EXPERT VERIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ASPECT

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Abstract: *Methodology of elaborated verification of new theoretical methodological workings on public administration innovative problems has been grounded. The methodology realizes consequent evaluation of quality of the new workings (from general to concrete) by means of applying the methods of focus-group expertise and competent expert. The elaboration of methodology at each of its steps is examined in detail.*
Keywords: *Methodological tools, verification research, competent expert, criterions verification.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

One of the main priorities of modern public administration reforms in Ukraine directs to a large-scale innovation of the system of public administration (further on – SPA) according to the world tendencies, especially concerning introduction of the acknowledged innovations [Попов С., 2013 А] in raising efficiency and image of SPA in the society, providing its transparency, improvement of delivering public services, upgrading social trust to the authorities and their mutual interaction, etc. Complexity and scope of qualitative changes in SPA condition their longevity. Foreign experience proves that such changes in average last 10 years [Крылова Е., 2009]. Topicality of the public administration innovative problem raising attracts attention of many researchers and practical workers, especially concerning the questions of development of theoretical-methodological provision (further on – TMP). The latter, in its turn, demands verification of new workings out.

Rendering the main material. Traditionally, verification of the gained results is applied in natural sciences, and also as a method of quality evaluation of political and social forecasts. The verification principle is one of the fundamental ones in the scientific method of the branch of knowledge "public administration" [Ковбасюк Ю., 2011] which is, by the way, used in the dissertational researches by V.M. Bashkatov [Башкатов В., 2012] and S.P. Shubin [Шубін С., 2012]. The first researcher used the method of expert assessments for the practical verification of theoretical methodological results concerning the model of democratic changes in conditions of the transitive democracy, system

factors of the country''s democratization. According to his own author''s approach, S.P. Shubin confirmed the validity of new scientific data, positions, proposals and conclusions, which are described in his dissertation.

A Big Thesaurus of the modern Ukrainian language [Бусел В., 2007] defines the term "verification" as checking of the truth, determination of trustworthiness. Verification, according to the definition of Webster''s Dictionary, is a creation or confirmation of the truth or precision of a fact, theory, etc. [Neufeldt V., 1991]. Peculiarities of the research subject condition differences of the verification conduction methodology. The author of the present article applied the method of focus-group expertise [Попов С., 2013B] for the verification of new workings out of TMP public administration innovative activity (further on – PAIA). Nevertheless, that method allowed evaluating their quality only in general due to the labor-consuming expertise, scatter of the knowledge depth and views of experts; though their scientific interests are close to the subject of the present research. That was the reason why there arose the necessity in improvement of the verification methodology by means of its widening with other methods, which make it possible to reveal the essence of new elaborations and assess their quality deeper. The aim of the present article is grounded improvement of the verification methodology of new elaborations in TMP PAIA, which will allow to deeper evaluate their quality.

2.   THE METHODOLOGY OF VERIFICATION

At present, there are known direct and indirect kinds of verification, among which the first ones are rather problematic as for their application in the field of knowledge of "public administration" because of their weakness in structuring (or absence of such an ability) objects of research, and also complexity of their construction and functioning, the necessity of elaboration of the specialized apparatus, great expenses, risks as to its consequences, etc. [Ковбасюк Ю., 2011].

In such a case, application of the direct kind of verification of new elaborations is additionally complicated with the fact that PAIA as the object of research sharpens the manifestation of the following phenomena:

 contradictions caused by the simultaneous activity of PAIA and traditional functioning of SPA, complexity of administration of wide-range innovations;

 a wide variety of non-defined features of the outer (conditioned by political, organizational legal and other factors, complexity of innovations, which are still more complicated with the acceptance of their conductors and adjustment to SPA, and also to the subject field of their application) and inner (conditioned by non-homogeneous innovative readiness of SPA subjects, their ability for adaptation to innovations) characters;

 a widened need in outer and inner resources of the necessary quality and volume, etc.

The above described limitations direct to the usage of an elaborated kind of verification, which do not exclude partial application of "direct" methods in case of necessity. It is proposed to conduct the methodology of carrying out the elaborated verification in two stages. At the first stage the quality of new workings in general should

be made using the method of focus-group expertise. At the second stage it is necessary to specify the gained assessments, and also to more concretize the quality indices of new workings using the method of component expert.

The general aim of verification is a complex quality assessment of the gained results on TMP PAIA due to a definite totality of characteristics. General criteria for conducting this research are the following:

☐ verification is an ordered process of using concrete criteria, indices, methods and tools (modes, means, actions, procedures, etc.), which provide attaining the corresponding assessments and grounded analysis of the new workings" quality;

☐ indices of new workings in TMP PAIA quality are their most important totality, which qualitatively and quantitatively characterize their actuality, righteousness, verity, importance, etc. for the development of the theory and practice, their usefulness for the educational training process;

☐ the verity of indices assessment of the new workings" quality, which should be verified, is provided by iterative means of their specification and an all-round analysis, complex and consequent usage of the corresponding methods, which decrease the impact of undefined phenomena on the final conclusions" formation;

☐ reliability of the indices assessment of the quality of new workings is provided with the formation of verification expert environment, the scientific and practical interests of which are most close to the subject of the present research.

The first stage of verification. The methodology of generalized assessment of new workings" quality in TMP PAIA includes the following stages: preparatory; getting and working out of expert assessments, working out of generalized conclusions (Table 1. Methodology of generalized assessment).

Table 1. Methodology of generalized assessment

№	Stages of Methodology	Stages Characteristics
1	Preparatory Stage	☐ formulation of the main aim and criteria of verification ☐ choice of verification conduction method ☐ grounding of tools for verification ☐ choice of verification assessment indices ☐ selection of verification environment subjects
2	Gaining and working out	☐ gaining verification expert assessment of expert assessment ☐ according to the apparatus tools chosen
3	Working out of generalized	☐ generalization of expert assessment conclusions ☐ working out of conclusions concerning verification of the result gained

Preparatory stage. The main aim of the totalized verification is confirmation of the truthfulness (righteousness) of the new scientific results on TMP PAIA. The main criteria of this methodology elaboration (accounting for the general criteria) are the following:

☐ methods should be concrete and available for practical conduction of the indirect verification, and also acceptable for the provision of safety and trustworthiness of assessment;

 tool apparatus should be conductible from the point of view of labor-consuming and available in usage and, similarly, reflect both primary (basic) ideas, which were used in the research of TMP PAIA, and new principally important theoretical workings out without their over-detailing;

 indices should be both qualitative and quantitative, and also concrete and transparent for understanding, acceptable for measuring and provide reliable and trustworthy confirmation of the verity of new scientific claims;

 reliability of the quality assessment of new workings out is provided by bringing in experts to the verification, scientific and practical interests of whom are the closest to the subject of the present research. The results of generalized verification are to be used for discovering a competent expert.

As for the choice of methodology of verification conduction, methods of empirical research are widely used in public administration [Ковбасюк Ю., 2011]: methods of individual and group expert assessments. The latter methods (methods of scientific commission, "brain storm", "Delphi", others) are more complicated in application, resource-consuming, especially in time. Though, their advantage is considered as higher reliability of the group thought than an individual one.

The most widely used, accessible and acceptable for the verification conduction are the methods of individual expert assessments (methods of interview, expert questioning, focus-group, completing forms, testing, etc.) as those which provide [Ковбасюк Ю., 2011]: independence of formation of expert assessment of qualitative and quantitative character; lowering of impact on this assessment from the side of conformism and political situation; previous, simplified formalization of the verification procedure. The most widely used are the methods of completing forms, interview and analytical expertise, which, in the present case provide for the acquisition of the corresponding expert evaluations. Besides, the first method, on condition of the correct composition of the question list, will simplify the procedure of getting and working out of the verification assessments, elaboration of final conclusions due to the previous clear structuring of questions, which mostly bear a closed character.

The interview method provides a wider experts speculation expression and higher reliability of their assessments: during a conversation experts express their thoughts on the previously drawn circle of open, closed and half closed interviewer‟s questions [Ковбасюк Ю., 2011]. This method, compared to the first one, is more complicated but available for realization. The deepest and most reliable verification assessments of an independent character can be acquired by means of the method of analytical expertise. Nevertheless, its disadvantage are much higher labor-consuming and volume of time-waste, because an expert needs: not only a deepened elaboration of the material, but also in modernizing his/her own knowledge on the innovative problem scope; in the working out of the final analytical memorandum which goes on together with the working-time spending, which makes application of this method additionally more complicated. Other difficulties may arise in connection with: multi-sense definition of the same notions by experts, their keeping to other views on giving them advantages to scientific works of other researchers; the necessity of an interviewer‟s ability in skillful interview conduction and creation of preconditions for honest expression of his/her thoughts by an

expert, and also keeping to a certain logics in the formulation of questions and tasks to the experts and the order of their discussion, etc.

Being grounded on the previously said, the most adequate for the generalized verification on the subject of the present research, may be considered the methods of completing forms and interview, which are well-developed and tested, available, non-wasteful, and they also provide for the adequate reliability and trustworthiness of assessment.

As for the structuring of the verification tools (question lists and interview), taking into consideration the previously defined criteria and the subject of the present research, it is necessary:

☐ clearly, logically and generally structure the problematic aspects of PAIA, used primary ideas and new theoretical elaborations which are to be verified. Actual problems and primary ideas should be considered those which result from the analysis of the modern state of public administration innovations, namely: global and national innovative development tendencies, subject field and the mostly acknowledged kinds of modern innovations; problematic questions of PAIA and its TMP. The new research results are to be examined through the system-activities approach to PAIA, regularities and principles of large-scale introduction of innovations, and also peculiarities of their classification, innovative process, strategic management of large-scale innovations and systematization of the main factors of resistance to qualitative changes;

☐ to choose a non-labor demanding quality (up to 10-12) of closed and open questions, which could in a general way characterize primary ideas and principally important theoretical issues;

☐ the formulation of questions should be available and transparent for acceptance and their thoughtful working out by experts in a short period of time. To render a possibility of briefly express the experts" opinions in the open questions.

As for the verification indices, in the general case they should reflect qualitative characteristics concerning the following issues:

☐ actuality, theoretical importance and practical meaning of new TMP aspects, relevance of their application in educational process, professional training of public servants, training of post-graduates;

☐ confirmation of the righteousness, verity and innovation of new elaborations;

☐ success in introducing public-administrative innovations, development of PAIA, etc.

To assess indices to the corresponding questions there may be chosen: a five-point grade for the assessment of the importance rate of the results obtained; a four-point grade – for the assessment of the rate of actuality of SPA innovative modernization; a three-point grade – for the assessment of the rate of theoretical importance of the result obtained, its practical importance for the innovative SPA development, and also useful for the educational process. Moreover, to give an expert possibility to express his/her thought on the closed questions.

As for the formation of the verification environment, in the general case, experts may be experienced public servants, scientists, students and post-graduates of the National Academy of Public Administration, Office of the President of Ukraine, and its Regional Institutes, which are both theoretically prepared and practically experienced in

the aspects of SPA reformation. The guiding point for choosing experts-scientists may be their works (dissertations, monographs, articles), most closely related to PAIA by their problematic. Nowadays, the amount of such experts in the field of knowledge the "public administration" is enough for conducting verification on the subject of the present research.

As for the stage of obtaining and working out expert assessments, conducting of questioning and interviewing is possible both at direct questioning and communication, and by phone regime or with the help of applying modern information telecommunication technologies, namely: at the mode of forum, video conference, etc.

With the aim of working out question lists it is relevant to use the SPSS program product, which makes it possible to elaborate a great amount of information in totality of parameters. Taking into account the complexity of the material to be verified, it is desirable to previously acquaint experts with the contents of the interview, and conduct it at their readiness.

The results should be documented in electronic and paper carriers.

Concerning the final stage of this methodology, the verification results are formulated as generalized conclusions, where there are reflected:

☐ the rate of achieving the main verification aim as a diagnostic form (approval, confirmation) of the righteousness of new scientific issues on TMP PAIA;

☐ the rate of correspondence of the verification research to the previously defined criteria;

☐ summarized analysis of the most important expert assessments, in which there is given detailed argumentation as for the facts to what extent the obtained theoretical aspects were confirmed and with the help of which speculations, specifications and proofs by experts they were justified;

☐ theoretical and practical recommendations for the further application of conclusions.

An important summary of the first stage of verification research is finding out the most experienced experts, and among them – competent ones who could be called for further verification.

At another verification stage, there is used the methodology which is grounded on the method of competent expert with the corresponding confirmation logics (objection) of the verity of new TMP PAIA elaborations. The main aim of this methodology is in the more detailed (than at the first stage) iterative cooperation in the form of "competent expert – researcher" with the aim of clearing up the qualitative characteristics of new theoretical methodological elaborations. From the point of view of general criteria, structuring of this methodology is based on the following main criteria:

☐ verification of new elaborations should start with the understanding of the persons interested in the TPM PAIA working out, finding out the necessity and importance of its working out, being grounded on the problematic fields both as innovative activity and its theoretical methodological provision;

☐ expediency of the new researches chosen themes should be grounded on their demand, basing on the most important needs of TMP working out and PAIA development;

☐ the quality of new TMP workings out is, firstly, checked to the correspondence (deviation from) to the most important results of the previously determined main directions of its problematic field;

☐ verity of the new most important results is confirmed with clearing up the adequacy of the methodological apparatus used in the research; essences of the main approaches, models, claims, suppositions, etc., and also giving grounds to the ability of their application at new workings out elaboration.

The first stage of this methodology (Table 2) is focused at clearing up the TMP PAIA development needs. In this case, a competent expert-interviewer puts the following questions to the researcher-recipient:

☐ (1) what subjects are mostly interested in TMP PAIA working out?;

☐ (2) what is the necessity and importance of TMP PAIA lie in and on the basis of what documents?;

☐ (3) which research directions form the generalized problematic field of TMP PAIA?

Table 2. Methodology "The Competent Expert"

№	Stages	Characteristics of Stages
1	Conceptualization of the necessity,	☐determination of TMP PAIA importance and essence of TMP PAIA interested subjects; ☐ working out grounding of thenecessity and importance of TMP PAIA; ☐ finding out generalized problematic TMP PAIA field
2	Grounding of the expediency of TMP	☐grounding of the main TMP PAIA main directions research directions as for their adequacy for the most important PAIA needs
3	Defining the correspondence of the results obtained to the main directions of the problematic field	☐analysis of the TMP research results obtained according to three groups: "relevant and calculated" (most important); "relevant but uncalculated"; "irrelevant but calculated"
4	Evaluation of the quality of the most important research results	☐ evaluation of the adequacy of the methodology apparatus used for gaining the most important TMP research results; ☐ finding out verity of the used in the research logics, ☐ rate of suppositions grounding and their correspondence to the previously formulated needs

The second stage of the methodology concerns expediency of research of the main TMP PAIA directions. Due to this stage, a competent expert-interviewer proposes to the researcher-respondent to answer the following questions:

– what TMP research directions are the most important (key) from the point of view of their correspondence to the modern PAIA development needs?;

– what is the relevance of analyzing the most important directions from the point of view of their impact on the development of theory, practice and scientific methodological provision of the educational process?

The third stage deals with the definition of correspondence (deviation) of the factually gained results to the main directions of TMP PAIA research, which were determined due to the previous methodological stage (Table 2). In that case, a competent

expert-interviewer defines the correspondence (deviation) of the research results by means of their division into three groups: "relevant and calculated" (further on - RC); "relevant but uncalculated" (further – RUC); "irrelevant but calculated" (further – IRC). The "relevant and calculated" results are estimated as the most important among those obtained in one"s own research: they answer to the main TMP directions. With the aim of corresponding separation of results, a competent expert-interviewer marks one of the variants with the chosen criteria with the sign "v" in Table 3.

Table 3. Separation of the results obtained according to their importance

Research Result Obtained	RC	RUC	IRC

The fourth stage is directed to the assessment of the verity of the most important TMP PAIA research results on the following questions of a competent expert-interviewer to a researcher-recipient:
– which methodological tools are used when getting the most important TMP PAIA research results?;
– what main approaches, models, claims and suppositions, worked out by the predecessors, are used at working out of the new most important results?;
what is the essence of grounding such approaches, models, claims and suppositions for their application at the elaboration of new workings out?;
– what is the essence of the new most important elaborations from the point of view of TMP PAIA development?

After ensuring in the full grounded answers to the above mentioned questions, a competent expert-interviewer formulates conclusions as to the verification of the new most important results on the following subject:
– correspondence of the main theoretical-methodological elaborations from the point of view of their necessity, importance and practical demand from SPA subjects;
– relevance (deviation) of the obtained new most important results to TMP PAIA development demands;
– argumentation of the truthfulness of the obtained new most important results by means of confirming: adequacy of the used methodological tools and applied main approaches, models, claims and suppositions, which were worked out by the predecessors, to the subject of the present research, and also grounding of ideas, laid in new elaborations.

3.   CONCLUSIONS

Application of the direct kind for the verification of new theoretical-methodological result in the field of knowledge „the public administration" is, in general, problematic, and as for questions of public administrative innovative activities, is even more complicated. In that case, it is possible to use an indirect kind of verification as an ordered process of application of concrete criteria, indices, methods and tools (skills, modes, actions, procedures, etc.), which will enable to acquire the corresponding assessments of the quality of new theoretical results and their detailed analysis.

General methodology of verification may include two consequent stages. At its first stage, there should be used the method o focus-group expertise, and at the other – the method of competent expert. Such an approach will enable to primarily form generalized quality assessments of new theoretical results, and later on to specify them and in more detail concretize with the help of a competent expert, found out at the first stage.

The principal question at the elaboration of the general methodology is determination of a list of indices which could fully enough and transparently characterize the verification object and enable to formulate final conclusions in a grounded way. Generalized conclusions should describe: the rate of achievement of the main aim of verification research and its correspondence to the previously elaborated criteria; grounded argumentation as to adequacy of the applied theoretical elaborations of the predecessors and grounding of new workings out on the basis of logical speculations and experts" claims.

An important question is defining the expert staff, and among them – a competent expert. The main verification tool is proposed using an interview and answering question lists, which may be realized with the help of traditional and modern information-telecommunication means in the distance mode.

Further direction of research should be an experimental testing of the proposed methodology, which will enable to improve each of its stages.

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