

# THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF LINE MANAGERS' MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES

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## **Abstract**

Line managers are one of the key groups of the organization's personnel. The effectiveness of the entire organization ultimately depends on how well their managerial competencies are developed. In this article, the authors analyze the development of managerial competencies of line managers in Russian companies. At the same time, there is assessed the development of 11 groups of competencies. The source of information was a questionnaire survey of line managers of Russian companies conducted in the fall of 2020. On average, the level of development of managerial competencies of line managers turned out to be quite high. However, at the same time, there is a dispersion of development by individual competencies and dispersion of development of competencies by individual groups of managers. As a result of the cluster analysis, it was possible to identify three groups of line managers with different levels of development of managerial competencies. In addition, the influence of certain factors on the development of competencies was recorded. In addition, with the help of factor analysis, the relationship between the development levels of individual competencies was revealed.

**Key words:** line managers, managerial competencies, types of managers

**JEL Code:** J24, M12

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## **Introduction**

Line managers are the "guides" of the top management decisions, and the implementation of the entire company's strategy depends on how well they can implement the tasks assigned to their departments. However, in practice, often little attention is paid to the managerial competencies of line managers. Most often, the development of line managers is focused on professional competencies, while managerial competencies are the secondary concern. At the same time, the development of the managerial competencies of line managers allows them to take higher managerial positions subsequently. Therefore, the development of managerial competencies of line managers is one of the mandatory tasks of personnel development of each organization.

Research on managerial competencies has a certain history already. Therefore, starting with the works of Boyatzis (1982), the authors present their list of managerial competencies, for example, Smart (1999), Abraham (2001), Shirazi (2009). Robinson (2007) describes the methodology for assessing managerial competencies, including such an option as self-assessment. Boyatzis (2008), Siddique (2007), and Wheeler (2008) assess the impact of various factors on the development of managerial competencies. The works of Chye (2010), Stuart (1997), Young (2009) present assessments of the impact of managerial competencies development on the effectiveness of the organization. These studies emphasize the importance of studying managerial competencies – assessing the degree of their development, factors affecting the development of competencies, as well as the degree of connection between the development of managerial competencies and the company's performance.

## **1 Research**

The analysis of competencies of line managers was based on a questionnaire survey of more than 900 middle managers from various business sectors in seven regions of Russia. For self-assessment of managerial competencies, we used a questionnaire - Self-assessment of the development of key competencies [[http://loft.imc-nev.ru/file/%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82\\_v2.pdf](http://loft.imc-nev.ru/file/%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82_v2.pdf)]. There is assessed the development of 11 groups of competencies: complex multi-level problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, cooperation with others, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision-making, customer orientation, ability to negotiate, cognitive flexibility, effective job search.

Each competence was evaluated based on 5 questions. For each question, the score varied from 1 to 5 points. Accordingly, each competence of middle managers could receive a score from 5 to 25 points. Since gender, age, managerial experience, and the number of subordinates also influence the formation of managerial competencies, we separately assessed its impact. In this regard, we measured:

- age of line managers at the following levels: up to 30 years, from 31 year to 45 years, from 46 to 60 years and more than 10 years.
- management experience at the following levels: up to 1 year, from 1 year to 3 years, from 3 to 5 years, 6-10 years and more than 10 years. These intervals are allocated on the basis of the features of the accumulation of managerial experience and reflect the different stages of the formation of a manager. So the period up to 1 year is a period of adaptation to

management activities. Period from 1 to 3 years is the period of active search for "correct" management decisions. Period from 3 to 5 years is the period of consolidation of managerial skills. Period from 6 to 10 years is the period of transition of skills to a "new" managerial level, the formation of skills of a professional manager. And the management experience of over 10 years indicates the transition of a professional manager to the expert level. This is the highest level of development of management skills.

- number of subordinates at the following levels: up to 5 people, from 6 people to 10 people, from 11 to 20 people and more than 20 people.

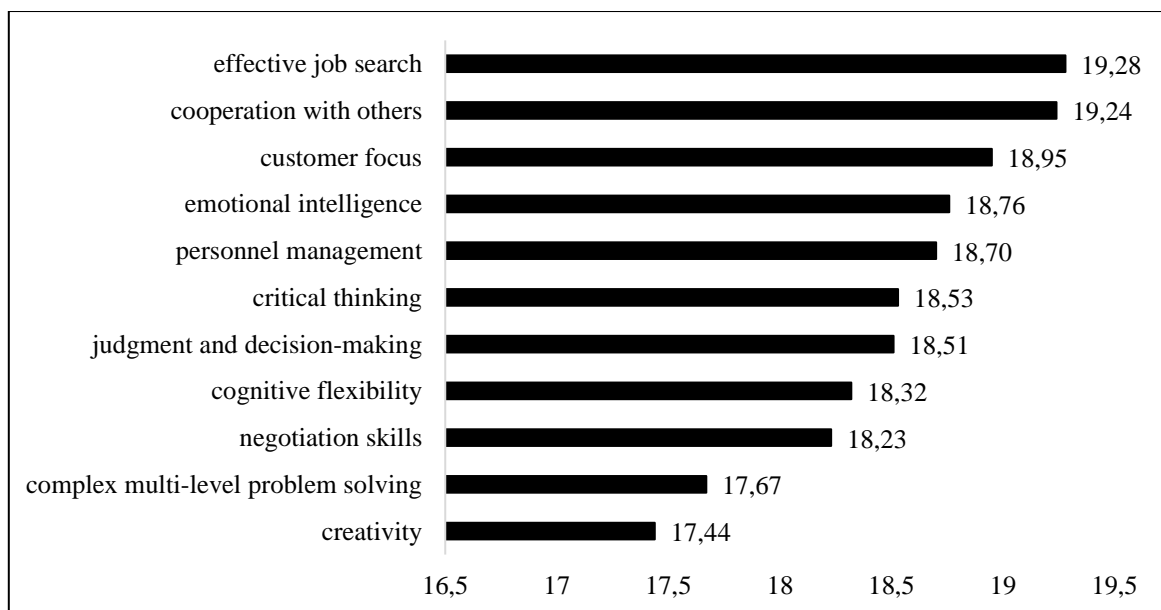
To assess the development of competencies, we used descriptive statistics, factor and cluster analysis. The following assumptions were made as hypotheses.

1. Managerial competencies of line managers are developed unevenly.
2. Gender, age, managerial experience and the number of subordinates influence the development of competencies.
3. The development of some competencies affects the development of other competencies.

## 2 Results

Initially, we assessed the development of all managerial competencies. Figure 1 presents the results of the assessment.

**Fig. 1: Development of line managers' managerial competencies**



Source: authors

Figure 1 shows that individual competencies of line managers are developed differently. Thus, according to the self-assessment of managers, the most developed competencies are effective job search and cooperation with others, and the least developed are creativity and complex multi-level problem solving. At the same time, the variation between the levels of competencies development is small and amounts to 1.84 points.

Next, we analyzed the influence of individual factors on the level of competencies development. Thus, gender statistically significantly (at the level of an error of 10%) affects only the development of such competencies as critical thinking, judgment and decision-making (Tab. 1). Table 1 shows that the development of these competencies among women is lower than among men. At the same time, women are more diverse in terms of the development of these competencies than men are. The remaining competencies of women and men are developed equally (no statistically significant differences were found).

**Tab. 1: Indicators of competence development by gender**

Gender	Characteristics	critical thinking	judgment and decision-making
female	mean	18.25	18.24
	std.dev	2.88	2.78
male	mean	19.08	19.04
	std.dev	2.47	2.36

Source: authors

The age of line managers statistically significantly (at the error level of 10%) affects only the development of the competence of personnel management (Tab. 2).

The competence of personnel management is the most developed among managers aged from 31 to 45 years. In our opinion, this may be because young managers have not yet fully mastered this competence. And more experienced managers (over 45 years old), most likely, do not pay much attention to its development, since in traditional organizations for a long time the competence of personnel management was functionally assigned to the specialized departments (HR departments) and its development was not necessary for line managers.

**Tab. 2: Indicators of competence development by age**

Age	Characteristics	Personnel management
up to 30 years	mean	18.59
	std.dev	2.84
31-45	mean	19.07
	std.dev	2.22
46-60	mean	18.43
	std.dev	2.51
over 60 years	mean	16.20
	std.dev	3.27

Source: authors

We also analyzed the influence of managerial work experience on the level of competencies development. We assumed that more experienced managers would have a higher level of competence development. However, the influence of managerial experience statistically significantly affects only the development of creativity (Tab. 3).

**Tab. 3: Indicators of competence development by managerial work experience**

Management's experience	Characteristics	Creativity
up to 1 year	mean	18.75
	std.dev	3.31
1-2 years	mean	17.12
	std.dev	3.47
3-5 years	mean	17.73
	std.dev	2.60
6-10 years	mean	16.37
	std.dev	2.75
over 10 years	mean	17.63
	std.dev	3.07

Source: authors

Despite the presence of statistically significant differences, Table 3 shows the absence of a trend in the influence of managerial experience.

Otherwise, with the increase in the number of subordinates, the development complex multi-level problem solving, critical thinking and cooperation with others increases (Tab. 4).

Most likely, managers with more developed competencies from the table 4 are assigned a larger number of subordinates. At the same time, the variance of development assessments is being reduced with a larger number of subordinates (this is especially evident for the critical thinking competence).

**Tab. 4: Indicators of competence development by number of subordinates**

Number of subordinates	Characteristics	Complex multi-level problem solving	Critical thinking	Cooperation with others
up to 5 people	mean	17.17	18.15	19.05
	std.dev	2.45	3.01	2.90
6-10 people	mean	17.55	18.00	18.40
	std.dev	2.48	2.88	3.04
11-20 people	mean	18.61	19.44	18.33
	std.dev	3.41	2.20	2.47
over 20 people	mean	18.35	19.54	19.54
	std.dev	1.85	1.96	2.97

Source: authors

Next, we analyzed the relationship between the levels of individual competencies development using factor analysis. Its results are presented in the table 5.

Using factor analysis, we identified two groups of factors. The first group includes critical thinking, personnel management, cooperation with others, judgment and decision-making, negotiation skills. These competencies are united by their orientation to the internal environment of an organization. The second group of competencies includes complex multi-level problem solving, creativity, customer focus, and effective job search, which are more focused on the external environment of an organization. In addition, two competencies - emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility, were associated with both groups of factors, that is, their development is most likely due to other reasons than the development of competencies from the first and second factors.

Then, using cluster analysis, we identified three groups of managers depending on the level of their managerial competencies development (Fig.2).

Figure 2 shows that three groups of managers, in this case, can be conditionally called managers with a relatively low level of competence development, with an average level, and with a relatively high level of competence development. At the same time, most of the competencies of managers in groups are developed evenly. Creativity is less developed among

the line managers in clusters 1 and 2. At the same time, the competencies of customer orientation and effective job search are more developed among the managers of the third cluster compared to other competencies of these managers.

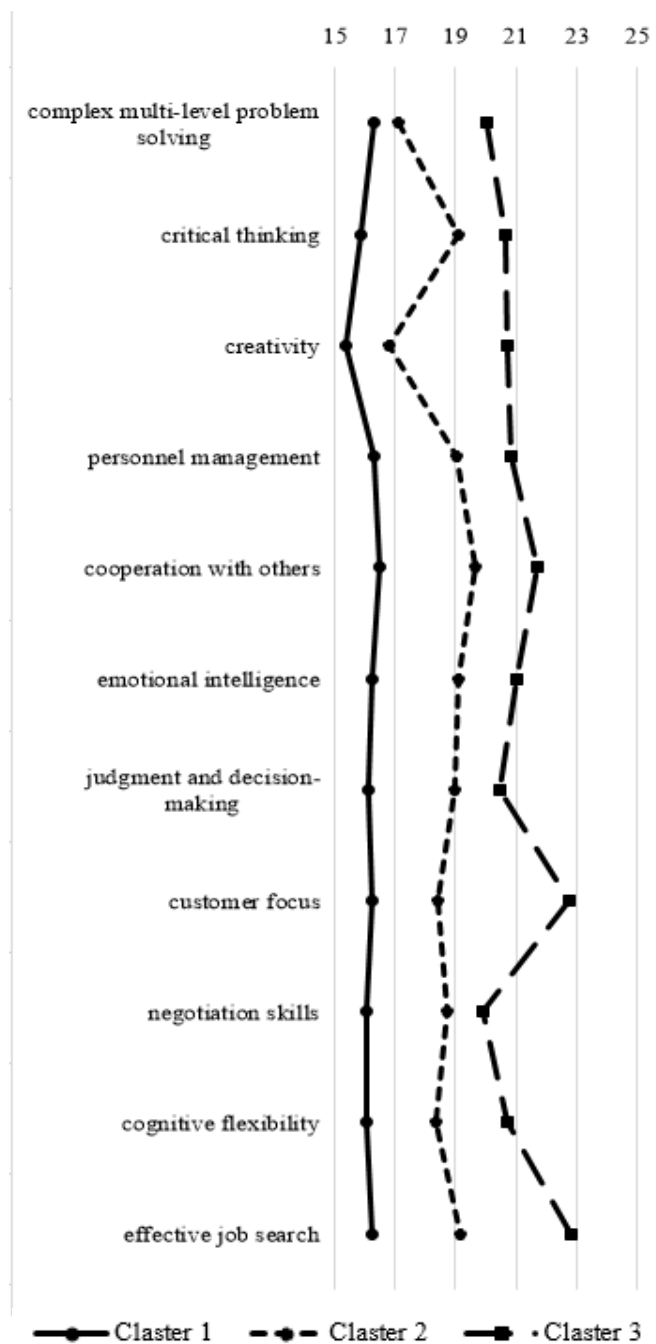
The socio-demographic analysis of the selected groups of line managers showed the influence of work experience on the level of competence development. Thus, with the increase in the work experience, the probability of a manager's entering the group with an average and high level of development of all competencies increases. That is, managers with uniformly high indicators of the development of all competencies are chosen to manage relatively large groups of subordinates.

**Tab. 5: Results of factor analysis of competence development (rotation by Varimax method)**

Competencies	Factor 1	Factor 2
complex multi-level problem solving		0.763
critical thinking	0.720	
creativity		0.814
personnel management	0.734	
cooperation with others	0.760	
emotional intelligence	0.592	0.409
judgment and decision-making	0.815	
customer focus		0.753
negotiation skills	0.676	
cognitive flexibility	0.547	0.535
effective job search		0.775
Percentage of total variance explained	53.013	10.263

Source: authors

**Fig. 2: Groups of line managers by the level of competences development**



Source: authors

## Conclusion

The analysis made it possible to draw the following conclusions.

First, line managers' managerial competencies are developed unevenly. So there is a variation in the development of individual competencies. In addition, it was possible to identify three groups of line managers according to the level of their competencies development –



managers with a relatively low level of competence development, managers with an average level of competence development, and managers with a high level of competence development.

Secondly, several factors affect the development of individual competencies. Namely, gender, age, managerial experience, the number of subordinates.

Third, the development of individual competencies is interrelated with the level of other competencies development. There were identified two groups of managerial competencies, depending on the features of their development.

Thus, the analysis made it possible to assess the level of line managers' managerial competencies development.

## **Acknowledgment**

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