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SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE PROBLEM OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL
CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

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Annotation. The article reveals the scientific and theoretical foundations of studying the socio-psychological characteristics of leadership activity. It is shown that leadership represents not only an individual set of qualities but also a system of social influence mediated by group norms, role expectations, organizational culture, and the leader’s emotional intelligence. Based on the analysis of domestic, foreign, and regional (Uzbekistan and CIS countries) research, the key components of leadership activity are identified: motivational-value, cognitive, emotional-volitional, and communicative-behavioral. The necessity of a culturally sensitive approach to the study of leadership and the development of programs for its enhancement is substantiated.

Keywords: leadership, leadership activity, socio-psychological characteristics, emotional intelligence, group dynamics, organizational culture, motivation, leadership style.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of leadership has remained one of the central topics in social and organizational psychology for decades. Modern societal transformations, digitalization, hybrid employment formats, and the growing uncertainty and turbulence have intensified the demand for leaders who are capable not only of managing resources effectively but also of maintaining the psychological well-being of employees, creating conditions for trust, engagement, and innovation.

While classical theories of leadership mainly focused on the personal qualities of the leader or his management style, modern approaches view leadership as a multi-level socio-psychological phenomenon that encompasses the interaction between the individual, the group, and the organizational environment. In the works of B.D. Parygin, G.M. Andreeva, T.V. Bendas, and A.N. Zankovsky, leadership is described as a special form of group influence based on the recognition of the leader’s authority and his ability to organize joint activities and communication.

Foreign researchers (B. Bass, R. Riggio, D. Goleman, and others) expanded the understanding of leadership activity by introducing the concepts of transformational and emotionally competent leadership, emphasizing the importance of not only rational but also affective, value-based, and meaningful components of a leader’s influence on followers.

The purpose of this article is, based on the analysis of domestic, foreign, and local studies, to substantiate the scientific and theoretical foundations of the problem of socio-psychological characteristics of leadership activity, to identify its key structural components and factors, and to outline prospects for further research in a culturally specific (including Uzbek) context.

1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

1.1. Classical Concepts of Leadership

The development of scientific ideas about leadership has traditionally been described through several generations of theories:

1. **Trait Theories (Trait Approach)** – assumed the existence of a “set of qualities” distinguishing leaders from non-leaders (intelligence, confidence, emotional stability, dominance, etc.). Despite criticism for being static and ignoring context, this approach laid the groundwork for the empirical study of leaders’ personal characteristics.
2. **Behavioral Theories** – shifted the focus from “who the leader is” to “how the leader behaves.” Studies of leadership styles (authoritarian, democratic, and liberal) demonstrated that style affects group cohesion, satisfaction, and effectiveness.
3. **Situational and Contingency Theories** (F. Fiedler, Path-Goal Model, etc.) – emphasized that the effectiveness of a leadership style depends on situational characteristics: task structure, formal authority, maturity, and employees’ expectations.
4. **Transformational Leadership** (B. Bass, R. Riggio) – views the leader as a figure who inspires followers by transforming their values, motivation, and perceptions of their own capabilities. The main components of transformational leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
5. **Concepts of Emotionally Competent Leadership** (D. Goleman) – emphasize that a leader’s effectiveness largely depends on emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize one’s own and others’ emotions, manage them, and use emotional information in decision-making and relationship building.

Thus, the evolution of leadership theories demonstrates a transition from a static understanding of the leader as a bearer of fixed traits to a view of leadership as a dynamic socio-psychological process in which personal characteristics, behavior, context, and emotional-value connections form a unified system.

1.2. The Socio-Psychological Perspective: Leadership as a System of Influence and Relationships

In Russian social psychology, leadership is traditionally viewed as a special form of intra-group relations and influence, based not only on formal status but also on the recognition of the leader’s personality by the group. G.M. Andreeva points out that leadership belongs to the core socio-psychological phenomena of a small group, along with cohesion, norms, and the status-role structure.

B.D. Parygin emphasized that leadership is not limited to administrative management: leadership functions as an “*instrument of community integration*” that ensures the alignment of individual and group goals, the maintenance of an optimal socio-psychological climate, and the direction of joint activities. Several studies identify typologies of leaders based on the nature and content of their activities (inspirational leader, executive leader, task-oriented and emotional leaders, etc.), which demonstrates the multidimensionality of leadership activity and the need for analysis from various perspectives.

Thus, from a socio-psychological perspective, leadership activity is understood as:

- a process of initiating, organizing, and coordinating joint activities;
- a system of interpersonal influences and role expectations;
- a mechanism for forming and maintaining group norms and values;
- the core of the socio-psychological climate and the power structure within a group or organization.

2. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

2.1. The Structure of Leadership Activity

An analysis of domestic and foreign studies makes it possible to identify several key components of leadership activity that together determine its socio-psychological specificity:

Motivational-Value Component. Includes the system of motives and values of a leader: orientation toward achievement, power as responsibility, pro-social orientation, and readiness to serve the common good. Transformational leaders are characterized by values of development, innovation, and trust, combined with a low level of manipulateness.

Cognitive Component. Relates to the features of a leader's social cognition: the ability to analyze situations, forecast the consequences of decisions, understand the structure of interests and expectations of different groups, and possess strategic thinking.

Emotional-Volitional Component. Includes emotional stability, self-regulation, tolerance for uncertainty and frustration, as well as the development of emotional intelligence—the ability to recognize and regulate one's own and others' emotions.

Communicative-Behavioral Component. Reflects the leader's interpersonal style: openness, empathy, the ability to listen, provide constructive feedback, manage conflicts and negotiations, and build relationships of trust.

The socio-psychological features of leadership activity are manifested in the unity of these components: even with pronounced personal qualities, a leader will be ineffective if unable to establish communication, is insensitive to the group's emotional state, or ignores the followers' value expectations.

2.2. Leadership Activity and Emotional Intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI), proposed by D. Goleman and developed in the context of leadership, emphasizes that EI enables leaders to function effectively in complex, conflictual, and uncertain situations.

The key components of a leader's emotional intelligence are:

Self-awareness – understanding one's own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses;

Self-regulation – the ability to manage impulses and mood;

Empathy – sensitivity to others' experiences; **Social skills** – building and maintaining effective relationships and managing team dynamics.

Research shows that a high level of emotional intelligence is positively correlated with employee satisfaction, engagement, and perceived fairness, while reducing the risks of

destructive leadership forms such as authoritarianism, emotional burnout, and abuse of power.

2.3. Group and Organizational Determinants of Leadership Activity

The socio-psychological characteristics of leadership cannot be understood outside the context of group dynamics and organizational culture. In the works of B.D. Parygin, G.M. Andreeva, T.V. Bendas, and others, it is shown that the effectiveness of a leader is determined not only by personal qualities but also by:

- the level of group cohesion;
- the nature of the informal structure of power and influence;
- the state of the socio-psychological climate;
- the specificity of organizational culture (hierarchical, clan, adhocratic, etc.);
- the prevailing socio-economic and cultural conditions.

Modern studies emphasize the importance of the concept of *distributed leadership*, where leadership functions are shared among several members of the team (both formal and informal leaders), which increases the adaptability and resilience of the organization under conditions of change.

3. THE REGIONAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF STUDYING LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

3.1. Leadership Research in the CIS Countries. In the post-Soviet space, the problem of leadership is considered with an emphasis on the socio-cultural characteristics of transforming societies, where elements of both traditional and modern cultures coexist.

T.V. Bendas analyzes the gender, ethno-cultural, and role characteristics of leaders, emphasizing the influence of cultural norms and expectations on the formation of leadership behavior.

A.N. Zankovsky, summarizing the achievements of leadership psychology, highlights the need to integrate cognitive, motivational, and socio-psychological approaches, as well as to study leadership within the context of corporate culture and organizational changes.

Several modern studies in CIS countries focus on examining the *leadership potential of adolescents and youth*, the connection between leadership and personality orientation, achievement motivation, and social status within a group.

3.2. Local Research (Uzbekistan and Central Asia Region). In recent years, research in Uzbekistan and neighboring countries has become more active, focusing on the development of leadership qualities among managers, students, and youth, as well as the socio-psychological conditions for the formation of effective leadership in educational and managerial structures.

For instance, Sh. Mardieva analyzes the socio-psychological factors influencing the formation of leadership qualities among managers and emphasizes the importance of targeted training programs that develop responsibility, initiative, creativity, and communicative competence.

Thus, the **scientific and theoretical foundations** of the problem of socio-psychological characteristics of leadership activity form a solid basis for empirical research and practice-oriented developments aimed at shaping responsible, emotionally mature, and socially competent leadership.

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