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## The use of Gestalt Psychology in Project Work

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### ABSTRACT

The work aims to increase the effectiveness of innovative projects using tools based on the use of Gestalt psychology. The methodology of Gestalt psychology in its structure, conceptual apparatus, and properties is more suitable (than traditional psychology) for project activities. Therefore, Gestalt psychology can be effectively applied in project activities, and therefore Gestalt psychology has prospects for development in the field of project activities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the work is related to the need to improve the efficiency of innovative projects. Regular implementation of innovative projects forms the project model of the organization's functioning (Glushchenko, 2020; Glushchenko, 2022a; Glushchenko, 2022b).

The psychology of project management can influence the effectiveness of implemented projects (Manghano *et al.*, 2022; Riteshkarmaker, 2023). The hypothesis of the article is an assumption: the use of Gestalt psychology in project management can increase the effectiveness of projects. The basics of Gestalt psychology are presented in.

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## 2. METHODS

This study is a literature survey. Data were obtained from internet sources, especially articles from international journals. Data was obtained, collected, and summarized to make this paper.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is known that Gestalt psychology originated in the 20th century in the analysis of perception. Gestalt psychology (from Gestalt "personality; image, form") is a general psychological direction, which is characterized by attempts to explain, first of all, perception, thinking, and personality (Wagemans *et al.*, 2012).

As a key explanatory principle, Gestalt psychology uses the principle of integrity (Schwarzfischer, 2011). And this makes Gestalt psychology close to a systematic approach. This allows hoping that Gestalt psychology is better suited for using it as the main method of the psychology of managing complex systems (or innovative projects).

A key part of Gestalt psychology is the use of the ability of the individual's psyche to organize his experience into a definite whole that is accessible to him. Gestalt psychology was founded by Wertheimer, Koffke, and Koehler (Graham, 2008).

The authors of Gestalt psychology have found a methodology for analyzing the personality psyche based on the study of Gestalt (integral structures). By this, they rejected the key principle of traditional psychology, which consists of the division (decomposition) of an individual's consciousness into parts (elements) to further synthesize complex mental phenomena (phenomena) from such elements. Note that the described principle of traditional psychology corresponds to the structure and process model of organizations.

The process model identifies three types of processes in the organization (main, auxiliary, and service). At the same time, the phenomenon of psychology and competence of an employee is formed based on an analysis of work within the framework of the process served by him in the organization.

In contrast, Gestalt psychology is based on the idea of the integrity of the image (in this case, the image of an innovative project). Such a holistic image of an innovative project has the property of emergence (the property of irreducibility of the properties of the project to the sum of the properties of its stages or elements).

At the same time, in Gestalt psychology, it is believed that the objects that make up the external environment of the project are perceived by the feelings of the participants of this project in the form of certain organized forms, but not in the form of separate objects (parts of the project).

In innovation, such an organized form of this activity can be a separate project. Consequently, the perception of project business entities is not reduced to the sum of sensations from individual actions, the application of knowledge and/or skills (competencies). It can be assumed that the properties of the project (drawing) are not described through the properties of its elements, and stages (parts).

For this reason, the project Gestalt can characterize, and reflect a certain functional structure. Such a structure organizes and organizes the complex of individual production results, actions, and phenomena in the implementation of an innovative project.

At the same time, all the properties of the perception of the process and the result of the project (constants, drawing, background) describe the relationship between them and create a qualitatively new property. This is the Gestalt in project activity, the quality of form in project activity.

The integrity of perception in project activity and its orderliness are formed on the basis of the following principles:

- (i). The principle of proximity,  
according to which the stimuli in an innovative project are close to each other, and therefore have a basis and a tendency to be perceived by the subject as a whole (together);
- (ii). The principle of similarity in the Gestalt psychology of the project,  
according to which stimuli are close (similar) in size, significance, properties (material, immaterial) or form (monetary or non-monetary), have the property (tendency) to be perceived by the subject as a whole (together); the principle of integrity, which emphasizes that perception in the project has the property (tendency) towards simplification and integrity;
- (iii). The principle of proximity of project activity,  
which characterizes, reflects the trend towards the completion of an innovative project (figure) in such a way that this figure (project) has a complete, completed form (project result);
- (iv). The principle of adjacency in the project includes a certain proximity of stimuli (in time and /or space), as a result of which this principle acts as the basis of a certain algorithm (sequence) of actions of the subject;
- (v). The principle of a common zone in the project creates the everyday perception of the project subjects along with the training and past experience of this subject, which allows the project subjects to predict thoughts and expectations, jointly generate ideas, hypotheses and much more ([Mwala & Lyakurwa, 2022](#)).

The gestalts synthesized during the project appear as integral, complete structures with clearly defined contours:

- (i). Goal,
- (ii). Team composition,
- (iii). Deadlines,
- (iv). Resources, and etc.

The contour of the project can be characterized by: the level of sharpness or blurriness; it can be open or closed contours. At the same time, the outline of the project acts as the objective basis of the project gestalt. One of the properties of the project Gestalt can be called the desire for completeness.

The well-known "Zeigarnik effect" can be voiced as follows: unsuccessful projects affect team members more than successful projects. When describing a gestalt, the term "importance" is also used. This term echoes the concept of "valence" in Viktor Vroom's motivational theory. The analysis shows that V. Vroom's theory of expectations is most suitable for analyzing the motivation of project participants.

At the same time, in Gestalt psychology, the whole can be important and, at the same time, parts of this whole can be considered unimportant elements, and vice versa. In Gestalt psychology, the "figure" (an innovative project) is always considered more important than the basis (the background on which this project is implemented). Importance can be distributed in such a way that, as a result, all team members (or project elements) can be considered equally important. At the same time, the conclusion about the equal importance of all components (parts) of the project is the basis of a systematic approach in the project business.

The elements (members) of the Gestalt can be assigned different ranks. The quality of the "transpositivity" of the project is manifested in the fact that the image of the project as whole remains, even if all parts of this project change (for example, in characteristics, in their material, etc.).

As a key law of grouping individual elements into a single whole (an innovative project), the law of content can be applied. Content (from lat. *praegnans* - meaningful, etc.) is one of the basic concepts of Gestalt psychology. Meaningful means the completeness of the project gestalts, which have received a balanced state ("good shape").

Meaningful project gestalts have the following properties: closed, clearly defined boundaries of an innovative project; symmetry, the internal structure of an innovative project, taking the form of a "figure". As factors that contribute to the grouping of elements into integral project gestalts, the following factors can be named:

- (i). Proximity factor,
- (ii). Similarity factor,
- (iii). Good continuation factor, and
- (iv). Common destiny factor (belonging to the same project).

The law of the "good" Gestalt, proposed by Wolfgang Metzger sounds like this: "Consciousness is always predisposed to perceive mainly the simplest, unified, closed, symmetrical, included in the main spatial axis (in this case, in the project implementation program) from the perceptions given together."

Deviations from "good" gestalts are not perceived immediately, deviations from "good" gestalts are detected only with intensive study of processes and phenomena in an innovative project.

In the Gestalt psychology of project activity, the constancy of the size (scale of the project) is that the perceived size of the object (innovation project) remains constant, regardless of the change in the size of its "image".

The perception of simple things in an innovative project may seem natural or innate. However, in most cases, the perception of an innovative project is formed through the project participant's own experience.

The analysis carried out in this work showed that Gestalt psychology can act as an effective tool in the process of managing innovative projects. The effective use of Gestalt psychology in the process of innovation activity is facilitated by:

- (i). The orientation of this type of psychology to the holistic perception of the project;
- (ii). The orientation of the perception of the project subject to achieve a certain final project result;
- (iii). Psychological assessment by the subject of the importance of the project and its parts, and more.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The methodology of Gestalt psychology in its structure, conceptual apparatus, and properties is more suitable (than traditional psychology) for project activities. Therefore, Gestalt psychology can be effectively applied in project activities, and therefore Gestalt psychology has prospects for development in the field of project activities.

#### 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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