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## **SOCIAL-COGNITIVE DETERMINANTS OF MANAGERIAL SUCCESS: A REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Determining the necessary skills to meet present and future priorities and assessing resources of managerial activity are the fundamental directions of strategic staff planning in civil service. The necessity of studying cognitive and personal determinants of success in managerial activity is becoming even more urgent insofar as it concerns processes inextricably connected with the person performing it and their qualities and methods of action. It seems important to assess the cognitive styles that significantly influence managerial activity and mediate the influence of a number of other psychosocial variables. In connection with this, the purpose of this study is the theoretical analysis of technologies and methods for studying the features of the social-cognitive domain of managers in the public administration system and its relationship with their managerial success. The least studied here, yet no less significant, are cognitive determinants directly related to personality traits, a subject which is also illuminated in the results obtained in the course of the theoretical analysis, analytical synthesis, analytic induction, typology, and generalization of more than 60 scientific articles from domestic and international researchers. The result is also an analysis and systematization of productive approaches and methods for studying the features of the social-cognitive domain and an assessment of their influence on managerial and career achievements, which has become the grounds for describing the main social-cognitive antecedents that affect managerial success and substantiating the typology of leaders' subjective managerial conceptions, based on which it is possible to develop programs for their individual development. The study and assessment of cognitive personality traits have significance concerning the search for factors that contribute to strategic change.*

**Keywords:** *public administration, managerial success, the social-cognitive domain of personality, social-cognitive determinants, emotional (psychological) crutches.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary public administration system, the problem of managerial success is most often considered from the standpoint of individual psychological characteristics of personality, indicators of its effectiveness, or psychobiographical factors. Questions of social-cognitive factors and their influence on personal achievements are considered to a lesser extent. At the same time, cognitive antecedents that explain managerial success and differences in management styles are an important determinant on par with the characteristics above, which lends relevance to this research topic. Studying them through the prism of personal life strategies (core ideas), systems of personal meanings that determine individual consciousness, allows us to identify and describe strategies of subjective effectiveness and success in managerial activity, especially in a situation of its growing complexity.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS, HISTORY, AND APPROACHES TO THE ASSESSMENT OF COGNITIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS.**

Determining the necessary skills to meet present and future priorities and assessing resources of managerial activity are the fundamental directions of strategic staff planning in civil service. In connection with the active development of the science of artificial intelligence, the necessity of studying cognitive and personal determinants of the success of managerial activity becomes even more urgent as this concerns the processes inextricably connected with the person performing it and their qualities and methods of action. In this regard, the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is of interest, as it lays out an understanding of the development of an individual's educational and professional trajectory, characterizes the decision-making process, indicates ways of improving performance, and shows the importance of individual persistence, satisfaction/well-being, and several other qualities. Developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994, the SCCT is based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura, which explains the mechanism of thought and motivational processes and aims to describe various aspects of career behaviour, including how people cope with normative tasks, adapt to changes, and make independent decisions. The tenets of the theory allow one

to analyze mental processes and interpretations of life events and explain how they interact.

The history of the study and assessment of cognitive personality traits began approximately 150 years ago when Galton (1869) proposed that for various achievements, intellect is necessary first and foremost, and only after that “zeal [persistence]” and “capacity for hard labor.” According to the researcher, it is precisely this, in addition to luck and circumstances, that determines the achievement of personally significant goals. Charles Darwin actively supported this approach. But on the whole, at that time, the development of psychology in this direction proceeded in the opposition of cognitive personality traits to non-cognitive factors. For example, Cox (1926) proposed that in addition to intelligence, successful people are characterized by a “tendency not to abandon tasks from mere changeability” and a “tendency not to abandon tasks in the face of obstacles.” Wechsler (1943) also distinguished intellects from non-intellective factors but preferred the latter.

Nevertheless, theoretical preferences and empirical studies of human achievements in the past century concentrated primarily on assessing cognitive characteristics and abilities, as the researchers supposed that the measurement of these qualities was more reliable and more accurate in the diagnosis of personal achievements than most non-cognitive attributes.

## **MAIN RESULTS OF THE STUDY, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION.**

The theoretical analysis of 64 articles describing the results of studies of social-cognitive aspects of managerial success has shown that today the assessment of a leader's skills and strengths involves not only the diagnosis of individual professional qualities but also the assessment of cognitive styles. The most studied are cognitive determinants associated with behaviour, especially intentions, self-efficacy, and performance. Several models have been developed in this area to integrate various determinants of effective behaviour. Less studied are cognitive determinants directly related to personality characteristics - thinking, logic, memory, emotions, etc., although in aggregate, it is precisely these which determine the cognitive skills that control the brain and are used to think, remember, reason, pay attention, and learn. Working together, they process incoming information and transfer it to a personal knowledge bank, which the manager uses daily at work and in life.

In international scholarship, the term “cognitive style” denotes individual differences in perception and information processing, the assessment of which, within the framework

of managerial skills, includes knowing how to perform not only managerial but also mental activity. The studies of Helfat and Peteraf (2013), Kholodnaya (2004), and Tolochev (2013) outline specific types of cognitive styles that may underlie dynamic managerial skills, as well as their potential effect on strategic organizational change. The researchers explain how the heterogeneity of these cognitive styles may lead to the heterogeneity of dynamic management actions among senior management, which may contribute to organizational success in times of change.

The studies of R. Rajagopal and A. Rajagopal (2011) and Helfat and Peteraf are also devoted to the analysis of cognitive determinants but in managerial decision-making. Their research shows how cognitive parameters impact the success of managers' work and mediate the influence of a number of other psychosocial variables.

A study of the role of cognitive characteristics in strategic management—as only they, according to scientists, can explain why some managers possess more effective means than others and can predict, interpret, and respond to the demands of a changing environment more quickly and successfully—is found in the research of Kumbure, Tarkiainen, Luukka, Stoklasa, and Jantunen (2020); Helfat and Peteraf (2015); Cao, Ouyang, Balozian, and Zhang (2020); Bajwa, Shahzad, and Aslam (2017); and others.

Ongoing research leads to an ever-larger number of scientists inclined to consider cognitive personality traits an important factor in determining strategic change and influencing effectiveness in decision-making and higher productivity in the organization. Effective decision-making in dynamic conditions demands strategic thought and is characterized by the ability to quickly understand changes and act accordingly, even in uncertain situations, is also evidenced in the large-scale experimental data of Vecchiato (2016). When dealing with uncertainty, managers rely significantly on their cognitive skills rather than their managerial skills.

The most significant cognitive characteristics in managerial activity are cognitive complexity, cognitive dissonance, cognitive flexibility, and the tunnel thinking effect.

*Cognitive complexity* in the studies of Woznyj, Banks, Dunn, Berka, and Woehr (2019), following Bieri and Kelly (1955), is characterized as the ability of a person to generalize, use, structure, and process social information in a multidimensional way. At its basic level, cognitive complexity reflects a perceptual tendency and is more similar to a personal construct than a construct of abilities. Cognitive complexity interacts with other variables, such as cognitive abilities, in a compensatory way. *Cognitive dissonance* (Cooper and Hogg, 2007) is a state of discomfort because of a collision in an individual's consciousness between conflicting ideas about something incompatible. While defining

various factors of dissonance, Jaubert, Girandola, and Souchet (2020) supplement this phenomenon with the characteristic of *vicarious dissonance*, as there is always a reason someone may change their attitude toward a situation or phenomenon, which leads to a decrease in inconsistency on both the individual and the group level. *Cognitive flexibility* is adapting one's thinking or attention to changing goals and/or external stimuli. In a broad sense, cognitive flexibility is described as a person's ability to adapt their thinking when transitioning from an old situation to a new one and to overcome their accustomed reactions and thoughts in new conditions. If they can overcome their existing habits or judgments, they could be defined as cognitively flexible.

In our research, we also attach great significance to this characteristic and define cognitive flexibility as the ability to simultaneously consider many sides of a phenomenon and many aspects of a complex situation. According to the data we have collected, only every seventh contemporary leader is characterized by cognitive flexibility, while it is observed in practically all the young people participating in a similar study. *Emotional (psychological) crutches* play an important role here. A psychological crutch is when we become dependent upon something in an unhealthy way (C.Coupland, A.D. Brown, K. Daniels, and M.Humphreys, 2008). It can be something that makes us feel safe, and crucially - only safe when it is present. By carrying around our psychological crutch, we lose the sense of confidence in our own ability to cope. When we feel confident, we start to think more confidently. When we think and feel more confident, our actions are often more effective than if we are riddled with doubt and anxiety. Cognitive characteristics are influenced by a great number of factors that narrow one's vision and affect general personality development and cognitive processes. This could give birth to the *tunnel thinking effect*—when a person obsessed with achieving a goal stops thinking, making decisions, and adequately assessing the situation due to their own psychological “narrow-mindedness” (Lassetter, Hehman, and Neel, 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The highlighted characteristics and their assessment are especially important in domains of activity that involve making quick and complex decisions. This fully applies to civil service, especially in connection with the transition to digital tracks and remote management, which demands particular understanding, systemic thinking, and developing cognitive skills to analyze and rethink the dynamic processes of the modern world.

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