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CONTENT OF THE COMPETITION STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE
SOCIAL GOALS AMONG WORKING SUBJECTS

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Abstract

The article presents the results of a study devoted to the establishment of the originality of the content of the strategy of competition in professional activity addressed to the achievement of social goals in working subjects with varying severity of perfectionist orientation. It proposes a definition of the perfectionist orientation of the personality, based on the ideas about the role of orientation in the competitiveness of the individual in professional activity, the subject content of the orientation of the personality, as well as the data available in the literature on the subject content of perfectionism and its various types and their relationship with achievement motivation and cognitive attitudes. Numerous data on the relationship between the types of perfectionism and the personal characteristics of subjects allowed us to assume that the perfectionist orientation of the personality is a factor in building a strategy of competition among working subjects. The article describes the procedure for identifying various types of perfectionist orientation based on a combination of the type of perfectionism, achievement motivation, and cognitive attitudes, as well as the criteria for identifying subjects with a perfectionist orientation, oriented towards others, towards social prescriptions and a low-grade perfectionist orientation. The strategy of competition for achieving a goal in subjects with a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation is based on the desire to belong to a group, a positive assessment of their actions by others, the lack of awareness of colleagues as competitors for this goal, and innovative ways of performing activities.

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1. Introduction

The growth of competition in Russia and the world, affecting mainly the sphere of professional activity, is associated with an increase in the “compulsion to improve” the results of one's work and special relations between people in society (Curran & Hill, 2019). The consequence of this is the understanding by people of the need to improve the quality of the results of activities, compliance with the social content of the requirements for the individual and his social status, and the subject's building an appropriate strategy of competition for the sake of obtaining great advantages and a better position in professional activity in comparison with other subjects.

2. Problem Statement

2.1. Competition strategy

The study of competition is interdisciplinary (Shmelyov, 2014). In different areas of psychology, competition is defined in different ways: in social psychology – as one of the main ways of organizing social and interpersonal interaction, including social comparisons; in economic terms – as attempts to surpass a rival in something more promising due to incompatible interests; in personality psychology – as a motivational and operational orientation of subjects of activity towards gaining the desired advantages over competitors, etc. (Klyueva, 2009). In each of the areas, the authors emphasize the importance in the competition of striving for advantage, rivalry, achieving the best result due to comparison with the results of others.

The strategy of a person's competition in professional activity is considered as a conscious motivated activity, organized by the goal of the competition and sustainable ways of achieving it, which provides the subject with the desired advantages in professional activity based on his ideas about himself as a subject of activity, the activity itself and the closest professional environment. In the structure of the competition strategy, the following components are distinguished: motivational-target (motives of professional activity, purpose, and motives of competition), operational (innovative (introducing new techniques), stabilizing (retaining the achieved advantages), and adaptive (copying) competitive actions and behavioral attitudes towards competitors) and cognitive (ideas about colleagues, a leader and about oneself as an employee) (Dzhaneryan & Panina, 2013).

Researchers of competition within the framework of personality psychology focus on the search for its personality determinants (Bazarov & Shevchenko, 2010; Fletcher et al., 2008; Garcia et al., 2010). The authors pay special attention to competitiveness, the psychological basis of which is a high level of development of integral personality traits, the central place among which is the orientation (Mitina, 2002). It is a system of all motivational tendencies, attitudes, and ideals of the individual and has a certain subject content. The orientation of the individual to a specific objective content enhances his conscious activity in mastering these phenomena of reality, which leads to the consolidation of individual personal properties. This content can be compared with the three main types of the subject content of the orientation as such identified by Russian authors: the personality of the subject, the social and professional environment, and activity (Ilyin, 2011). Therefore, we believe that perfectionism can act as a

psychological factor that determines the achievement of competition goals and determines the originality of building a strategy to achieve them.

2.2. Perfectionism and perfectionist personality orientation

The results of many studies of perfectionism allowed scientists to identify significant positive connections between its types and motivation for achievement, as well as the subject's ideas about himself, the world, and others, manifested in cognitive attitudes (Garanian et al., 2018; Rice & Dellwo, 2002; Stoeber & Joormann, 2001). Throughout the history of the study of perfectionism, attempts have been made to define criteria for distinguishing between its neurotic and constructive manifestations, among which were highlighted: realism and conscientiousness in setting high standards of activity, persistent selectivity of the way of their implementation, control of the personality of experiences of failure, the presence of motivation to achieve goals and beliefs its attainability (Ilyin, 2011). These criteria determine the advisability of introducing the term perfectionist orientation of the personality, which implies the integration of general perfectionism and its constituent types, achievement motivation, and personality attitudes.

By perfectionist orientation (PF), we mean a complex of motives and attitudes of a person that are steadily manifested in various types of activity in its conscious striving for excellence based on high demands on others, perceived from others, as well as on oneself, which can provide advantages in achieving goals competition.

2.3. Perfectionism and the content of the competition strategy

Numerous studies have found the relationship between general perfectionism, as well as its types, with the personal characteristics of subjects manifested in situations of competition: with achievement motivation (Vindeker & Irgasheva, 2014), with setting goals to obtain better results in comparison with others (Stoeber & Joormann, 2001) and dominance over them (Stoeber et al., 2013), characteristics of self-assessment (Beskova, 2012) and perception of others as rivals (Stoeber et al., 2007), productivity and efficiency in work (Shim & Fletcher, 2012). The content of each of the listed relationships can be correlated with the content of the components of the competition strategy. This gives grounds to say that a perfectionist orientation, expressed in an orientation towards achieving better results and advantages in professional activity in comparison with others, in assessing oneself as a subject of competition and its other subjects, as well as in the peculiarities of performing activities, acts as a factor in building a strategy competition of working subjects.

Analysis of competition goals allows us to identify the focus of their subject content on socio-psychological indicators arising from the social comparison (position, leadership), oneself as a subject of competition (demonstration of individuality), and performance results (stability of results, high quality) (Dzhaneryan & Panina, 2013). Several studies of perfectionists emphasize their desire to achieve social goals based on social comparison: leadership, dominance, gaining approval, as well as the associated abilities for effective career decision-making, career flexibility (Stoeber, 2015; Tuzlukova & Dzhaneryan, 2020). In the context of competition, it is advisable to supplement the study of these goals with the study of the actual motives of competition and the motives of professional activity, the establishment of the

perfectionist's assessments of his competitors and actions towards them, which explains the novelty of this work.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the research is the strategy of competition to achieve various goals of subjects with varying severity of the perfectionist orientation of the personality; the object is the perfectionist orientation of the working subjects.

The empirical object of the study was 142 representatives of various professions (30 men, 112 women) from 19 to 62 years old with a total work experience from six months to 43 years and with work experience in the current position from six months to 39 years, of which 118 people are full-time employees and 24 are middle managers. The total sample size was 230 respondents.

1. To identify subjects with the severity of their various perfectionist personality orientations.
2. Reveal the specifics of the competition strategy to achieve the leading social goals of competition in the professional community among subjects with varying degrees of perfectionist orientation.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to establish the originality of the content of the strategy of competition in professional activity addressed to the achievement of various goals of the working subjects with varying degrees of perfectionist orientation.

5. Research Methods

The research methods included questionnaires: the author's questionnaire (S.T. Dzhanyan, E.A. Panina), which included a form for assessing the significance of competition goals for the implementation of a successful competition strategy, a leading competitor, a leading goal of the competition and a way to achieve it; testing: "Multidimensional scale of perfectionism" (P.L. Hewitt, G.L. Flatt), "The structure of work motivation" (K. Zamfir), "Q-sorting" (V. Stefanson), questionnaire "Motivation for achievement" (A. Mehrabian), "Methodology of irrational attitudes" (A. Ellis), "Methodology for diagnosing interpersonal relations" (T. Leary), methods of mathematical statistics: Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality criterion, binomial criterion, multiple linear regression analysis; quartile procedure; r-Spearman rank correlation coefficient, Friedman, Wilcoxon criteria.

The integral nature of the personality's PF, which allows it to include perfectionist aspirations, motives, and personality attitudes, became the basis for determining the following indicators as criteria for its types: the leading type of perfectionism (on others, oneself, and social prescriptions), achievement motive and content of cognitive attitudes. By these criteria, to distinguish types of PF, an individual indicator of the severity of perfectionist orientation was determined based on the severity of each type of perfectionism and its general indicator, according to the method of P.L. Hewitt, G.L. Flatt. To establish achievement motivation, the methodology "Diagnostics of achievement motivation measurement"

(A. Mehrabian) was used. To determine the levels of severity of perfectionism and achievement motivation, we used the quantitation procedures and the binomial criterion. With the help of the “Methodology of irrational attitudes” (A. Ellis) and the application of the criteria of Friedman and Wilcoxon, the dominant cognitive attitudes were identified.

During the correlation analysis of the relationship between the age-long-term characteristics of the general sample and each of the criteria for identifying PF was not established.

6. Findings

1. Identification of subjects with different perfectionist personality orientations.

Based on our ideas about the perfectionist orientation and the results of the analysis of the obtained empirical data, subjects with different types of perfectionist orientation were identified: perfectionist focus. The article examines the content of the types of perfectionist orientation, whose subjects have established social goals associated with the desire to achieve leadership: a perfectionist orientation focused on others, a perfectionist orientation focused on social prescriptions, and a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation (Table 01).

Table 1. The severity of the type of perfectionism, achievement motivation, and the dominance of an irrational attitude in subjects with a perfectionist orientation oriented towards others, a perfectionist orientation oriented towards social prescriptions, a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation

PF view	Type of perfectionism ($p \leq 0.01$)	Achievement motivation ($p \leq 0.05$)	Dominant irrational attitude ($p \leq 0.05$)
Focused on other PF	Very high and high scores on the scale of "Perfectionism directed at others"	Very high and high values	Obligation towards others
Social oriented PF	Very high and high scores on the socially prescribed perfectionism scale	Very low and low values	Duty towards oneself, frustration tolerance, self-esteem and irrationality of thinking
Low overall PF	Very low and low values on all scales of perfectionism	Individually variable values	Obligation to oneself, obligation to others

The group of subjects with a perfectionist orientation focused on others consisted of 20 people (15 women, 5 men) aged from 26 to 61 years (average age – 33.5 years) with work experience from one to 37 years, with a high degree of perfectionism oriented on others and striving to achieve success, the dominant cognitive attitude of others' obligation towards oneself.

The group of subjects with a perfectionist orientation focused on social prescriptions consisted of 25 people (17 women, 8 men) aged 19 to 62 years (average age 35.2 years) with a work experience of one to 35 years, with the severity of socially prescribed perfectionism, and the desire to avoid failure, the dominant cognitive attitudes: obligation about oneself, frustration intolerance, attitudes associated with self-esteem and irrationality of thinking.

The group of subjects with a low general perfectionist orientation consisted of 33 people (27 women, 6 men) aged 19 to 59 (average age – 32 years) with work experience from one year to 39

years, with low severity of general perfectionism, a desire to achieve success, and to avoidance of failure and cognitive attitudes with the dominance of the obligation concerning oneself and others.

2. The content of the components of the competition strategy to achieve the social goals of representatives of different types of professions with a perfectionist orientation oriented towards others, a perfectionist orientation oriented towards social prescriptions, and a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation

For the described types of PF, the subjects were determined the content of their competition strategy, which includes a motivational-target component (goal and motives of competition, motives of activity), cognitive (assessment by the subject of a leader, colleagues inside and outside the organization or a client as the main competitor) and behavioral (behavioral attitudes in communication situations for sociability, dependence, acceptance or avoidance of struggle, as well as adaptive, stabilizing, innovative competitive actions) components.

The content of strategies for achieving various goals of competition of subjects with a perfectionist orientation oriented towards others, a perfectionist orientation oriented towards social prescriptions, and a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation has been described in previous articles (Tuzlukova & Dzhanyan, 2020), therefore in this work we will consider the strategies of their competition in terms of achieving only the goal of “leadership”, reflecting the social side of the activity (Table 02).

Table 2. Influence of the content of components (independent variables) on the severity of goals (dependent variable) in the structure of the competition strategy of subjects with a perfectionist orientation focused on others, a perfectionist orientation focused on social prescriptions, and a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation (based on the results of multiple linear regression)

PF view	Motivational target component	Cognitive component	Operational component
other-oriented perfectionist focus	Competition motive "Belonging" $\beta=0.216$	R=0.95 at $p\leq 0.0$ Perception of a customer as a competitor $\beta=0.352$	Behavioral attitude "Acceptance of struggle" $\beta = 0.455$
social prescription-oriented perfectionist focus	Motives of activity "External negative motivation" $\beta = 0.490$ "External positive motivation" $\beta = -0.350$	R=0.81 at $p\leq 0.0001$ NE	NE
Low general perfectionist focus	Competition motive "Belonging" $\beta = 0.372$ Activity motive "External positive motivation" $\beta = 0.543$	R=0.94 at $p\leq 0.0$ Perception of a colleague in another company as a competitor $\beta = -0.216$	Competitive actions innovative $\beta = 0.326$

The strategy of competition of subjects with a perfectionist orientation towards achieving the goal of “leadership” is ensured by the desire to belong to a group as a motive for competition (motivational-target component), the perception of a person as an object of activity (client, patient, etc.) as a competitor (the cognitive component) and the behavioral attitude toward accepting the struggle (the operational component). Thus, in subjects with a perfectionist orientation focused on others, the construction of a

strategy for achieving leadership is supported by the motive of belonging, the concentration of the competition strategy on the client, and an attitude toward the struggle for a leadership position in the team. Research on other-centered perfectionism has highlighted its relationship to dominance, self-excellence, and narcissism, and Machiavellianism, which mediates its links to leadership, authority, and career satisfaction (Birch et al., 2019; Stoeber 2015). There is also evidence of greater success in competition among groups led by managers, educators, or coaches with this type of perfectionism (Cheung, 2019). The authors suggest that these results are due to the perception by subjects with AML of the results of their team as their achievements. Our data on the support of the goal of competition “leadership” by motives of belonging to a group confirm this assumption and reveal the content of a strategy that, probably, allows subjects with a perfectionist orientation oriented towards others to achieve and maintain a leadership position.

The strategy of competition of subjects with a perfectionist orientation towards achieving the goal of “leadership”, oriented towards social prescriptions, includes only a motivational component in the form of external negative motivation of activity, manifested in criticism from colleagues and management or possible negative consequences of actions taken, while the influence of external positive motivation not recognized by the subjects of the group. The influence of the leading content of the cognitive and operational components has not been established. In studies analyzing the links between leadership traits and various types of perfectionism, it has been found that subjects with socially prescribed perfectionism have minimized the number of leadership traits (Stoeber, 2015). According to our results, this may also be due to the lack of ideas about competitors for leadership and perceived actions to achieve this goal.

The strategy of competition of subjects with a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation to achieve the goal of “leadership” is provided by the desire to belong to a group as a motive for competition, external positive motivation for activity (motivational-target component), and innovative competitive actions (operational component) with a weak representation of the cognitive component. In other words, subjects with a low general perfectionist orientation, when achieving a goal, are guided by the desire to belong to a group, rely on a positive assessment of their actions by others, do not recognize colleagues as competitors for this goal, and use innovative ways of performing activities. In a study on the relationship between perfectionism and leadership styles in military personnel, it was found that non-perfectionists adhere to a passive-avoidant leadership style or are more prone to submission. Our data differ from the results of the cited work due to the specifics of the sample and the content of the activities of non-perfectionists.

7. Conclusion

Based on the consideration of the perfectionist orientation as a complex of motives and attitudes of the personality, which are steadily manifested in its conscious striving for perfection based on high demands on others, perceived from others, as well as on oneself, and providing advantages in achieving the goals of competition in professional activity, and results of the empirical analysis carried out, subjects with varying severity of the general perfectionist orientation were identified. The originality of the content and components of competition strategies to achieve the leading social goals of competition in the professional activity of subjects with a pronounced perfectionist orientation towards others, towards

social prescriptions and a low-expressed perfectionist orientation has been established. It was revealed that the achievement of social goals of competition in working subjects with a perfectionist orientation oriented towards others, a perfectionist orientation oriented towards social prescriptions, and a low-expressed general perfectionist orientation is provided by the different content of the components of their competition strategy.

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