

The interaction strategies and behaviour models in conflicts of Russian construction industry

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Abstract. The article discusses the results of the comparative analysis of interaction strategies and behavior models of managers (line and top) and professionals who work in the construction industry. The purpose of the research was to identify typical differences in the behavior of managers and professionals in the conflict situations in two of these three integrated factors: strategy of business communication and the model of behavior in the conflict. We used two test-questionnaires and some tasks (case-studies). The research showed the following result. The participants knew how to answer the questions correctly, how to choose the correct solution. However, their theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which are implemented in their life, are significantly different.

1 Introduction

Henry Ford (Jr.) worked at the factory for many years. He often repeated: "If we to learn how to resolve conflicts, this would reduce the cost of vehicle more than 25 years of technical innovation". However, people have not learned how to resolve conflicts peacefully. At the end of the twentieth century, after two world wars, the experts in human behavior decided to take a new look at the conflict. From the point of the traditional approach, the conflict is an exclusively negative phenomenon. Therefore, it needs to be destroyed. From the point of the modern approach, the conflict is a natural phenomenon. It is the inevitable companion of the human relations. Moreover, the conflict may be useful, but this is possible provided that people are willing to cooperate [1-5].

The conflicts develop slowly, consistently passing stage by stage. However, if it detects the first signs many people tend to smooth over the situation, they "close your eyes", they hope that the problem will disappear by itself. Thus the moment when the conflict is really possible to prevent or to send it in the right direction, is lost. The outbreak of the conflict it is extremely difficult to extinguish. If we don't want to see and solve the problems, the situation becomes worse.

People are afraid of the conflict. Everyone knows the destructive power of any conflict. There are many factors that determine the human behavior in the conflict. There are the goals and motives that a person is guided in the conflict and which he never realizes until

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the end; there are the emotional nature of the previous relations and peculiarities of the temperament, the character and etc. [6-8]

The "psychological subtleties" seek to circumvent in business communication. The experts want to create a universal rational scheme for the people's behavior in any conflict situation. There are three factors (as a rule) determining the success in the resolution of the conflicts:

Firstly, the strategy of communication, characteristic of the person in interpersonal interaction;

Secondly, the position occupied by this person in the system of domination – subordination;

Thirdly, the ways in which man seeks to defend their own interests.

These factors can be identified and measured through the psychological test, questionnaires. The people can corrected their strategy, the position and ways of communication during the psychological trainings, and, most importantly, people can managed these factors.

2 Research methodology

The purposes of the research are: to identify typical differences in the behavior of managers and professionals in conflict situations in two of these three integrated factors: strategy of business communication and the way of behavior in the conflict.

We used two test-questionnaires and some tasks (case-studies).

Russian psychologist Shipilov A.I. developed the test-questionnaire "Strategy of interaction" [9]. The basis of this test is the idea that the main components in the communication process are:

- the position of man in relation to his partner that can be counted as either hard or soft position;
- the attitude to the partner as a subject of interaction (equal partner) or as an object of influence.

Accordingly, there are four strategies: regulatory, confrontation, negotiation, and manipulative. The test-questionnaire "Strategy of interaction" has a scale of "Social desirability". American psychologist Kenneth Thomas developed the test-questionnaire "Conflict Resolution Methods". The basis of this test is the idea of a two-dimensional model of the conflict management [10-12]. This model was created by analogy with the model "managerial grid" [13]. The test-questionnaire "Conflict Resolution Methods" was built as a set of situations. People should make a choice from the two options to exit the conflict situation. The authors of the model suggested that the source of any collision is a mismatch of the interests. There were allocated two axes that define the style of the parties' behavior in the conflict. These axes are:

- the extent to which a person wants to satisfy its own interests: the maximum activity level, aggressiveness after which the person begins to reduce their claims, moving to the passive state;
- the attention to the interests of the other party, the extent to which one party agrees to satisfy the other side's interests, acting together or individually.

The combination of active-passive and individually-together constitute the basic methods of conflict resolution. If we will evaluate these characteristics on a qualitative level ("high", "medium", "low"), then there are five different behaviors: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating.

The test-questionnaire " Conflict Resolution Methods " has no a scale of "Social desirability", but the results obtained with this test correlate well with those obtained by other methods [14].

There were used four tasks (case studies) of an industrial nature for group work in this research. The study was conducted in Moscow State University of Civil Engineering (MGSU) from 2014-2016. There were 170 people, who attend (a) short training courses for managers of investment and construction sector and b) the two-year MBA program "Financial management". The study involved:

- thirty four top-managers (directors, caput department, project managers) aged from 38 to 52;
- twenty nine line-managers (foreman, chiefs of construction sites) at the age between 23 and 44;
- one hundred and seven professionals (engineers, mechanics) aged from 24 to 48.

The study has the particular interest because these studies of the perceptions about conflict in groups of people (managers of different levels and staff) who look at the situation from different perspectives. We may say: they are "on different sides of the barricades". Simplistically this relationship can be seen as straightforward: the action on the one hand may provoke the reaction. But the human relationships are very complex and this may be the reason for the inadequate response of the person. The knowledge of strategies and methods of behavior in the conflict, their strengths and weaknesses allows you to see the range of possible reactions of an opponent, reveal hidden points of disagreement.

The work was carried out in several stages:

Stage I – the respondents performed the test "Strategy of interaction" and the test "Conflict Resolution Methods" individually.

Stage II – the respondents worked in a group. Each of them had their own role in solving problems (case-study): "Imposed charity", "Grievance", "Young specialist", "Introduction of change".

Stage III – the respondents discussed the results of their work. Because the study was conducted in the learning process, then subjects of this work was to study the peculiarities of their own behavior in conflict situations, the search for contradictions between what was obtained through the execution test questionnaires and solve the problems (case-study).

3 Results

The results of the test-questionnaire "Strategy of interaction" were as follows.

The preliminary survey: almost of all the respondents said, that they prefer to use negotiating strategy as "very good and productive" strategy. The respondents realized that there are various situations in real life and other strategies can be more effective. Indeed, each person exhibits a different degree of hardness-softness depending on the situation. The breadth of the range and the brightness of the positions are different of different people, including for reasons of natural character (physiological characteristics) and characteristics of education. It is known that people show more flexibility and tolerance in communication, if they have rich life experience: meeting different people, traveling to different countries.

The results of the test-questionnaire "Strategy of interaction" are presented in table 1.

The results of this research are presented in the tabl. 1.

Table 1. The strategy of interaction preferred by different groups of the respondents

Strategy	Top managers	Line managers	Professionals
regulatory	65%	1%	0%
manipulative	20%	55%	43%
negotiation	11%	23%	22%
confrontation	4%	21%	35%

The regulatory strategy was the most preferred for the top and middle. But this strategy was not popular among the linear managers and specialists. This is understandable, since the regulatory strategy is based on the standard position, combined with respect for the individual opponent. This strategy involves the rational analyses of the situation. People make claims to other people based on official status or relationship, enshrined in the legal documents: the orders, directives and instructions. Psychologically, this strategy is the most secure, but possible only through a definite separation barrier between opponents.

The manipulative strategy was the most popular among the line managers and specialists. But these respondents when they received those results have been upset, because the manipulation perceived in the ordinary consciousness negatively. Indeed, a manipulative strategy is complicated and somewhat dangerous. It provides for the achievement of objectives through indirect psychological impact on the opponent, in which a person is forced to concede, or to act in the desired direction of the manipulator.

The negotiation strategy: almost of all respondents believe (theoretically) that this strategy is the most preferred, productive and the most desirable. They rarely use it in their real life. The negotiation strategy involves the implementation of the aspirations of the individual to discuss the problem, to active dialogue to search for alternative solution or compromise, to move towards a resolution of contradictions by concessions (unilateral or reciprocal), and also to find a solution that suits both parties. It is difficult to implement and costly (especially in time), because of this strategy is less preferred.

The confrontational strategy is seen as a conflict, aggressive behavior. It involves the active use of threats, the psychological pressure, the harassment, blocking of action, physical and moral violence. People are hardly in control of their emotions during a confrontation. Often confrontational actions become a way of inflicting a maximum damage to the opponent. The position, leading to confrontation denied all respondents. But really the desire to avoid such situation is observed among managers, especially among top managers, who are separated from the opponent ("close door"). The line managers and professionals are included in the immediate interpersonal relationships. They describe their condition in the process of communication as an insult; they think somebody seeks to hurt them, as a reaction there is a desire to "defend by attacking". This behavior is typical for people with the certain temperamental particularities, it is depends on their age, the level of social intelligence and the social status.

The results on a scale of "Social desirability" (reliability) are following:

- inaccurate results – 2.6%;
- situational reliable results – 4.7%;
- reliable results – 92.7%.

Each strategy corresponds to a certain way of the behavior, in varying degrees. But the choice method of resolving a conflict situation is influenced by many factors, mainly the factors that are considered subjective (emotional). It is supposed that man, before acting, makes analyze of the situation, and after this he chooses behavior, adequate for this case. But this is not happening. Usually the person doesn't thinks, and uses the method that he has already mastered and which led him to success in the past. The respondents' work with the test-questionnaire « Conflict Resolution Methods» was: the respondents should make a choice from the two options to exit the conflict situation. There are five different behaviors: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating. The results of the test-questionnaire "Conflict Resolution Methods" from the point of view of the adequacy of the use of the model of conflict resolution are on Tab. 2.

The inadequate way is:

- if a man uses the model too often, that it is possible to assume that this method prevails in his behavior;

- if a man uses the model too rare that it is possible to assume that the person has mastered it poorly.

Table 2. Adequate use the models of behavior in conflict

Model	Adequate	Prevails	Not mastered
competing	65.9%	14.3%	19.8%
collaborating	63.2%	32.8%	4.0%
compromising	57.5%	41.6%	0.9%
avoiding	51.1%	22.6%	26.3%
accommodating	43.2%	7.0%	49.8%

If a man shows in the conflict a high level of activity, defends own an interest persistently, not wanting to see the situation on the other hand, such way of the behavior is called a competing (other terms are also used: rivalry, competition). Such man relies mainly "on the use of force", uses formal authority and the right of precedence to ensure victory. This is a classic way for those who are in the position of "winner – loser". Usually the application of the coercion led to feelings of hostility and inner resentment of those to whom this method is applied. If the group is dominated by the strategy of the competition, it inevitably becomes fertile ground for conflict. The compulsion model was characteristic for the leaders of any rank, especially for the line managers. The top-managers were more cautious. The competing model is not typical for the specialists. It is not mastered actually by them.

The man, who uses the model avoiding (withdrawal), tends to ignore the contradictions in and wants out of conflict without solving it. Sometimes this behavior is a typical reaction to the use of means of compulsion, when a person sees no possibility to do something in the response. This forced position of the person creates a sense of the frustration, tension, resentment, but most importantly, delayed the solution of the problem. However, the use of avoidance as the physical or psychological actions (withdrawal) is common to all categories of the respondents that participated in the testing. The reason that the respondents, according to them, use this model is the desire to avoid the conflict.

The compromising is a model" to win for myself and give to win another" (H. Cornelius). This model requires a willingness to thoroughly study the interests of the parties and the search for mutually beneficial alternatives. The emphasis is on solving problems, not on figuring out who is to blame. The collaborating as a model of interaction is the most complex and costly both in time and activity (including intellectual). To work actively and jointly to develop solutions that meets the interests of all parties. It's an ideal, which is the last decade trying to master the world community. The respondents known the benefits of the collaborating, they are able to adequately apply this model (63.2%) and sometimes willing to use it even in the situations in which they can do in other model (32.8%). However, they used it only in a hypothetical situation; according to the respondents "this method is good, but it's not very applicable in real life".

The accommodating as a model to respond to conflicts is not welcome in modern practice, especially in psychological practice. This model involves that the person changing his position, smoothing of the contradictions. In fact, the person waives their own purposes, thus giving the partner the opportunity to solve their problems. However, abandoning their own interests, a person becomes "uninteresting" for himself and others. This position usually leads to a worsening situation and loss of respect. In our studies, the accommodating as an inadequate response (used when it was not necessary) emerged only a few specialists (7.0%).

The compromising is settlement of the differences through mutual concessions. The managers who focus on the team (no negative emotional consequences), or seek to gradually reduce the differences in attitudes and evaluations through the gradual exchange

of the concessions prefer this model. The desire for the compromising was typical for all groups of the respondents, even in situations when this model was not adequate (41.6%). If people use this method often that leads to a buildup of the claims on both sides. The experts on the conflict believe that a compromising cannot be considered a way of resolving conflicts. This is only a temporary respite, after which the inevitable serious conflict.

The group work to address specific situations in terms of role contradictions (the director, the site supervisor, the customer, the investor, the officer, the responsible officer, etc.) was emotionally intense and difficult to implement "rules".

The preliminary stage of work: analysis of the situation and choosing the appropriate method of the conflict resolution had been successful. The participants are well caught the essence of the problem, the degree of interest of the parties, determined a winning strategy and found adequate for the situation the way it was solved. All noted that such a situation can be solved without conflict. It should be noted that in the proposed case studies was adequate negotiation and manipulative strategy, appropriate models of conflict management – compromising, avoiding and compromising. However, the conflicts has not been resolved in gaming situations (four role-playing situation). The strategy, which began as a negotiation strategy, was transformed into a normative strategy, on the one hand and the confrontation strategy on the other hand, blocking, thus, the possibility for equal dialogue. The mutual accusations, the pressure and the blackmail ruled out the possibility of the cooperation. A similar situation occurred in the solution of the case where the manipulative strategy was the appropriate method. The participants didn't want to propose a compromising model. They accused of the manipulation each other and tried to "prove their innocence". The conflicts continued even after leaving the role and completion of a class.

4 Conclusion

What did the study show, in which was attended by well-trained people who have "extensive experience in the attenuation of conflicts" in the team?

If to speak about the knowledge of the conflicts, it meets the modern requirements of competence-based approach: the participants knew how to correctly answer the questions, how to choose the correct solution. However, their theoretical knowledge and the practical skills that they implement in the life, have different sources.

People receive extensive knowledge during the learning, but they don't bring them to the level of the practical skills [15]. At the same time, everyday experience is always specific, but very limited experience. The managers feel the security with the help of various instructions and orders, but it is difficult for them in the situations in which their opponent formally does not obey them, and therefore the managers unable to apply the normative strategy. The line managers are accustomed to manipulate when working with subordinates, meet resistance from those who resent "such primitive manipulation". People, having mastered a strategy in one situation, usually try to transfer it to another situation without analyzing the new situation. Because of this "transfer" people do what they can do, even knowing that to do so should not be. This gives rise to the conflict "from scratch", we know how to do, but do as always.

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