



Temur MARATOV^a 

^aActing Associate Professor, PhD
Kimyo International University in Tashkent
E-mail: t.maratov@kiut.uz

THE STUDY OF COGNITIVE STYLE IN FOREIGN RESEARCH: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Abstract. *This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the problem of cognitive style as studied in foreign psychological research. Cognitive style is defined as a stable individual difference in the way people perceive, process, organize, and utilize information. The aim of the study is to examine the evolution of cognitive style theory, identify major classifications, and analyze its role in psychological, educational, and organizational contexts. The paper reviews classical and modern approaches, including field dependence–independence, analytic–intuitive styles, and integrative models of cognitive processing. The analysis demonstrates that cognitive styles significantly influence learning strategies, decision-making processes, problem-solving approaches, and interpersonal behavior.*

Keywords: *cognitive style, foreign research, individual differences, information processing, analytic thinking, intuitive thinking, field dependence, psychological theory.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of cognitive style has been widely studied in foreign psychological research as a key factor explaining individual differences in thinking, perception, and problem-solving. Unlike intelligence, which reflects the level of cognitive performance, cognitive style describes the preferred way in which individuals process information and interact with their environment (Kozhevnikov, 2007:464). This distinction has made cognitive style an important construct in psychology, particularly in areas such as education, decision-making, personality psychology, and organizational behavior.

The origins of cognitive style research can be traced back to the mid-20th century, when psychologists began to explore how individuals differ not only in ability but also

in their cognitive approaches. One of the earliest and most influential contributions was made by Herman Witkin, who introduced the concept of field dependence and field independence (Witkin et al., 1977:6). According to this theory, individuals differ in their ability to separate relevant information from surrounding context. Field-independent individuals tend to rely on internal frames of reference and are more analytical, while field-dependent individuals are more influenced by external context and social cues.

Later research expanded the concept of cognitive style into multiple dimensions. Allinson and Hayes proposed the analytical intuitive cognitive style, which distinguishes between individuals who rely on logical, systematic analysis and those who depend on intuition and holistic judgment (Allinson & Hayes, 1996:121). These developments showed that cognitive style is not a single trait but a multidimensional construct. In recent decades, foreign researchers have moved toward integrative approaches that consider cognitive styles as flexible systems rather than fixed categories. Kozhevnikov (2007:466) emphasized that cognitive styles should be understood within a broader framework of information processing and mental representation. This perspective highlights that cognitive styles interact with environmental demands and task characteristics.

The relevance of studying cognitive style lies in its practical implications. In education, cognitive styles influence how students learn and process information. In professional contexts, they affect decision-making, leadership, and problem-solving. In psychology, they provide insight into personality structure and behavioral patterns. Therefore, analyzing foreign research on cognitive styles is essential for understanding both theoretical developments and practical applications.

METHODS

This study is based on a theoretical and analytical approach. The primary methods include literature review, comparative analysis, conceptual synthesis, and systematization of foreign psychological research on cognitive styles.

The analysis focuses on major theoretical models developed in Western psychology. These include: field dependence–independence theory (Witkin et al., 1977); analytical–intuitive cognitive style (Allinson & Hayes, 1996); integrative cognitive style framework (Kozhevnikov, 2007); and cognitive style classifications in educational psychology (Riding & Cheema, 1991).

The study examines how these models define cognitive style, what dimensions they propose, and how they relate to psychological processes such as perception, learning, and decision-making. Additionally, the research analyzes the role of cognitive styles in different domains, including education, management, and interpersonal communication. Special attention is given to the evolution of the concept from rigid typologies to flexible, multidimensional frameworks.

RESULTS

The analysis of foreign research reveals several important findings regarding the nature and function of cognitive styles.

First, cognitive style is a stable but not rigid characteristic of the individual. Early studies tended to classify individuals into fixed categories, such as field-dependent or field-independent. However, modern research suggests that cognitive styles are relatively stable tendencies that can change depending on context and experience (Kozhevnikov, 2007:469).

Second, cognitive styles influence how individuals perceive and process information. Field-independent individuals are more capable of isolating specific details from complex backgrounds, while field-dependent individuals perceive information more globally and are more sensitive to context (Witkin et al., 1977:9). This difference affects not only perception but also learning and problem-solving strategies.

Third, analytical and intuitive cognitive styles represent two fundamental modes of thinking. Analytical thinkers rely on logic, structured reasoning, and detailed evaluation. Intuitive thinkers rely on experience, pattern recognition, and holistic understanding (Allinson & Hayes, 1996:123). These two styles are not mutually exclusive; rather, they often complement each other in effective cognitive functioning.

Fourth, cognitive styles have a significant impact on learning processes. Research shows that students with different cognitive styles prefer different learning methods. Analytical learners benefit from structured instruction and clear explanations, while intuitive learners prefer experiential and interactive learning environments (Riding & Cheema, 1991:195).

Fifth, cognitive styles play an important role in decision-making. Analytical individuals tend to make slower but more accurate decisions based on evidence and

logical reasoning. Intuitive individuals make faster decisions based on experience and general impressions. Hunt et al. (2013: 78) demonstrated that cognitive style influences the strategies individuals use in decision-making tasks.

Finally, modern research emphasizes the multidimensional nature of cognitive styles. Riding and Cheema (1991:197) proposed that cognitive styles should be understood as a combination of different dimensions rather than a single continuum. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of individual differences.

DISCUSSION

The findings from foreign research indicate that cognitive style is a complex and multifaceted psychological construct. One of the key issues in the study of cognitive styles is the balance between stability and flexibility. While cognitive styles are relatively stable, they are not fixed traits. Individuals can adapt their cognitive approaches depending on the situation, task requirements, and environmental conditions.

Another important issue is the relationship between cognitive style and cognitive ability. Some researchers argue that cognitive styles are independent of intelligence, while others suggest that there may be interactions between them. For example, a highly intelligent individual may still prefer an intuitive approach, while another individual with similar ability may prefer analytical reasoning.

The practical implications of cognitive style research are significant. In education, understanding cognitive styles can help teachers design more effective instructional strategies. Instead of applying a single teaching method, educators can use diverse approaches to accommodate different learning styles. This can improve student engagement, comprehension, and academic performance.

In organizational settings, cognitive styles influence leadership, teamwork, and decision-making. Analytical leaders may focus on data and structure, while intuitive leaders may focus on vision and innovation. Effective organizations often benefit from a combination of different cognitive styles. In psychological counseling, cognitive styles can help explain individual differences in behavior and decision-making. By understanding a client's cognitive style, psychologists can provide more personalized guidance and support.

However, there are also limitations in cognitive style research. One of the main challenges is the lack of a unified theoretical framework. Different researchers use different definitions, classifications, and measurement tools, which makes it difficult to compare results across studies. Additionally, some critics argue that cognitive style constructs overlap with other psychological concepts, such as personality traits and cognitive abilities. Despite these challenges, the study of cognitive styles remains an important area of research. It provides valuable insights into how individuals think, learn, and make decisions, and it has practical applications in various fields.

CONCLUSION

Foreign research on cognitive styles has significantly contributed to understanding individual differences in cognitive processing. Cognitive style is a key factor that influences perception, learning, decision-making, and behavior. The evolution of the concept from simple dichotomies to multidimensional frameworks reflects the increasing complexity of psychological research.

The findings show that cognitive styles are not fixed categories but flexible tendencies that interact with situational factors. Analytical and intuitive styles, as well as field dependence and independence, represent different but complementary ways of processing information. Understanding cognitive styles has important implications for education, management, and psychological practice. It allows for more personalized approaches to learning, more effective decision-making strategies, and better psychological support.

Future research should focus on developing integrated theoretical models, improving measurement tools, and exploring the interaction between cognitive styles and other psychological variables. Such research will contribute to a deeper understanding of human cognition and behavior.

REFERENCES

1. Allinson, C. W., & Hayes, J. (1996). The cognitive style index: A measure of intuition–analysis for organizational research. *Journal of Management Studies*, 33(1), 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1996.tb00801.x>
2. Hunt, R. G., Krzystofiak, F. J., Meindl, J. R., & Yousry, A. M. (2013). Cognitive style and decision making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 44(3), 72–92.

The Journal of Interdisciplinary Human Studies

3. Kozhevnikov, M. (2007). Cognitive styles in the context of modern psychology: Toward an integrated framework of cognitive style. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(3), 464–481. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.133.3.464>
4. Riding, R. J., & Cheema, I. (1991). Cognitive styles – an overview and integration. *Educational Psychology*, 11(3–4), 193–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144341910110301>
5. Witkin, H. A., Moore, C. A., Goodenough, D. R., & Cox, P. W. (1977). Field-dependent and field-independent cognitive styles and their educational implications. *Review of Educational Research*, 47(1), 1–64. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543047001001>