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ROLE OF LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN CONDITIONS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Abstract. The article investigates the role of leadership potential in ensuring effective project management under conditions of structural change, using the regions of Ukraine as an empirical case. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing importance of project-based management in an environment characterised by increased uncertainty, innovation-driven transformations, and deep structural disruptions that intensified after 2022. Under such conditions, managerial competencies, particularly leadership potential, become a critical factor influencing project implementation and organisational performance. Within the study, the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers is conceptualised as an integral latent construct that combines emotional intelligence, leadership behaviour, and innovation orientation. The empirical basis of the research consists of survey data collected from managers across various industries and regions of Ukraine (N = 210), as well as official statistical data reflecting regional project and investment activity for the period 2018–2024. The methodological framework integrates psychometric analysis, the index method for constructing composite indicators, and fixed-effects panel regression to assess the relationship between leadership potential and project management performance. Project management performance is assessed using an integral index based on official statistical proxies, including capital investment volumes, expenditures on innovation activities, and regional gross value added. The empirical results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between managers' leadership potential and project management performance at the micro level. The integral leadership potential indicator demonstrates stronger explanatory power compared to its individual components, supporting the relevance of a comprehensive approach to evaluating managerial human capital. At the same time, the meso-level analysis indicates a substantial weakening of the relationship between leadership potential and project management performance after 2022. This finding suggests that, during periods of profound structural shock, exogenous factors such as security conditions, infrastructure constraints, and institutional changes dominate over managerial characteristics in shaping project outcomes. The scientific novelty of the study lies in combining psychometric measurement of leadership potential with quantitative regional analysis of project management performance while explicitly accounting for structural change. The practical implications of the findings include their potential use in designing management decisions aimed at fostering innovation-oriented leadership and enhancing project effectiveness under unstable and rapidly changing conditions.

Keywords: leadership potential; project management; project performance; innovation-oriented management; structural change; regional development.

INTRODUCTION

Current economic conditions are characterised by the growing role of innovation in project-based approaches. However, this relationship is now complemented by management competencies as key factors in organisational competitiveness. Increased global competition, the digitisation of business processes, and the growing complexity of management decisions necessitate a rethink of traditional management approaches. In conditions of high uncertainty, technological change, and structural shocks, the ability of managers to effectively initiate, coordinate, and implement projects becomes strategically important. This issue is particularly relevant for countries with transitional economies. Thus, the realities of Ukraine combine not only processes of innovative development and institutional change, but also the shock impact of exogenous crisis factors.

Scientific literature increasingly emphasises that the effectiveness of project management is not limited to meeting deadlines, budgets, or technical parameters of a project. It is shaped by a broader range of factors, among which the managerial and psychological characteristics of those responsible for project implementation are fundamental. The personal and managerial characteristics of managers play a significant role. In particular, the leadership potential of managers, their ability to work with uncertainty, motivate teams, and maintain the organisation's innovative orientation. In this context, the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers is seen as a complex, latent characteristic that combines cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components of management.

Statement of the problem. Within the study, leadership potential is operationalised using a psychometric approach that allows the measurement of latent managerial characteristics using standardised scales. The effectiveness of project management, in turn, is assessed through proxy indicators of project and investment development in Ukraine's regions, available in official statistics for 2018–2024.

The study's scientific novelty lies in combining psychometric measurement of leadership potential with quantitative analysis of project management effectiveness at the regional level. It also accounts for the structural shock of 2022 as a separate analytical factor. The practical significance of the work lies in the possibility of using the results obtained to develop management decisions aimed at improving the effectiveness of project activities.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. In project management studies, leadership is considered one of the key factors for project success, along with process and contextual parameters. A summary of current approaches to the concept of "project success" emphasises the multidimensional nature of performance. However, performance depends not only on the "iron triangle" (time-budget-scope), but also on organisational, behavioural, and stakeholder indicators [1]. In this context, the leadership practices of a project manager are systematised as a tool for influencing team interaction. It is also important to align goals, manage conflicts, and maintain motivation, as these factors can affect performance [2].

Empirical studies show that different leadership styles are associated with project performance. In particular, a meta-analytic review compares the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on project success. This review confirms the leadership factor as a statistically significant predictor [3]. At the level of individual empirical models, it has been shown that the impact of transformational leadership on project success can be realised through team building and teamwork [4].

Servant leadership deserves special attention. In a project environment, this approach is seen as one that strengthens the team's learning orientation and adaptability, which is also linked to performance [5] Research on shared leadership in project teams emphasizes that leadership roles can evolve throughout the phases of a project. Such evolution can occur under the influence of events and contextual changes, which is important for interpreting results in dynamic environments [10].

The psychometric logic of measuring leadership potential in management research involves constructing scales, testing their reliability and structure, and forming integrated indicators. Related to this topic are scientific works on emotional intelligence (EI) as a component of leadership competencies and behavioural decisions in management. In particular, the relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and management decisions in project management has been demonstrated [6]. A mechanism has also been proposed linking a project manager's emotional intelligence to the project's success [7]. In Ukrainian literature, the emotional intelligence of leaders is considered a factor associated with an enterprise's economic performance [8]. This confirms the feasibility of including EI in a broader construct of leadership potential in innovation-oriented management.

For empirical research, leadership potential should be understood as a latent characteristic that combines cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components of managerial activity. In applied Ukrainian works, leadership is described as a managerial phenomenon that manifests itself through the ability to form a vision and to ensure coordinated action within the organisation. In the context of digitalisation and environmental change, the need to rethink traditional leadership approaches in favour of digital practices is emphasised [9].

Despite a significant number of theoretical and applied studies on leadership and project management, unresolved issues persist in scientific discourse. First, most empirical studies focus on psychometric measurement of leadership qualities without a clear connection to objective performance outcomes. Alternatively, such studies focus on analysing economic indicators without accounting for psychological and managerial factors. Second, studies that combine a psychometric approach to measuring leadership potential with an analysis of project management performance remain limited. Such limitations apply not only at the micro level but also at the macro and meso levels, especially in countries experiencing systemic external shocks.

When considering Ukraine, the additional complexity of dividing periods should be justified separately. The period 2018–2021 covers a stage of relatively stable innovative development. At the same time, the period of profound structural change after 2022 should be analysed separately. Full-scale crisis events not only affected macroeconomic indicators but also significantly altered the conditions for project implementation and the leadership role in organisations. In such conditions, it is necessary to assess the relationship between managers' leadership potential and project management effectiveness. Moreover, this determines the analysis of the question of changing the nature of this relationship under the influence of crisis events.

Purpose of the article. Given the above, this article aims to empirically examine the impact of the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers on the effectiveness of project management, using Ukraine as an example.

To achieve this goal, the article sets out to accomplish the following tasks:

– operationalise and empirically measure the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers using a psychometric approach;
– to assess the effectiveness of project management in the regions of Ukraine for the period 2018–2024, taking into account the structural shock after 2022;
– to investigate the impact of the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers on the effectiveness of project management using integral indices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a combination of a psychometric approach to measuring the leadership potential of managers and a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of project management at the regional level. This approach allows for the integration of the micro level (managerial and psychological characteristics of managers) with the meso level (effectiveness of project and investment development in the regions of Ukraine) (Fig. 1).

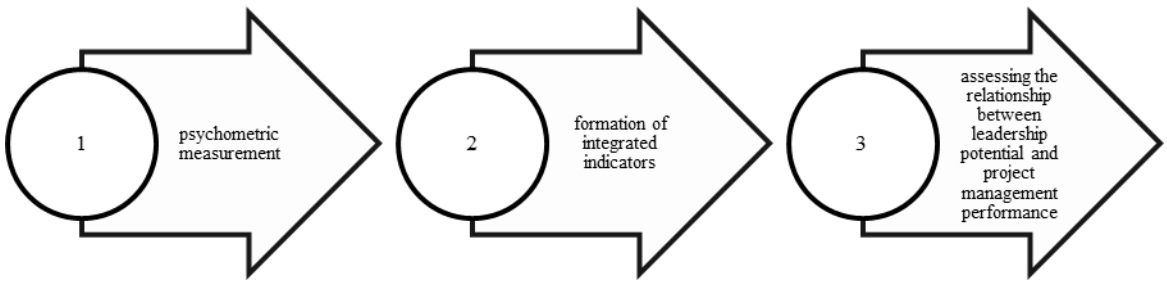

Fig. 1. Logic of the study

The logic of the study consists of three consecutive stages:

– psychometric measurement of the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers;
– formation of integral indicators of project management performance at the regional level;
– assessment of the relationship between leadership potential and project management performance, accounting for the structural shock after 2022.

To achieve the research objectives, psychometric analysis, the index method for constructing integrated indicators, panel analysis with region- and year-fixed effects to assess the relationship between leadership potential and project management performance, and interaction analysis to assess the impact of structural shocks were used. The effectiveness of project management was summarised using an integral performance index. This approach reduces the influence of variable dimensions and ensures comparability of regions' dynamics.

Leadership potential (LP) is considered a latent variable measured through a set of observable indicators (1) [11]:

$$LP_i = \lambda_1 EI_i + \lambda_2 LB_i + \lambda_3 IO_i + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

LBi — leadership behavior;
IOi — innovation orientation;
λ — factor loadings;
ε_i — measurement error.

The project management performance index is calculated as the average of normalized indicators [12]:

$$PMPI_{rt} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n} Z_{jrt}, \quad (2)$$

r — region;
t — year.

The impact of leadership potential on project management performance is assessed using fixed-effects panel regression [13]:

$$PMPI_{rt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LP_{rt} + \beta_2 Shock_t + \beta_3 (LP_{rt} \times Shock_t) + \mu_r + \tau_t + \varepsilon_{rt}, \quad (3)$$

Shockt = 1 for 2022–2024;
μ_r — regional fixed effects;
τ_t — time-fixed effects.

Within the scope of the study, the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers is considered a latent psychological and managerial construct, measured through a set of indicators. The system of indicators consists of the following indicators:

– emotional intelligence (this indicator is critical for leadership in a project environment due to high levels of stress and change) — EI;
– behavioural component (this indicator acts as a mechanism for translating internal potential into results) — LB;
– innovation-cognitive component (this indicator allows us to distinguish innovation-oriented leadership from traditional leadership).

The effectiveness of project management is reflected in the volume of capital investments in the region (the result of implementing project decisions). The second indicator in the assessment block is the volume of expenditures by enterprises in the region on innovative activities (since such expenditures are usually associated with project implementation). The third indicator is the region's gross value added as a generalised performance indicator. The

empirical analysis covers the period 2018–2024, which is divided into two sub-periods. The first is 2018–2021, a period of relatively stable innovation and project development. The second is 2022–2024, a period of profound structural shock marked by changes in external and internal conditions for project implementation.

RESULTS

The empirical basis of the study consists of the results of a survey of managers from various industries in different regions of Ukraine (N=210). The leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers is operationalized as an integral psychometric construct comprising three components: emotional intelligence (EI), leadership behavior (LB), and innovation orientation (IO). The effectiveness of project management was measured using a separate self-assessment scale of project implementation effectiveness (Table 1) [].

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and reliability of psychometric scales

Components and indicators	Number of questions	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Correlation with performance (r)
Emotional intelligence (EI)	6	5,42	0,82	0,86	0,48
Leadership behavior (LB)	7	5,81	0,65	0,89	0,61
Innovative orientation (IO)	6	5,24	0,94	0,84	0,55
Leadership potential (LP)	19	5,49	0,80	0,91	0,68
Project effectiveness (RES)	4	5,12	1,12	0,82	-

The results indicate a high level of internal consistency across all psychometric scales ($\alpha = 0.82–0.91$), confirming the reliability of the tools used. The leadership potential indicator shows the strongest correlation with project management performance, suggesting the advisability of a comprehensive approach to assessing managerial competencies.

Correlation analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship between all components of leadership potential and project management performance. The highest correlation coefficient was recorded between the integral indicator of leadership potential and project implementation performance ($r = 0.68$; $p<0.01$). This means that managers with higher levels of emotional competence, pronounced leadership behaviour, and an innovative orientation demonstrate, on average, greater project management effectiveness. At the same time, the integral LP indicator explains the effectiveness of project management better than any individual component, confirming its analytical value. To analyse the relationship between leadership potential and project management performance at the meso level, individual survey results were aggregated by region.

Table 2

Regional distribution of leadership potential and performance indicators

Region	EI (M)	LB (M)	IO (M)	LP (M)	LP (SD)	RES (M)	Correlation LP–RES (r)
Kharkiv region	5,49	5,73	5,35	5,52	0,95	5,38	0,94
Kyiv region	5,37	5,66	5,29	5,44	0,89	5,25	0,93
Dnipropetrovsk region	5,33	5,70	5,28	5,44	0,83	5,26	0,96
Lviv region	5,07	5,43	5,00	5,17	0,74	4,91	0,96
Poltava region	5,08	5,43	4,97	5,16	0,84	4,97	0,93
Odesa region	4,99	5,37	4,89	5,08	0,78	4,80	0,93
Vinnytsia region	4,86	5,22	4,73	4,94	0,90	4,69	0,96
Total	5,18	5,51	5,07	5,25	0,85	5,04	0,95

The table shows clear regional differentiation in both leadership potential and project management performance. Regions with higher average LP levels (Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions) also demonstrate higher project management performance values. At the same time, regions with relatively lower LP levels exhibit lower average performance values. Statistically significant correlation coefficients between LP and RES (0.93–0.96) confirm the strong association between managerial human capital and project implementation effectiveness.

The statistical characteristics presented indicate adequate measurement quality for all the constructs studied and their substantive connection with project performance. The Cronbach's alpha (α) values for all indicators exceed the threshold value of 0.8, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of the scales and allows us to consider the results obtained to be reliable from the point of view of classical psychometrics. The average values of the studied variables range from 5.12 to 5.81, indicating a generally average to above-average level of emotional intelligence, leadership behaviour, innovation orientation, and leadership potential in the sample. The highest average score was recorded for leadership behaviour (M = 5.81), suggesting its significant role in project management practices.

Correlation analysis reveals moderate to strong positive relationships among all studied characteristics of a leader and project performance. The strongest link with performance was recorded for leadership potential (r = 0.68), confirming its system-forming role in achieving project results.

To test the impact of the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers on project management performance, the results of individual questionnaires were used in a micro-level analysis. The obtained correlation coefficients indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between the integral indicator of leadership potential and project implementation performance ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.01$). This allows us to interpret leadership potential as a significant predictor of project management effectiveness, confirming the presence of managerial influence, rather than just an associative relationship between variables. At the same time, the results obtained are interpreted as managerial influence in a statistical sense, without claiming to be a strict cause-and-effect conclusion.

The innovative orientation of managers within the leadership potential structure serves as a mechanism for translating management decisions into project performance.

Compared to emotional intelligence and leadership behaviour, innovative orientation demonstrates a positive, independent relationship with project performance, underscoring its particular importance for project management in a changing, unstable environment.

To analyse the impact of leadership potential on project management performance in a broader context, the study shifted from micro-level individual assessments to meso-level regional integrated indicators. This approach allows us to account for the impact of external conditions on project implementation and assess the sustainability of managerial influence amid structural changes. The next stage of the study is to develop integrated indicators of project management performance at the regional level (the PM Index). The PM Index is formed as an integrated indicator that reflects regional "project performance" through proxies of official statistics (2018–2024):

INV (Investment subindex) — capital investments (volume of capital investments, "Total", all types of activities).

CONSTR (Construction subindex) — infrastructure/project activity through commissioning: the sum of residential and non-residential building areas, aggregated from quarters per year.

INN (Innovation subindex) — share of innovation-active enterprises (data not available for all years; see note below).

For each year, the indicators are normalised to the min–max range across 7 regions, resulting in a scale of [0, 1]. It is also assumed that the PM Index for the year is the arithmetic mean of the sub-indices with equal weights. Normalised sub-indices for the periods 2018–2021 and 2022–2024 are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

INV/INN/CONSTR sub-indices by period (normalized scale 0–1)

Region	INV (2018–2021)	INN (2018–2021)	CONSTR (2018–2021)	INV (2022–2024)	CONSTR (2022–2024)
Kharkiv region	0,138	0,957	0,183	0,022	0,004
Kyiv region	0,522	0,744	1,000	0,763	1,000
Dnipropetrovsk region	1,000	0,668	0,135	1,000	0,072
Lviv region	0,256	0,744	0,599	0,551	0,560
Poltava region	0,151	0,265	0,000	0,152	0,060
Odesa region	0,135	0,000	0,382	0,056	0,258
Vinnytsia region	0,000	0,500	0,193	0,058	0,319

A comparative analysis of normalized indicators for the periods 2018–2021 and 2022–2024 shows significant territorial asymmetry in investment and construction activity after 2022. Most regions have seen a decline or stagnation in the investment indicator (INV), most pronounced in the Kharkiv and Odesa regions, while the Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions remain relatively high.

Table 4

PM Index by period and change after 2022 (equal weighting of available components)

Region	PM Index (2018–2021)	PM Index (2022–2024)	Difference
Kharkiv region	0,293	0,013	-0,280
Kyiv region	0,761	0,882	0,121
Dnipropetrovsk region	0,590	0,536	-0,054
Lviv region	0,489	0,555	0,066
Poltava region	0,108	0,106	-0,002
Odesa region	0,220	0,157	-0,063
Vinnytsia region	0,161	0,188	0,027

Interpretation of the dynamics of the integral performance indicator of project management for the periods 2018–2021 and 2022–2024 indicates an uneven impact of the structural break after 2022 at the regional level. The most significant decline in the PM Index was recorded in the Kharkiv region (-0.280), which is consistent with the sharp deterioration in project implementation conditions due to changes in the security, infrastructure, and institutional environment. Against this backdrop, the Kyiv region shows positive dynamics of the integral indicator (+0.121), which, within the available components, is explained by the preservation of high normalized values of investment activity and the commissioning of facilities in 2022–2024. For a number of regions, changes in the PM Index are moderate, particularly in the Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa regions, or close to zero, as in the Poltava region, which indicates the relative inertia of project performance in the context of a partial loss of individual components of the index.

The results show that even with relatively stable leadership potential values in the regions, project management performance after 2022 will be largely determined by exogenous factors. This indicates the contextual dependence of managerial influence and the limitations of leadership potential in conditions of deep structural shock.

The final stage of the study is to check how regional leadership potential (LP) values correlate with the PM Index's integral assessments before and after the structural shock. For this purpose, a correlation analysis was performed (Table 5).

Table 5

Correlation between LP and PM Index

PM Index period	Correlation between LP and PM Index	Interpretation
2018–2021 (before the shock)	0.627	moderately positive correlation
2022–2024 (after the shock)	0.325	weakly positive correlation
Change (after–before)	-0.389	negative correlation (regional losses dominate)

The results obtained confirm the key provisions of contemporary scientific literature regarding the role of leadership as a factor in the effectiveness of project management. At the same time, they expand on these provisions in the context of innovation-oriented management and structural changes in the environment. The statistically significant positive correlation identified at the micro level is consistent with the results of previous empirical and meta-analytical studies [1].

The results obtained support the approach whereby leadership potential should be viewed as a multidimensional latent construct rather than a set of individual characteristics. The integral indicator of leadership potential demonstrates a higher explanatory power regarding project performance compared to individual components, which is consistent with modern psychometric and management approaches [11].

The role of emotional intelligence as a component of leadership potential is also confirmed by the results obtained. They are consistent with previous studies on the impact of a project manager's emotional intelligence on the quality of management decisions, which ultimately affects the success of the project [6], [7]. This confirms the advisability of including emotional intelligence in the integral model of leadership potential, especially in conditions of high turbulence. At the same time, the results indicate a significant weakening of the link between leadership potential and project management performance after 2022. In this sense, the results do not deny the importance of leadership potential, but rather indicate the limitations of its influence in conditions of systemic environmental disruptions.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study analyses the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers and their connection to the effectiveness of project management at the micro and meso levels, using the example of regions in Ukraine. Leadership potential is operationalised as an integral psychometric construct that combines emotional intelligence, leadership behaviour, and innovation orientation, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the managerial competencies of managers involved in project implementation.

The empirical results confirm a statistically significant positive relationship between leadership potential and project management performance at the micro level. The integral indicator of leadership potential shows a stronger connection with project performance than the individual components, suggesting the feasibility of a comprehensive approach to assessing managerial human capital. Innovative orientation plays a special role in the structure of leadership potential, serving as a mechanism for translating management decisions into project performance, especially in a changing, unstable environment.

Aggregating individual survey results to the regional level revealed apparent differences in both leadership potential and project management performance across regions. Regions with

higher average leadership potential values exhibit higher performance indicators, confirming the importance of managerial human capital for project implementation under stable conditions.

At the same time, analysis of the dynamics of the integral project management performance indicator (PM Index) before and after 2022 showed a significant impact of structural shock on regional project processes. After 2022, there is a significant weakening of the link between leadership potential and project management performance, indicating the dominance of exogenous factors — security, infrastructure, and institutions — over managers' managerial characteristics.

Thus, the study's results confirm that the leadership potential of innovation-oriented managers is an important factor in the effectiveness of project management under conditions of relative stability. At the same time, during periods of profound structural change, its influence is conditional and significantly limited by the external context. This allows us to conclude that the managerial impact of leadership potential is context-dependent and that it is necessary to combine the development of managerial competencies with systemic measures at the macro and meso levels to improve the effectiveness of project management.

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РОЛЬ ЛІДЕРСЬКОГО ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ В ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННІ РЕЗУЛЬТАТИВНОСТІ ПРОЄКТНОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТУ В УМОВАХ СТРУКТУРНИХ ЗМІН

Анотація. Статтю присвячено дослідженню ролі лідерського потенціалу в забезпеченні результативності проєктного менеджменту в умовах структурних змін на прикладі регіонів України. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням ролі проєктного підходу в управлінні в умовах підвищеної невизначеності, інноваційних трансформацій та глибоких структурних зламів, що посилилися після 2022 року. У таких умовах управлінські компетентності менеджерів, зокрема їхній лідерський потенціал, набувають стратегічного значення для реалізації проєктів і підтримання результативності організацій. У межах дослідження лідерський потенціал інноваційно-орієнтованих менеджерів операціоналізовано як інтегральний латентний конструкт, що поєднує емоційний інтелект, лідерську поведінку та інноваційну орієнтацію. Емпіричною базою дослідження стали результати анкетування менеджерів різних галузей та регіонів України (N = 210), а також офіційні статистичні дані щодо проєктно-інвестиційної діяльності регіонів за період 2018–2024 років. Для досягнення мети застосовано психометричний аналіз, індексний метод побудови інтегральних показників, а також панельний аналіз з фіксованими регіональними та часовими ефектами. Результативність проєктного менеджменту оцінювалася за допомогою інтегрального індексу, сформованого на основі проксі-показників офіційної статистики, зокрема обсягу капітальних інвестицій, витрат на інноваційну діяльність та валової доданої вартості регіонів. Отримані результати свідчать про наявність статистично значущого позитивного зв'язку між лідерським потенціалом менеджерів і результативністю проєктного менеджменту на мікрорівні. Інтегральний показник лідерського потенціалу демонструє вищу пояснювальну здатність порівняно з окремими складовими, що підтверджує доцільність комплексного підходу до оцінювання управлінських компетентностей. Разом із тим результати мезорівневого аналізу засвідчили суттєве послаблення зв'язку між лідерським потенціалом та результативністю проєктного менеджменту після 2022 року. Це свідчить про домінування екзогенних факторів — безпекових, інфраструктурних та інституційних — над управлінськими характеристиками менеджерів у період глибокого структурного шоку. Наукова новизна дослідження полягає у поєднанні психометричного вимірювання лідерського потенціалу з кількісним аналізом результативності проєктного менеджменту на регіональному рівні з урахуванням структурних змін середовища. Практичне значення результатів полягає у можливості їх використання для формування управлінських рішень, спрямованих на розвиток інноваційно-орієнтованого лідерства та підвищення ефективності проєктної діяльності в умовах нестабільності.

Ключові слова: лідерський потенціал; проєктний менеджмент; результативність проєктів; інноваційно-орієнтоване управління; структурні зміни; регіональний розвиток.

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