



VALUE-ORIENTED COGNITIVE READINESS AS A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR OF MANAGERIAL DECISION-MAKING UNDER INSTITUTIONAL UNCERTAINTY

A. Nazarov

International Academy of Islamic Studies of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

E-mail: 19azamatnazarov80@gmail.com

Abstract. The article develops the concept of value-oriented cognitive readiness as an integral socio-psychological factor of managerial decision-making under institutional uncertainty. Using an integrative theoretical review and conceptual synthesis of classical and recent research on managerial decision-making, cognitive flexibility, affect-cognition interaction, responsible and ethical leadership, psychological safety, and uncertainty communication, the study distinguishes institutional uncertainty from ordinary informational uncertainty and specifies the structure of the proposed construct. The theoretical analysis identifies six interdependent components of value-oriented cognitive readiness: cognitive, reflective, emotional-regulatory, motivational, ethical-value, and communicative. It further specifies seven socio-psychological mechanisms through which this readiness may support decision quality, legitimacy, and sustainability: reflective control, value consistency, social perspective-taking, responsibility internalization, communicative trust, professional identity, and regulation of cognitive bias. These elements are integrated into a four-stage model comprising diagnostic orientation, value-based evaluation, responsible choice, and socio-psychological implementation with recursive feedback. Unlike approaches that examine cognitive bias, leadership ethics, or organizational climate in isolation, the proposed framework explains how cognitive, value-based, emotional, reflective, and communicative resources are coordinated within the decision-maker's internal preparedness. The article is theoretical rather than empirical; its results are conceptual propositions that require subsequent operationalization and empirical verification. Practical recommendations are proposed for developing decision-making competence among mid-level and senior managers in educational, administrative, and other institutional settings.

Keywords: managerial decision-making; cognitive readiness; institutional uncertainty; value orientation; reflective control; organizational culture; responsibility.

Introduction

In contemporary organizations, managerial effectiveness is increasingly determined not only by a leader's ability to select one alternative among several possible options, but also by the capacity to act responsibly in situations where information is incomplete, time is limited, institutional expectations are contradictory, and social consequences are difficult to predict. In such conditions, a decision is not merely an administrative act; it becomes a socio-psychological event that influences interpersonal trust, professional motivation, organizational climate, and the moral stability of the team. Classical and modern theories of management emphasize that decision-making is a central function of leadership because it links the analysis of a problematic situation with the practical transformation of organizational reality (Barnard, 1938; Mintzberg, 1973; Simon, 1997).

The transformation of public administration, higher education, and other social institutions has intensified the demand for managers who can combine strategic thinking with social responsibility. Institutional reforms, digitalization, growing accountability, and changes in professional expectations require leaders to interpret complex information and to coordinate the interests of different participants in the organizational process. Under these circumstances, managerial decision-making cannot be understood as a purely technical procedure. It includes perception of the problem, interpretation of institutional signals, anticipation of possible outcomes, comparison of alternatives, regulation of emotional tension, and acceptance of responsibility for implementation (Kahneman, 2011; March & Simon, 1993). Recent research additionally demonstrates that managerial judgment is shaped by the interaction of cognition and affect, by leaders' capacity to adapt their information search, and by the way uncertainty is communicated to others (Cristofaro et al., 2022; Kiss et al., 2020; Løhre & Teigen, 2024).

The relevance of the present study is associated with the need to conceptualize decision-making through the category of value-oriented cognitive readiness. Previous studies have analyzed organizational structure, communication channels, leadership style, personal qualities, emotional stability, cognitive flexibility, ethical and responsible leadership, and socio-psychological determinants of managerial decisions (Bedi et al., 2016; de Klerk & Jooste, 2023; Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni, 2018; Makhmudov, 2006; Nazarov, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Voegtlin et al., 2020). However, these lines of research are commonly developed in parallel: cognitive studies explain adaptation and bias, leadership studies clarify ethical and responsibility-related orientations, while relational research emphasizes psychological safety and trust. Less attention is given to the integrative internal readiness through which a manager simultaneously interprets uncertainty, evaluates alternatives against institutional values, regulates affective pressure, accepts responsibility, and communicates a choice to stakeholders. The same organizational conditions may therefore produce different managerial outcomes because leaders differ in the degree to which these resources are integrated in actual decision situations.

The main purpose of the article is to substantiate value-oriented cognitive readiness as a socio-psychological factor that increases the quality of managerial decision-making under institutional uncertainty. The research tasks are as follows: to clarify the meaning of institutional uncertainty in managerial activity; to define the structure of value-oriented cognitive readiness; to analyze the socio-psychological mechanisms connecting internal readiness with decision quality; and to formulate practical recommendations for leadership development programs in institutional settings.

The novelty of the article lies in shifting the analytical focus from the external stages of decision-making to the internal psychological preparedness of the decision-maker. This approach does not deny the importance of formal rules, organizational regulations, or rational analysis. Rather, it shows that formal procedures become effective only when they are supported by the leader's capacity for reflective control, value-based evaluation, and socially responsible communication.

In order to avoid reducing managerial choice to a purely procedural category, the article interprets readiness as a dynamic psychological system. This system includes the ability to preserve analytical clarity in the absence of complete information, to correlate alternatives with institutional goals, and to transform personal responsibility into a constructive form of leadership behavior. Such an interpretation also makes it possible to distinguish between formal decision-making and mature managerial choice. Formal decision-making may be externally correct, but mature managerial choice requires a conscious relation to consequences, people, and values (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1997).

Research gap and analytical questions

The literature reveals a first gap at the intersection of managerial cognition and leadership psychology. Research on bounded rationality, cognitive bias, and cognitive flexibility explains why decision-makers may simplify information or adapt their search strategies (Jordão et al., 2020; Kiss et al., 2020; Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni, 2018), whereas research on ethical and responsible leadership explains how values, responsibility, and stakeholder orientation shape leadership conduct (Bedi et al., 2016; de Klerk & Jooste, 2023; Voegtlin et al., 2020). These traditions provide important but partly separated explanations. What remains insufficiently conceptualized is the internal psychological configuration that connects cognitive adaptation with value-based evaluation and responsible social implementation within one decision process.

A second gap concerns the meaning of uncertainty itself. Managerial research frequently treats uncertainty primarily as incomplete information or unpredictability. In institutional leadership, however, uncertainty may simultaneously involve ambiguous norms, competing stakeholder expectations, time pressure, public accountability, and the psychological consequences of implementation. Contextual leadership research shows that leadership processes are shaped by multiple situational layers (Oc, 2018), while experimental work on uncertainty communication indicates that different forms of disclosed uncertainty can alter how a leader and a decision are perceived (Løhre & Teigen, 2024). A socio-psychological model therefore requires a broader account of institutional uncertainty than information deficit alone.

A third gap concerns the relationship between internal readiness and collective implementation. Studies of psychological safety emphasize the importance of relational climates in which speaking up, feedback, and interpersonal risk-taking are possible (Newman et al., 2017). Yet such climate-level constructs do not by themselves explain how a manager translates personal reflection, values, emotional regulation, and responsibility into a concrete choice and then into a communicatively legitimate implementation process. The present article addresses this problem by treating value-oriented cognitive readiness as an integrative construct located at the interface between individual self-regulation and institutional interaction.

Accordingly, the theoretical analysis is guided by four analytical questions: (RQ1) How should institutional uncertainty be distinguished from ordinary informational uncertainty in managerial activity? (RQ2) What psychological components constitute value-oriented cognitive readiness? (RQ3) Through which socio-psychological mechanisms can this readiness support the quality, legitimacy, and sustainability of managerial decisions? (RQ4) How can these components and mechanisms be organized into a process model applicable to institutional leadership? These questions make the intended contribution more explicit: the article does not propose another isolated leadership trait, but an integrative explanatory framework connecting cognitive, reflective, emotional, motivational, ethical-value, and communicative regulation in decision-making under institutional uncertainty.

Methodological basis

The article employs an integrative theoretical review and conceptual synthesis. Its purpose is not to estimate an empirical effect size or to report primary statistical data, but to integrate established and recent psychological explanations that are directly relevant to managerial choice under institutional uncertainty. The systemic approach serves as the general methodological framework because a managerial decision is treated as the result of interaction among the leader, the group, the institution, and the wider social environment. From this perspective, decision-making cannot be isolated from organizational culture, communication norms, value expectations, and institutional mission (Schein, 2017).

The analytical corpus was organized around five conceptually relevant domains: (a) classical theories of managerial decision-making and bounded rationality; (b) cognitive flexibility, information search, cognitive bias, and affect-cognition interaction in judgment; (c) ethical, responsible, transformational, and contextual leadership; (d) psychological safety, trust, and uncertainty communication; and (e) socio-psychological determinants of managerial decision-making developed in the author's previous work. Priority was given to peer-reviewed studies from 2016–2024 when recent evidence was available, while foundational works were retained where they define concepts that remain central to the argument. Sources were included when they provided a directly transferable concept,

mechanism, or empirical pattern relevant to the psychological regulation, social legitimacy, or implementation of managerial decisions.

The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, definitions and explanatory mechanisms concerning uncertainty, managerial cognition, affective regulation, leadership responsibility, and relational conditions were extracted and compared. Second, conceptually overlapping elements were grouped according to the level at which they operate: intrapersonal regulation, value-motivational orientation, interpersonal interaction, or institutional context. Third, these elements were synthesized into six components of value-oriented cognitive readiness and seven mechanisms linking readiness to decision quality. Fourth, the resulting structure was organized into a four-stage process model and checked for conceptual consistency against the four analytical questions formulated in the Introduction. This procedure provides a transparent chain from the reviewed theoretical positions to the proposed framework, while preserving the exploratory and conceptual character of the article.

The activity-based and socio-psychological approaches complement this procedure. Decision-making is treated as purposeful activity that includes preparation, interpretation, evaluation, implementation, and feedback rather than only the instant of choice (Barnard, 1938; Mintzberg, 1973). At the same time, the socio-psychological perspective makes it possible to examine group expectations, professional identity, social responsibility, interpersonal trust, and organizational emotional climate. A managerial decision is therefore analyzed both as a cognitive product and as a social act that changes relationships, redistributes responsibility, affects motivation, and influences institutional development.

The author's previous studies are used as a domain-specific basis for interpreting leadership qualities, emotional stability, locus of control, communication competence, and evaluation of social consequences in managerial decision-making (Nazarov, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2026; Nazarov & Nuradinov, 2025). In the present article these elements are not presented as newly measured empirical variables; rather, they are theoretically reorganized through the concept of value-oriented cognitive readiness and compared with recent international research on cognition, responsible leadership, and relational conditions of decision-making.

Because this is an integrative conceptual analysis rather than an exhaustive systematic review with a pre-registered search protocol, the selected literature should not be interpreted as a complete census of all publications on managerial decision-making. The analytical outcome is a set of theoretically grounded propositions, not evidence of statistical association or causality. The construct and its proposed mechanisms therefore require subsequent operationalization, psychometric examination, and empirical testing in different institutional samples.

Results of theoretical analysis

The integrative analysis produced four interrelated theoretical results corresponding to the four analytical questions. The following sections present these results in sequence: a multidimensional definition of institutional uncertainty, a six-component structure of value-oriented cognitive readiness, a set of socio-psychological mechanisms connecting readiness with decision quality, and a four-stage process model of managerial choice and implementation. These are conceptual findings derived from comparative synthesis of the literature rather than empirical estimates.

Institutional uncertainty as a condition of managerial choice

Institutional uncertainty may be defined as a condition in which a manager must make a decision despite incomplete information, changing external requirements, contradictory expectations, and the absence of a fully predictable outcome. Such uncertainty is characteristic of educational, administrative, military-administrative, religious-educational, and social institutions, where decisions are connected not only with resources and procedures but also with people, values, discipline, development, and responsibility.

Institutional uncertainty differs from ordinary informational uncertainty. Informational uncertainty refers primarily to the lack of sufficient or reliable data. Institutional uncertainty includes this aspect but also involves value conflicts, ambiguous norms, competing interests, legal restrictions, psychological pressure, and the expectations of different groups. Contextual leadership research similarly shows that leadership processes are embedded in multiple situational layers rather than determined by leader characteristics alone (Oc, 2018). In such situations, the leader must answer not only what is objectively correct, but also what is institutionally justified, socially acceptable, psychologically appropriate, and strategically useful.

This type of uncertainty reveals the limits of purely formal decision-making. A decision may formally correspond to an instruction and still fail in practice if it is not accepted by the team, contradicts the moral expectations of employees, weakens trust, or is communicated in an authoritarian manner. Conversely, a decision that is developed with attention to values, communication, and psychological consequences may create higher readiness for implementation, even when it requires effort and discipline from participants.

The problem becomes especially important in higher education institutions. Academic managers work simultaneously with professors, students, administrative staff, external partners, and state requirements. Their decisions influence educational quality, scientific productivity, psychological climate, student motivation, and the public image of the institution. Therefore, institutional uncertainty in higher education demands not only administrative competence but also a high level of socio-psychological maturity.

Digital transformation adds another layer to this uncertainty. Recent work on personalized and optimized educational system models and on AI/ML-supported gamification demonstrates the expanding role of technology-mediated approaches in education (Askarova et al., 2024; Nazarov et al., 2026). For institutional leaders, the significance of these developments lies not in the technology itself but in the managerial need to evaluate innovation in relation to pedagogical goals, stakeholder expectations, organizational accountability, and longer-term institutional consequences. This expands the decision space and strengthens the relevance of value-oriented cognitive readiness when technological opportunities evolve faster than established routines or shared organizational norms.

In this context, uncertainty should not be understood only as a negative factor. It may also become a developmental condition. When a leader uses uncertainty as an opportunity for reflection, dialogue, and innovation, it stimulates organizational learning. However, if uncertainty is experienced as a threat and is not regulated by values and reflection, it may lead to impulsive decisions, avoidance of responsibility, excessive dependence on external pressure, or formalism.

For this reason, institutional uncertainty should be considered a normal feature of contemporary management rather than an exceptional situation. Educational and administrative organizations increasingly function in a space where legal requirements, social expectations, digital communication, public evaluation, and professional standards intersect. Moreover, how leaders communicate internal or external uncertainty can influence social judgments about both the leader and the decision, which makes uncertainty a relational as well as an informational phenomenon (Løhre & Teigen, 2024). A leader who is unable to integrate these different signals may either postpone a necessary decision or choose an administratively simple but psychologically ineffective solution. A leader with developed value-oriented cognitive readiness, by contrast, uses uncertainty as a field for responsible analysis and coordinated action.

Value-oriented cognitive readiness: essence and structure

Value-oriented cognitive readiness is an integrated psychological preparedness of a manager to perceive, analyze, evaluate, and implement decisions in accordance with institutional values, professional responsibility, and the human factor. This readiness is not automatically produced by an official position or administrative authority. It is formed through professional experience, education, self-reflection, ethical internalization, and participation in organizational culture.

The cognitive component of readiness reflects the leader's ability to analyze information, distinguish essential and secondary factors, compare alternatives, identify risks, anticipate consequences, and avoid stereotyped thinking. Under uncertainty, cognitive flexibility becomes particularly important because decision-makers must revise assumptions, shift information-search strategies, and adapt to changing task demands. Empirical work with expert decision-makers and senior executives supports the relevance of cognitive flexibility for adaptive choice and information search (Kiss et al., 2020; Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni, 2018). At the same time, awareness of cognitive limitations and biases remains necessary for responsible choice (Jordão et al., 2020; Kahneman, 2011).

The reflective component is expressed in the leader's ability to analyze not only the external problem but also personal attitudes, emotional reactions, possible biases, and hidden motives. Reflection protects the manager from automatic reactions and allows the decision-making process to become more conscious. A reflective leader is less dependent on stereotypes and more capable of balancing institutional demands with the needs of people.

The emotional-regulatory component includes tolerance to stress, resistance to impulsive reactions, ability to control anxiety, and capacity to remain psychologically stable during conflict or pressure. Emotional instability

may lead to defensive, hasty, or avoidant decisions, whereas emotional balance helps preserve clarity of thinking and constructive communication. Contemporary review evidence indicates that managerial decision-making is shaped by ongoing interaction between affective and cognitive processes rather than by cognition alone (Cristofaro et al., 2022). In conflict situations, this component is especially important because the leader's emotional reactions can either reduce or intensify collective tension.

The motivational component is expressed in orientation toward institutional development rather than personal comfort, avoidance of responsibility, or short-term image protection. A manager with developed readiness does not seek only the safest or easiest solution. Such a leader aims to choose an alternative that corresponds to the mission of the organization, the needs of people, and long-term strategic goals.

The ethical-value component is the central element of the proposed model. It reflects the ability of the leader to evaluate decisions through the categories of justice, responsibility, trust, dignity, professional duty, and social usefulness. Values in this context are not abstract declarations; they function as internal criteria that guide the selection of alternatives and determine the legitimacy of managerial action in the eyes of the team. Meta-analytic and conceptual research on ethical and responsible leadership similarly links value-based leader conduct with consequential employee and organizational outcomes, while emphasizing accountability to stakeholders (Bedi et al., 2016; de Klerk & Jooste, 2023; Voegtlin et al., 2020).

The communicative component includes the ability to explain the decision, involve relevant participants, listen to different opinions, prevent destructive resistance, and ensure feedback during implementation. Even a well-founded decision may lose effectiveness if it is communicated unclearly or in a psychologically insensitive way. Communication transforms a decision from an individual act of the leader into a shared organizational process.

These components are analytically separated, yet in real managerial practice they operate as a unified structure. Cognitive flexibility without ethical responsibility may lead to manipulative pragmatism; emotional stability without reflection may turn into rigidity; communication skills without value consistency may produce only external agreement. Therefore, the central thesis of the article is that the effectiveness of decision-making depends not on one isolated quality of the manager but on the integration of cognitive, emotional, motivational, ethical, and communicative resources. This integrative nature distinguishes value-oriented readiness from ordinary professional competence.

Socio-psychological mechanisms of decision quality

The quality of managerial decision-making depends on several socio-psychological mechanisms through which value-oriented cognitive readiness is realized in practice. The first mechanism is reflective control. Reflection allows the manager to identify the real motives of action, analyze emotional states, and detect cognitive distortions. It supports the transition from reactive behavior to conscious choice.

The second mechanism is value consistency. Decisions become more sustainable when they correspond to the declared mission of the institution and to the moral expectations of the team. If a manager's decision contradicts institutional values, even technically effective measures may produce distrust. Value consistency strengthens legitimacy and facilitates implementation because employees perceive the decision as meaningful and fair.

The third mechanism is social perspective-taking. Organizational decisions affect different groups: subordinates, colleagues, students, service recipients, partners, and society. The ability to see the situation from several social positions helps the leader prevent narrow administrative thinking. It also reduces the risk of conflicts caused by ignoring the psychological needs and expectations of participants.

The fourth mechanism is responsibility internalization. A decision becomes genuinely managerial only when the leader accepts responsibility not merely for issuing an order but also for its consequences. Responsibility internalization means that the manager does not transfer all difficulties to subordinates, external circumstances, or formal regulations. Instead, the leader recognizes personal participation in the outcome and remains involved during implementation.

The fifth mechanism is communicative trust. Trust reduces uncertainty and increases the readiness of employees to accept decisions, even when such decisions are difficult. It is formed through consistency, openness, respect, and fairness. Research on psychological safety demonstrates the importance of interpersonal conditions that make voice, feedback, and constructive risk-taking possible within organizations (Newman et al., 2017). In the absence of trust, any decision may be interpreted as pressure or manipulation; in a trust-based climate, even

unpopular decisions are more likely to be understood as necessary and justified. The manner in which uncertainty is communicated may further shape these judgments (Løhre & Teigen, 2024).

The sixth mechanism is professional identity. A manager who identifies with the mission of the institution and understands the social meaning of leadership is more likely to make decisions that serve long-term development. Professional identity protects the leader from purely situational behavior and strengthens commitment to institutional goals. This is especially important in educational and public organizations, where leadership decisions have moral and developmental consequences.

Another mechanism is the regulation of cognitive bias. Under pressure, managers may overestimate familiar information, rely on previous successful patterns, or interpret dissent as resistance rather than as a source of diagnostic feedback. Research on judgment and managerial decision-making documents systematic biases and shows that affective and cognitive processes jointly influence evaluation (Cristofaro et al., 2022; Jordão et al., 2020; Kahneman, 2011). In managerial practice, these distortions become especially risky because they influence not only the individual decision-maker but also the entire group. Reflective control and feedback mechanisms reduce this risk by requiring the leader to test assumptions before transforming them into organizational action.

Theoretical model of decision-making under institutional uncertainty

Based on the analysis above, the proposed model includes four interrelated stages: diagnostic orientation, value-based evaluation, responsible choice, and socio-psychological implementation. Each stage contains both cognitive and social components, and each depends on the leader's level of value-oriented cognitive readiness.

At the stage of diagnostic orientation, the leader identifies the real problem, separates facts from assumptions, determines the interests of participants, and clarifies the degree of uncertainty. This stage requires analytical thinking and openness to feedback. A weak diagnostic stage may lead to solving the wrong problem or choosing measures that address symptoms rather than causes.

At the stage of value-based evaluation, the manager compares possible alternatives not only according to efficiency but also according to justice, institutional mission, long-term consequences, and psychological acceptability. This stage prevents purely formal or utilitarian decisions that ignore human dignity and organizational culture. It also allows the leader to understand which alternative is more consistent with the values declared by the institution.

At the stage of responsible choice, the leader selects the most appropriate alternative and assumes responsibility for it. The decision must be clear, realistic, timely, and within the leader's competence. However, responsibility also means readiness to explain the choice, correct implementation errors, and monitor consequences. This stage connects cognitive analysis with moral commitment.

At the stage of socio-psychological implementation, the manager organizes communication, distributes tasks, supports participants, prevents resistance, and evaluates feedback. Implementation is not a mechanical continuation of the decision. It is a separate psychological process in which motivation, trust, discipline, and collective understanding are formed. Many decisions fail not because the choice itself is incorrect, but because implementation is not supported by communication, participation, and feedback.

The model demonstrates that the quality of decision-making is not located only at the moment of selecting an alternative. It is distributed across the entire cycle from understanding the problem to evaluating consequences. Therefore, managerial competence should be developed not as a narrow technical skill but as an integrated socio-psychological capacity.

The proposed model also emphasizes the recursive character of managerial decision-making. Feedback from implementation may reveal new risks, hidden conflicts, or additional resources. Therefore, the responsible leader does not perceive a decision as finished immediately after it is announced. The decision continues to exist as a process that must be monitored, explained, corrected, and evaluated. This is particularly relevant in institutions where decisions affect educational trajectories, professional motivation, discipline, and the moral atmosphere of the collective.

Synthesis of theoretical findings

Finding 1 (RQ1). Institutional uncertainty is broader than a deficit of information. The theoretical synthesis identifies at least four intertwined dimensions: informational incompleteness, normative-value ambiguity, relational/stakeholder plurality, and implementation uncertainty across time. This formulation explains why a formally cor-

rect decision can remain psychologically or institutionally ineffective when the leader fails to interpret competing expectations and social consequences.

Finding 2 (RQ2). Value-oriented cognitive readiness has a six-component structure comprising cognitive, reflective, emotional-regulatory, motivational, ethical-value, and communicative components. These components are analytically distinguishable but functionally interdependent. The construct therefore differs from a single trait such as cognitive flexibility or emotional stability: it describes the coordinated psychological preparedness required to move from problem interpretation to socially responsible implementation.

Finding 3 (RQ3). Seven mechanisms connect this readiness with the anticipated quality, legitimacy, and sustainability of decisions: reflective control, value consistency, social perspective-taking, responsibility internalization, communicative trust, professional identity, and regulation of cognitive bias. The model does not treat these links as statistically proven causal effects. Rather, they are theoretically specified pathways that explain how internal regulation may be translated into managerial behavior and that can be tested in subsequent empirical research.

Finding 4 (RQ4). Managerial decision-making under institutional uncertainty is organized as a recursive four-stage process: diagnostic orientation, value-based evaluation, responsible choice, and socio-psychological implementation. Feedback from implementation returns to diagnosis and may require revision of assumptions, alternatives, or communication. Decision quality is therefore distributed across the whole cycle rather than concentrated only at the instant of selecting an alternative.

Taken together, these findings answer the analytical questions and define the principal theoretical contribution of the article: value-oriented cognitive readiness operates as a bridging construct between individual psychological regulation and institutional legitimacy. It integrates insights that are often studied separately—cognitive adaptation, affective regulation, ethical responsibility, stakeholder orientation, and relational trust—within one process model of managerial decision-making.

Discussion

The proposed concept expands traditional interpretations of managerial decision-making by shifting attention from isolated decision variables to their coordinated psychological organization. Research on cognitive flexibility explains adaptive shifts in attention and information search (Kiss et al., 2020; Laureiro-Martínez & Brusoni, 2018), while studies of managerial bias and affect–cognition interaction clarify why judgment may deviate from purely rational models (Cristofaro et al., 2022; Jordão et al., 2020). The present framework incorporates these insights but argues that cognitive adaptation alone is insufficient where decisions must also be institutionally legitimate, socially acceptable, and responsibly implemented.

The analysis also shows that institutional uncertainty creates a specific test of leadership maturity. In stable and routine situations, formal rules can guide action effectively; in uncertain situations, the leader must combine contextual interpretation with internalized values, reflective thinking, and socio-psychological sensitivity. This position is consistent with contextual leadership research emphasizing that leadership processes change across situational conditions (Oc, 2018), but it adds a more specific psychological question: what internal readiness allows a leader to integrate contextual signals rather than merely react to them? The proposed construct addresses this question at the level of the decision process.

Value-oriented cognitive readiness is also related to, but not identical with, transformational, ethical, and responsible leadership. Transformational leadership highlights values and motivational influence (Bass & Riggio, 2006), while ethical leadership research focuses on morally appropriate conduct and its consequences, whereas responsible leadership places stronger emphasis on stakeholder relations and accountability (Bedi et al., 2016; de Klerk & Jooste, 2023; Voegtlin et al., 2020). The construct proposed here concerns the decision-maker's internal preparedness before and during choice: the capacity to coordinate analysis, reflection, emotional regulation, value criteria, responsibility, and communication. In this sense, it offers a process-level bridge between normative leadership orientations and the psychological mechanics of a concrete managerial decision.

A further distinction concerns relational climate. Psychological safety is a group-level condition that facilitates voice, feedback, and interpersonal risk-taking (Newman et al., 2017). Value-oriented cognitive readiness is an individual-level integrative readiness, yet it is expected to operate more effectively when the relational environment

permits feedback and disagreement. Thus, communicative trust is not treated as a substitute for psychological safety, but as a mechanism through which the manager's readiness interacts with the social environment during diagnosis and implementation.

For educational, public, military-administrative, and religious-educational institutions, this distinction is important because decisions often combine administrative constraints with developmental, moral, and relational consequences. The cost of a poor decision may therefore be high not only administratively but also socially and psychologically. The model suggests that effective decision-making requires the leader to maintain emotional stability, evaluate alternatives ethically, preserve openness to feedback, and communicate unavoidable uncertainty without undermining trust. Recent experimental evidence that uncertainty disclosure affects evaluations of leaders and their decisions reinforces the communicative dimension of this argument (Løhre & Teigen, 2024).

At the same time, value-oriented cognitive readiness cannot be formed through theoretical instruction alone. It requires practice with ambiguous cases, role-based decision tasks, supervision, feedback, and psychological diagnostics. Leadership development programs should reproduce realistic combinations of incomplete information, conflicting interests, emotional pressure, ethical dilemmas, and implementation resistance. The six-component structure proposed in this article provides a basis for designing such training in a differentiated way rather than treating decision-making competence as a single undivided skill.

An additional implication concerns the prevention of avoidant and hypervigilant decision-making styles. Avoidance appears when the leader distances himself from responsibility or transfers the burden of choice to external circumstances. Hypervigilance appears when emotional tension narrows perception and forces the leader to make hasty decisions without sufficient analysis. Both tendencies reduce the social quality of management. Value-oriented cognitive readiness may function as a psychological buffer by strengthening reflection, value-based prioritization, tolerance of ambiguity, and deliberate testing of assumptions (Janis & Mann, 1977; Jordão et al., 2020; Nazarov, 2019). This proposition, however, requires direct empirical examination rather than being assumed from conceptual correspondence alone.

Limitations and directions for empirical verification

The principal limitation of the present article follows from its theoretical-analytical design. The proposed construct, its six components, seven mechanisms, and four-stage process model are conceptually derived and have not been tested here with primary data. Accordingly, the framework should not be interpreted as demonstrating causal relationships, predictive coefficients, or established psychometric properties. Its value at this stage lies in specifying an empirically testable architecture and clarifying the relationships that require verification.

Future research should operationalize value-oriented cognitive readiness and examine its convergent and discriminant validity in relation to adjacent constructs such as cognitive flexibility, tolerance of uncertainty, locus of control, emotional regulation, responsible or ethical leadership, and psychological safety. Multi-source designs combining manager self-reports with subordinate or peer evaluations could reduce common-method bias, while longitudinal and scenario-based studies could clarify how readiness functions before, during, and after difficult decisions. Cross-institutional comparisons would be especially useful for determining which components are general and which are sensitive to educational, administrative, military-administrative, or religious-educational contexts.

Empirical verification should also preserve the multilevel logic of the model. Individual readiness can be assessed at the manager level, whereas trust, psychological safety, organizational culture, and implementation outcomes may require group- or institutional-level indicators. Such a design would make it possible to test whether value-oriented cognitive readiness contributes explanatory value beyond established constructs and whether the proposed mechanisms operate differently under varying degrees and forms of institutional uncertainty.

Practical recommendations

First, leadership training programs should include special modules on decision-making under institutional uncertainty. Such modules should focus on value analysis, responsibility, socio-psychological consequences, and the prevention of cognitive distortions.

Second, psychological diagnostics of managers should assess not only leadership style but also cognitive flexibility, emotional tolerance, locus of control, readiness for responsibility, reflective capacity, and communication openness. This will make it possible to identify strengths and risk zones in managerial behavior.

Third, case-study methods should be used to develop the ability to analyze ambiguous situations. Cases should require comparison of alternatives from administrative, ethical, psychological, and institutional perspectives. This method helps leaders learn to see decision-making as a multidimensional process.

Fourth, organizations should strengthen feedback culture. High-quality decisions require information from different levels of the institution and cannot rely only on vertical administrative channels. Feedback helps the leader correct assumptions and increase the legitimacy of decisions.

Fifth, managers should be trained in reflective practices, including self-analysis after difficult decisions, identification of personal biases, and evaluation of implementation results. Reflection transforms experience into professional development.

Sixth, institutional values should be clearly formulated and integrated into decision-making procedures. Values should function not as formal slogans but as practical criteria for evaluating managerial alternatives.

Seventh, special attention should be paid to the development of communicative trust. The effectiveness of a decision depends not only on its content but also on how it is perceived, explained, accepted, and implemented by participants.

Eighth, institutions should introduce post-decision review procedures. Such procedures should not be limited to administrative reporting. They should include analysis of whether the decision corresponded to institutional values, whether communication was sufficient, how the decision influenced the team's motivation, and what socio-psychological risks appeared during implementation. This type of review transforms managerial experience into organizational learning and prevents the repetition of ineffective patterns.

Conclusion

Managerial decision-making under institutional uncertainty is a complex socio-psychological process that requires more than formal authority or administrative experience. The theoretical analysis supports the conceptualization of value-oriented cognitive readiness as an integrative form of psychological preparedness combining cognitive, reflective, emotional-regulatory, motivational, ethical-value, and communicative resources.

The synthesis yielded four interrelated theoretical results: a multidimensional definition of institutional uncertainty, a six-component structure of readiness, seven socio-psychological mechanisms, and a recursive four-stage process comprising diagnostic orientation, value-based evaluation, responsible choice, and socio-psychological implementation. These results directly correspond to the analytical questions formulated in the article and clarify how internal readiness can be linked conceptually to the quality, legitimacy, and sustainability of managerial decisions.

Thus, the development of value-oriented cognitive readiness may become an important direction in the psychological preparation of managers. The framework contributes to responsible leadership by bringing together cognitive adaptation, reflection, affective regulation, institutional values, responsibility, and communication within a single decision process. At the same time, the proposed relationships remain theoretical propositions until they are operationalized and empirically tested in different institutional contexts.

From the practical point of view, the proposed approach may be used as a conceptual basis for professional development courses, psychological assessment of managerial personnel, mentoring programs for mid-level leaders, and institutional training aimed at strengthening responsible decision-making. From the theoretical point of view, it creates a structured agenda for examining the relationships among value orientation, cognitive flexibility, locus of control, emotional tolerance, reflective control, communicative trust, and decision effectiveness. Consequently, the article expands the socio-psychological understanding of managerial choice by demonstrating that information and authority must be considered together with the internal readiness of the leader to act responsibly under uncertainty.

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А.С. Назаров

Ўзбекистан халықаралық исламтану академиясы, Ташкент, Ўзбекистан

**Құндылыққа бағдарланған когнитивтік дайындық институционалдық
белгісіздік жағдайында басқарушылық шешім қабылдаудың
әлеуметтік-психологиялық факторы ретінде**

Андатпа. Мақалада құндылыққа бағдарланған когнитивтік дайындық институционалдық белгісіздік жағдайында басқарушылық шешім қабылдаудың кешенді әлеуметтік-психологиялық факторы ретінде негізделеді. Классикалық және қазіргі зерттеулерді интегративті теориялық шолу және концептуалдық синтез негізінде институционалдық белгісіздік қарапайым ақпараттық белгісіздіктен ажыратылып, ұсынылған конструктінің құрылымы нақтыланады. Теориялық талдау құндылыққа бағдарланған когнитивтік дайындықтың өзара байланысты алты компонентін айқындады: когнитивтік, рефлексивтік, эмоциялық-реттеуші, мотивациялық, этикалық-құндылықтық және коммуникативтік. Сонымен қатар шешімнің сапасын, легитимділігін және тұрақтылығын қамтамасыз етуі ықтимал жеті әлеуметтік-психологиялық механизм жүйеленді: рефлексивтік бақылау, құндылықтық үйлесімділік, әлеуметтік перспективаны ескеру, жауапкершілікті интериоризациялау, коммуникативтік сенім, кәсіби сәйкестік және когнитивтік қателерді реттеу. Бұл элементтер диагностикалық бағдарлау, құндылықтық бағалау, жауапты таңдау және кері байланысы бар әлеуметтік-психологиялық іске асырудан тұратын төрт кезеңді модельге біріктірілді. Ұсынылған тәсіл когнитивтік бейімделу, этикалық жауапкершілік және ұйымдық өзара әрекеттесуді біртұтас шешім қабылдау үдерісінде байланыстырады. Мақала эмпирикалық емес, теориялық сипатта; алынған нәтижелер одан әрі операцияландыру мен эмпирикалық тексеруді қажет ететін концептуалдық тұжырымдар болып табылады. Орта және жоғары буын басшыларының шешім қабылдау құзыреттілігін дамытуға арналған практикалық ұсынымдар берілген.

Түйін сөздер: басқарушылық шешім қабылдау; когнитивтік дайындық; институционалдық белгісіздік; құндылықтық бағдар; рефлексивтік бақылау; ұйымдық мәдениет; жауапкершілік.

А.С. Назаров

Международная академия исламоведения Узбекистана, Ташкент, Узбекистан

**Ценностно-ориентированная когнитивная готовность как социально-психологический
фактор принятия управленческих решений в условиях
институциональной неопределенности**

Аннотация. В статье обосновывается концепция ценностно-ориентированной когнитивной готовности как интегрального социально-психологического фактора принятия управленческих решений

в условиях институциональной неопределенности. На основе интегративного теоретического обзора и концептуального синтеза классических и современных исследований управленческого решения, когнитивной гибкости, взаимодействия аффекта и когниции, ответственного и этического лидерства, психологической безопасности и коммуникации неопределенности институциональная неопределенность разграничивается с обычной информационной неопределенностью и уточняется структура предлагаемого конструкта. Теоретический анализ позволил выделить шесть взаимосвязанных компонентов ценностно-ориентированной когнитивной готовности: когнитивный, рефлексивный, эмоционально-регулятивный, мотивационный, этико-ценностный и коммуникативный. Систематизированы семь социально-психологических механизмов, посредством которых такая готовность может поддерживать качество, легитимность и устойчивость решения: рефлексивный контроль, **достижение** ценностной согласованности, учет социальной перспективы, интериоризация ответственности, **выстраивание** коммуникативного доверия, **актуализация** профессиональной идентичности и регуляция когнитивных искажений. Данные элементы интегрированы в четырехэтапную модель, включающую диагностическую ориентацию, ценностную оценку, ответственный выбор и социально-психологическую реализацию с рекурсивной обратной связью. В отличие от подходов, рассматривающих когнитивные искажения, этику лидерства или организационный климат изолированно, предлагаемая модель объясняет их сопряжение во внутренней готовности лица, принимающего решение. Статья имеет теоретический, а не эмпирический характер; ее результаты представляют собой концептуальные положения, требующие последующей операционализации и эмпирической проверки. Сформулированы практические рекомендации по развитию компетентности принятия решений у руководителей среднего и высшего звена.

Ключевые слова: принятие управленческих решений; когнитивная готовность; институциональная неопределенность; ценностная ориентация; рефлексивный контроль; организационная культура; ответственность.

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Назаров А.С. — хат-хабар авторы; психология ғылымдары бойынша философия докторы (PhD); Өзбекстан халықаралық исламтану академиясы, «Дін психологиясы және педагогика» кафедрасының доценті; Абдулла Қодирий көшесі, 11-үй, 100011, Ташкент, Өзбекстан; E-mail: 19azamatnazarov80@gmail.com

Сведения об авторах:

Назаров А.С. — автор для корреспонденции; доктор философии по психологии (PhD); доцент кафедры психологии религии и педагогики, Международная академия исламоведения Узбекистана, ул. Абдуллы Кадыри, 11, 100011, Ташкент, Узбекистан. E-mail: 19azamatnazarov80@gmail.com

Information about the author:

Nazarov A.S. — corresponding author; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Psychology; Associate Professor, Department of Religious Psychology and Pedagogy, International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan; 11 Abdulla Qodiriy Street, 100011, Tashkent, Uzbekistan; E-mail: 19azamatnazarov80@gmail.com