achieved in the studies by N.E. Vasilisnina and I.M. Danilijuk-Cernih (Василишина, 2008; Данилюк-Черних, 2014).

The objective analysis of these examples, however, refers to ensuring conflict free collaboration inside the organisation and between organisations, whereas our case involves collaboration of two persons, behaviour options limited by existing rules, structures, regimes, regulations, etc. This is a different aspect of using the model and recommendations shaping behaviour strategy not of “subjects managing the state” but the service provider and the client.

If the behaviour strategy of the client is not in full the subject of management then the service provider is and should be managed by the state management authorities or local authorities and is obliged to show work behaviour compliant with the law, regulations and rules in force.

Distribution and application of the Thomas-Kilman (Herk, 2011) concept and model on a global scale as a tool to ensure fruitful interpersonal relations (Sample, 2008), as well as their creative upgrading by some authors to achieve other objectives (combined use of behaviour styles, personnel assessment, defining priorities in preparing and developing personnel, teams, leadership, coaching etc.) (Василишина, 2008; Крутий, 2008; Altmae, Türk, Toomet, 2011; McMahon, 2016; Introduction to..., 2011) justifies in full the study and the revealing of options applicable in formulating recommendations on organisation of effective collaboration of the services provider and the client.

The specifics of the innovative application of TKI tools in our study involve the following assumptions.

The client may use the entire set of styles, strategies, mannerism depicted in the Thomas-Kilman model in interacting with the service provider, whereas the latter's behaviour is restricted, some behaviours are excluded, some may be partially recommended or only applicable in combination with other behaviours.

The model with collaborating – competing coordinates in fig. 1, presenting behaviour patterns of interacting individuals in the process of receiving and providing administrative services, demonstrates 5 theoretically admissible options to both parties: 1 – avoiding; 2 – competing, 3 – compromising, 4 – accommodating, 5 – collaborating.

Without disclosing exactly the content of the listed behaviour options, we should emphasise that the suggested hypothetical objective of adapting the model to the environment of the service provider of administrative services, is achieving efficient

group work of the service providing personnel, capable of performing all entrusted tasks and fruitful cooperativeness with the client, as well as minimising the number and scale of conflicts starting from re-applications.

K. Thomas and R. Kilman once justified their approach to studying and solving conflicts between individuals and to assessing their behaviour by the need to change the traditional approach to conflicts, and that the phrase "solving problems" should be understood as the possibility and the necessity of reaching successful solutions, eliminating or, as in our case, counteracting the development of a conflict.

Therefore, the objective of applying this methodology and instrument is not solving conflicts but prevention and pre-emptive action to create a conflict free situation and harmony in the interaction between the service provider and the client.

Taking as a benchmark the statement of TKI authors that neither party in a conflict is successful by assuming such behaviours as avoiding, and in the case of a competing, accommodating and compromising attitude only one party wins, leaving the other party a loser, we must identify behaviours best recommended in discharging administrative functions and duties by the employees providing administrative services,

The optimal or most desirable employee behaviours at the work place of the service provider (ideal – 100%) is the collaboration option contributing most efficiently to counteracting conflicts.

If we suppose that every compromise of the parties (participants of the process of providing services to the inhabitants by the authorities) is generally

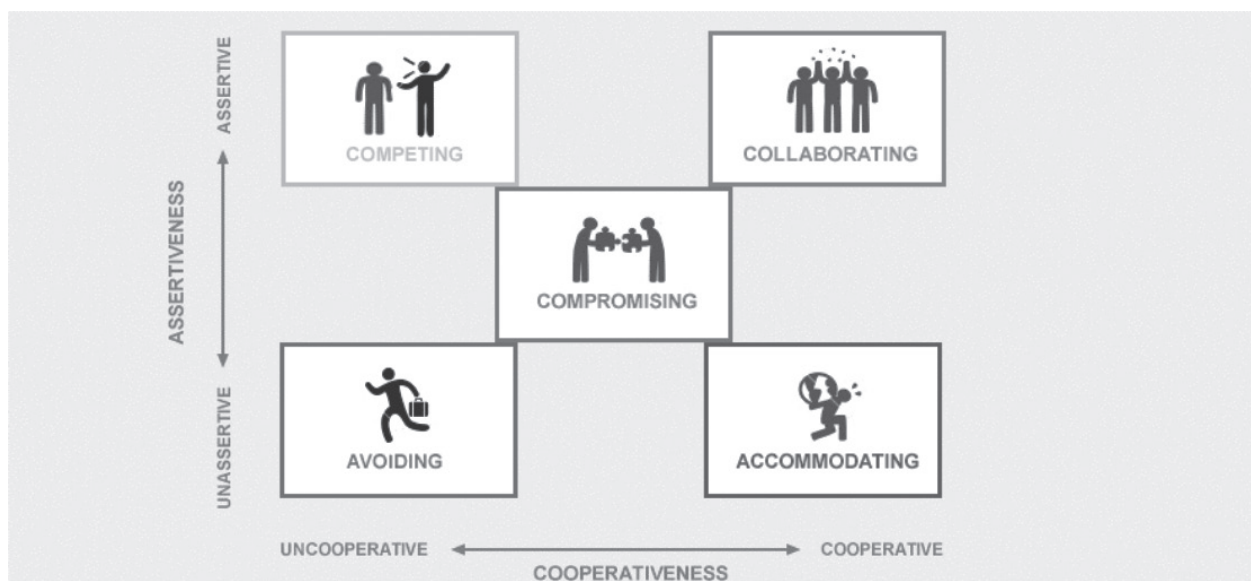


Fig. 1. Two dimensional Thomas-Kilman model of behaviour in conflict

Source: Herk, 2011; Sample, 2008.

achieved, and exceptionally in result of mutual collaboration, it seems purposeful to recommend this behaviour option as a less desirable but a possible behaviour pattern for employees of the service provider, which leads to positive results. As compromising together with competing or accommodating is illogical, such behaviour patterns may be recommended to employees of the service provider in performance of services for clients only in combination with collaboration.

Adoption in pure form of such behaviours as avoiding, competing and accommodating must be withdrawn or subject to the following restrictions:

- “Competing” – a behaviour pattern that may be applied by the employees of the service provider should the client demonstrate inadequate behaviour (breaching the regime, rules or standards) and exclusively in exceptional situations and only together with cooperating. At the same time collaborating should dominate competing.
- “Accommodating” – the least desirable behaviour in our behaviour study pattern, which in literature on conflicts is interpreted as seeking options to favour the opponent or submit own behaviour to client’s interests and needs counting on future benefits of such behaviour. For this reason such behaviours must be withdrawn from admissible employee behaviours of the service provider to the extent possible. It is obvious that in future these options may potentially evolve to regular undesirable interactions of service providers and clients compromising behaviour regimes, rules and standards as well as deviated benefit-oriented behaviours of the parties. Nevertheless,

this behaviour option generates a specific positive value. The employee of the service provider desires to show empathy, etc. to the extent admissible by law, in response to the attitude of the client, therefore, it can be recommended when combined with collaborating and compromising.

- “Avoiding” – analysing the potential of this behaviour, we may come to the conclusion that employees tending to adopt this behaviour either wish to avoid contacts with clients at any cost, neglecting performance of duties (if you do not work you do not make mistakes), or are ready to turn a blind eye to all infringing of the regime, rules and standards of processes and procedures in service providing to avoid own discomfort in entering into conflict. This behaviour pattern is inadmissible in both cases for proper employee operation of the service provider. Thus, avoiding, with its destructive nature, should be brought to a minimum and fully eliminated with time.

Taking into account the above, the recommended behaviour model for employees discharging duties of the service provider must comprise mainly of collaborating and partially combining this option with such constituents as compromising, competing, accommodating and avoiding, provided the latter are minimised.

Two modified options (in line with our proposal of interpreting test results) of the Thomas-Kilmann model for selecting recommended behaviours of administrative service providers, including the restrictions proposed in terms of minimising the components compromising, competing, accommodating and avoiding, are shown in figures 2 and 3.

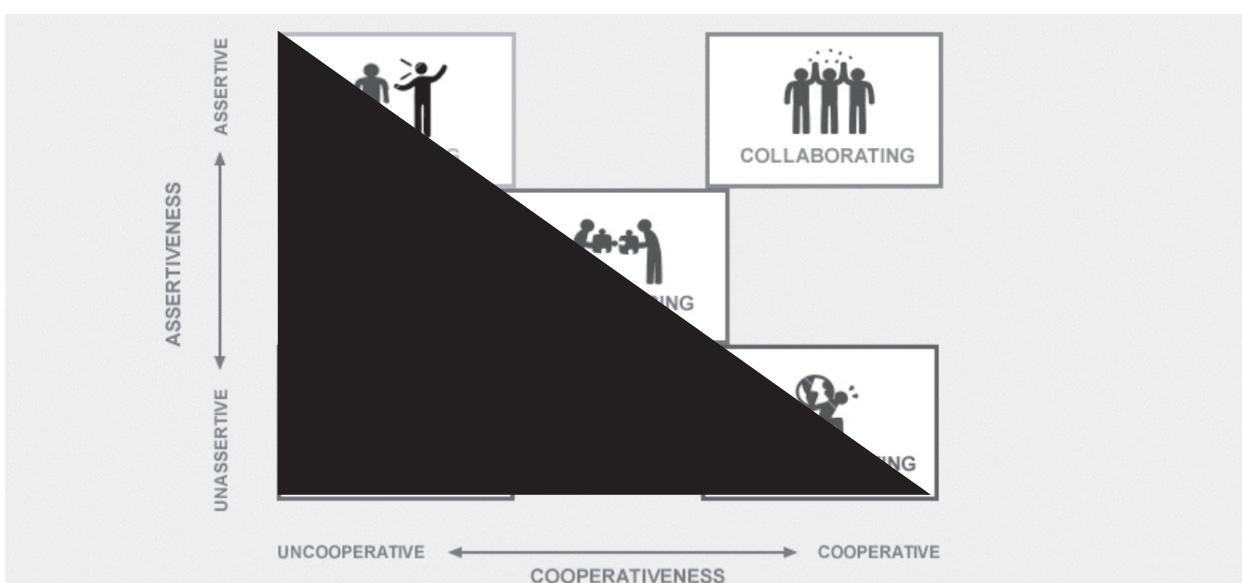


Fig. 2. Modified model of recommended behaviour patterns for employees of the administrative service provider (option no 1)

Source: Own studies based on Herk, 2011; Sample, 2008

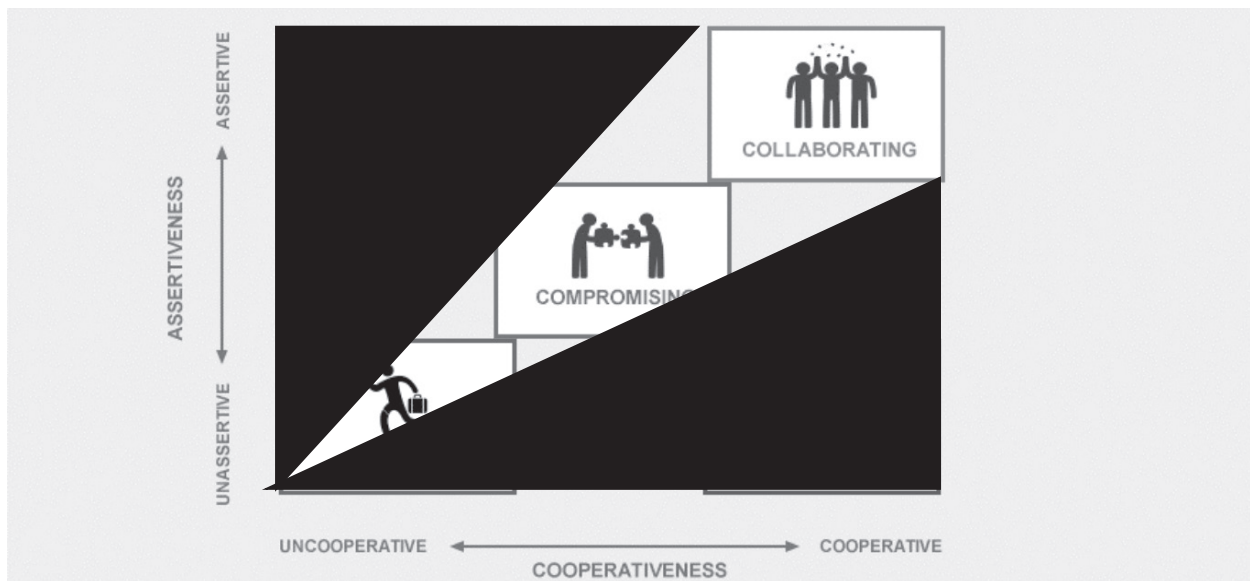


Fig. 3. Modified model of recommended behaviour dominants of employees of the service provider (option 2)

Source: Own studies based on Herk, 2011; Sample, 2008.

The spheres identified as undesirable behaviour of service provider personnel are shaded in figures 2 and 3, whereas preferential behaviours are left clean.

Obviously, the difference between the proposed options concerns only restricting undesirable personnel behaviours of the service provider. The restrictions shown in the second option of the modified model are more qualitative because the collaborating and compromising patterns can be applied in 100% whereas competing, accommodating and avoiding are limited to the maximum. Due to the fact that all these behaviours are part of every individual and that avoiding cannot be fully eliminated, the option presented in the second modified model is more acceptable in searching candidates with minimal level of competing, accommodating and avoiding.

Thus, the option of the best set of behaviours in accordance with model 2 may deem collaborating as a dominating feature of candidates → maximum, and sub dominating elements showing a decline with compromising < maximum, avoiding << maximum and competing and accommodating minimum.

It should be noted that in describing people in conflict K. Thomas and R. Kilmann at the same time suggested a relevant testing tool for performing a quantitative assessment.

Additionally, testing according to the TKI methodology is possible in the generally accessible on-line system (e.g.: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict..., no data) with presentation of both individual and group results.

What more, authors of the monograph (Єлагіна et al., 2004) mentioned TKI test results of the effects of using dialogue in interaction (of civil officers) at the interpersonal level, and showed the following breakdown of behaviour features: competing (10.9), compromising (8.4), avoiding (4.8), collaborating (4.6), accommodating (1.4)

On the grounds of these results O.M. Krutij (Крутій, 2008) suggested, in order to popularise collaboration of individuals, groups, institutions where all participants have equal rights, and the rights and values of each party are respected, an original diagnostic, development methodology and scientific description of implementing social partnership and dialogue in practice for subjects involved in state management.

Obviously, the proposed methodology may be applied in diagnosing and shaping desirable behaviour patterns in the interaction between the client and the service provider by creative merging of traditional psycho diagnosis and less traditional contemporary methodology based on the principles of assessing professional behaviour and performance of a participant or candidate for the management team (Крутій, 2008).

3. Conclusions

On the basis of the proposed modified Thomas-Kilmann model, we can draw the conclusion that the most desirable professional behaviour of the service provider in performing administrative services

in processes and procedures involving clients is collaboration.

Wherein a possible behaviour of the service provider towards the client is compromising and competing, whereas accommodating and avoiding must be limited to the minimum.

Selection and recommendation of applicants for the post of civil officer performing administrative services for the inhabitants should follow prior TKI methodology tests showing tendencies of individuals towards the justified behaviour patterns necessary and targeted for providing quality services.

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