

EDITORIAL MATERIALS

The Ocean of Irrationality: From Cognitive Illusions to Managerial Paradoxes

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Abstract. *Relevance and Problem.* In the contemporary world characterized by high uncertainty, information overload, and rapid change, individuals increasingly confront the limits of their own rationality. Irrationality, long regarded as a deviation or error, is now understood as a fundamental characteristic of human thinking and behaviour that does not disappear with the advancement of science and technology but rather transforms and manifests itself across various spheres of life, from everyday decision-making to the functioning of large corporations. Despite the abundance of empirical data, it remains insufficiently understood how different manifestations of irrationality (cognitive biases, magical thinking, and epistemically unjustified beliefs) are interconnected and what role they play in the human adaptive repertoire. *Objective.* This introductory article presents the thematic issue of the journal and aims to integrate interdisciplinary approaches to the study of irrationality, encompassing psychology, behavioural economics, linguistics, corporate anthropology, and other disciplines, as well as to offer readers tools for a deeper understanding of decision-making and human behaviour under conditions of uncertainty. *Methods.* To achieve this aim, the authors conducted a systematic review of key contemporary studies on cognitive biases, magical thinking, epistemically unjustified beliefs, and their roles in various contexts. The analysis covers both classic works by D. Kahneman, A. Tversky (Kahneman, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), K. Stanovich (Stanovich, 2009), and D. Ariely (Ariely, 2008), as well as more recent empirical investigations, including cross-cultural and clinical studies (Keinan, 1994; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008; Hamerman et al., 2018; Taher et al., 2020; Latifnejad Roudsari et al., 2015; Fluke et al., 2014; Rudski & Edwards, 2007). In addition, comparative discourse analysis of medical texts, a pilot study on user perception of artificial intelligence, and a pilot comparative study of victims of telephone fraud and individuals who terminated contact with fraudsters were employed. This comprehensive approach allows for the identification of both universal and culturally specific mechanisms of irrationality. *Results.* The analysis indicates that irrationality is not merely a collection of errors but constitutes a distinctive mode of adaptation to the complexity and uncertainty of the world, possessing both destructive and constructive aspects. Magical thinking and superstitions serve functions of creating an illusion of control, reducing stress, and explaining random events (Keinan, 1994; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008), as confirmed by data obtained across different countries, including Israel, Iran, Portugal, Colombia, and nations in Africa and Asia. A consistent relationship has been identified between irrational beliefs and personality traits, including neuroticism, external locus of control, and anxiety (Perdue, 2012; Wise, 2011; Wiseman & Watt, 2004). It has been demonstrated that even high intelligence does not guarantee protection against pseudoscience and conspiracism unless conscious rational strategies are engaged (Jastrzębski & Chuderski, 2022; Čavojská et al., 2020; Erceg et al., 2019). The articles in this issue further illuminate the phenomenon of "dark leadership" in organisations (Boddy, 2017; Mathieu et al., 2014; Diller & Jonas, 2020), age-related and gender-specific features of magical thinking in adolescence, linguistic markers of irrationality in medical discourse, anthropomorphic projections in human interaction with artificial intelligence, and effective cognitive interventions for chronic insomnia (Morin, 1993; Harvey, 2002; Perlis et al., 2011; Riemann et al., 2023). A pilot comparative study of telephone fraud victims showed that higher suggestibility, sensitivity, and magical thinking, together with lower aggressiveness and spontaneity, distinguish victims from those who terminated contact with fraudsters. Anxiety alone was not a sufficient risk factor; its combination with suggestibility and magical beliefs increased vulnerability. *Conclusion.* The materials presented allow for a reconceptualisation of irrationality not as pathology but as an evolutionarily entrenched mechanism for rapid responding to uncertainty. The principal practical implication is that managing irrationality requires not its eradication but its conscious recognition, an understanding of its hidden logic, and the

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use of this understanding for more balanced decision-making in business, education, healthcare, everyday life, and prevention of victimization in telephone and cyber fraud. The issue also demonstrates that irrational beliefs can serve as targets for prevention and psychological correction in fraud victimization. The issue provides readers with navigational tools for exploring the "ocean of irrationality," demonstrating that even the most peculiar human actions possess an internal logic, and that understanding this logic is the key to more effective interaction with the world and with oneself.

Keywords: Irrationality, Cognitive Biases, Decision-Making, Magical Thinking, Epistemically Unjustified Beliefs, Behavioural Economics, Corporate Culture, Victimization, Telephone Fraud

1. Introduction

Two years ago, psychological science suffered an irreparable loss: Daniel Kahneman, a cognitive psychologist who together with his friend and colleague Amos Tversky transformed the understanding of human decision-making held by most people, including researchers in economics and psychology, passed away. Kahneman and Tversky (Kahneman, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), and subsequently many of their colleagues and students, demonstrated that our decisions are largely irrational and based on heuristics, habitual and not fully conscious schemas, rather than on meticulous analysis and comparison of all known facts. It was through reading the works of Kahneman, as well as Keith Stanovich (Stanovich, 2009) and Dan Ariely (Ariely, 2008), that our interest in irrationality began.

The relevance of this line of inquiry today is particularly acute. The entire Western scientific tradition is built upon a rational comprehension of the world and its regularities; this is precisely why discoveries in cognitive psychology and behavioural economics appear so startling at first glance, revealing that human decision-makers are not rational agents in the way that a scientist studying the world and testing hypotheses should be. Yet these discoveries only begin to lift the veil on the vast expanse of what might be called the "ocean of irrationality." Irrationality has been the subject of popular science books by Daniel Kahneman (Kahneman, 2011), Keith Stanovich (Stanovich, 2009), and behavioural economists Richard Thaler (Thaler, 2015) and Dan Ariely (Ariely, 2008). Particularly intriguing is the analysis of irrational beliefs, their formation, consolidation, and defence in conflicts, as described in the book *The Time of Delusions*. Such beliefs are classified as conspiracy theories, which are also actively investigated as one facet of irrational thinking (Brotherton, 2015; Grzesiak-Feldman, 2015; van Prooijen, 2018). The patterns of formation, functioning, and dissemination of such beliefs have been examined and described in the works of Rob Brotherton (Brotherton, 2015), Monika Grzesiak-Feldman (Grzesiak-Feldman, 2015), Jan-Willem van Prooijen (van Prooijen, 2018), and other authors. Irrationality is also

investigated in social anthropology. Pascal Boyer's remarkable book *Religion Explained* (Boyer, 2001) describes how religious and other beliefs emerge and spread, and addresses the question of why some beliefs prove more resilient than others.

The problem is that fragmented data from psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and economics have yet to be integrated into a coherent picture, and practical conclusions often remain at the level of popular books. The question of in which scientific domains and by what means irrationality is investigated, as well as the mechanisms of its manifestation across different contexts, remains open. Numerous studies have addressed various aspects of irrationality, such as superstitiousness and belief in the paranormal. Keinan (1994) and Whitson and Galinsky (2008) identify among the functions of irrational beliefs the creation of an illusion of control and the reduction of psychological tension. Hamerman and Griffiths with colleagues (Hamerman et al., 2018; Griffiths et al., 2019) demonstrated a link between irrational beliefs and the tendency to overcome uncertainty and ambiguity, as well as the activity of causal reasoning, the propensity to attribute any event, including random or multidetermined occurrences, to a single cause. Research has also examined the prevalence of irrational beliefs across various groups and situations, including students preparing for examinations, individuals with somatic illnesses, women in relation to pregnancy and childbirth, and those living in war zones. Fluke, Webster, and Saucier (Fluke et al., 2014) observed that in some cases students prefer using talismans over exam preparation. Rudski and Edwards (Rudski & Edwards, 2007) found that the frequency of ritual behaviour increased with the subjective significance of the event and was inversely related to experience and level of preparation. A study conducted in Iran found that 40% of patients attributed somatic illnesses to irrational causes such as the "evil eye" and "sorcery." According to Taher and colleagues (Taher et al., 2020), superstitious patients with hypertension who believed in omens and luck did not properly adhere to their treatment regimen. African

researchers have also noted that patients associate illness and healing with magical influences. According to data obtained in Portugal, beliefs and myths generate fears and anxieties that shape women's perceptions of pregnancy: 82% of surveyed women reported being influenced to a greater or lesser extent by various myths and beliefs. Iranian researchers Latifnejad Roudsari, Zakerihamidi, and Merghati Khoei (Latifnejad Roudsari et al., 2015) also noted the influence of beliefs and superstitions, alongside other socio-psychological variables, on decision-making regarding natural childbirth versus caesarean section. Keinan's (1994) study found that Israeli citizens living during the Gulf War in areas subjected to missile attacks exhibited higher levels of magical thinking than those residing in areas not targeted by missiles. One study examining survey and interview data from Colombia for 2016–2019 reported that a significant portion of the population affected by armed conflict adheres to various conflict-related superstitions that influence their decisions and migration from conflict zones. Research has also examined the relationship between irrational beliefs and personality traits. Several researchers have highlighted the link between superstitiousness and an external locus of control, meaning that individuals attribute life events to fate, luck, or supernatural forces. Perdue (Perdue, 2012) found a direct relationship between irrational beliefs and such Big Five components as neuroticism and extraversion. Wise's (Wise, 2011) studies demonstrate that superstitions correlate with personality traits such as anxiety, need for control, pessimism, and depressiveness. Researchers have also noted the association of superstitiousness with traits such as pessimism and indecisiveness (Wiseman & Watt, 2004). Irrationality also matters in criminal victimization. Alekseeva and Danilova (2026) found that telephone fraud victims had higher suggestibility, sensitivity, and magical thinking than those who terminated contact; anxiety was a risk factor mainly when combined with suggestibility and magical beliefs.

It is important to note that irrationality is investigated not only by psychologists but also by anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists. Magical thinking has been found to serve, from primitive times to the present day, as one of the mechanisms of defence against uncertainty (Boyer, 2001; Vyse, 2014). Taher, Pashaeypoor, Cheraghi, Karimy, and Hoseini (Taher et al., 2020) identify poverty and social deprivation as causes of the spread of superstitious beliefs. Social pressure and emotional stress are high in

impoverished societies, rendering people's lives unsafe and tense, and creating fertile ground for superstitions. Sociological research results indicate that over 40% of Americans believe in unscientific medical treatments; in Africa, 70% of respondents turn to local non-conventional treatment methods, such as charms and witchcraft; in East Asia, nurses caring for patients believe in luck and misfortune; in India, 62% of schizophrenia patients seek treatment from witches and firmly believe in superstitions; and in Turkey, belief in the "evil eye" is a prevalent form of superstitious beliefs. From a linguocultural perspective, irrational beliefs expressed in the form of superstitions constitute verbalised irrational components of everyday consciousness, transmitted through cultural tradition and guiding individual behaviour. According to I. A. Cherginets (Cherginets, 2018), they perform explanatory, psychotherapeutic, and socialising functions.

The objective of this issue is to present an interdisciplinary panorama of research on irrationality, demonstrating its role in decision-making, corporate culture, language, and clinical practice, and to offer readers tools for more conscious engagement with their own irrationality. The "ocean of irrationality research" is boundless. Diverse fields of knowledge, including psychology, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and behavioural economics, examine irrationality as an object of study. This object encompasses a vast array of topics, including irrationality in decision-making, its manifestations in speech, irrational beliefs and their expressions across various situations and among members of different groups. In this journal issue, we have endeavoured to preserve the breadth of thematic coverage and the representation of diverse scientific disciplines.

2. Methods

To prepare this thematic issue, the editorial board applied a comprehensive strategy for selecting and analysing materials, ensuring interdisciplinary coverage of the phenomenon of irrationality. The methodological approach was grounded in the principle of triangulation: each article in the issue examines irrationality through the lens of its own disciplinary perspective, and the editorial synthesis of these data allows for the identification of both universal mechanisms and contextual features of irrational behaviour.

The specific methods employed by the contributing authors are diverse and reflect the breadth of the research field. Dvoinina and Dvoinin applied a non-systematic theoretical review with elements of narrative analysis and

synthesis, with literature searches conducted in the leading databases Scopus, Web of Science, and PsycINFO, focusing on empirical studies containing detailed methodological descriptions (Jastrzębski & Chuderski, 2022; Čavojová et al., 2020; Erceg et al., 2019; Pennycook et al., 2015a; Pennycook et al., 2015b). Lukianova's empirical study employed a quantitative design using eight standardised questionnaires covering cognitive styles, creativity, emotional intelligence, behavioural control, emotion regulation, mechanisms of moral disengagement, and moral identity; statistical processing included Spearman's rank correlations on the full sample and separately by sex, as well as Bayesian Model Averaging regression. Bogdanova and Khaidarova, in their conceptual article, draw on the case-study method and comparative analysis of empirical leadership research (Boddy, 2017; Mathieu et al., 2014; Diller & Jonas, 2020; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Peterson et al., 2012), integrating data from clinical psychology and corporate anthropology (Kramer & Brown, 2015; Hasbrouck, 2024; Douglas, 1986). Sazhenin applied discourse analysis and componential analysis of dictionary definitions to compare instructions for evidence-based and traditional medicine preparations, enabling the identification of linguistic markers of rational and irrational worldviews. Solondaev used a pilot online survey with subsequent statistical processing in the R environment, evaluating significance levels and confidence intervals using the test of proportions. Alekseeva and Danilova (2026) used a pilot comparative design: 27 telephone fraud victims and 56 individuals who terminated contact, with suggestibility, typological, and magical belief measures; Mann-Whitney U with FDR correction and Spearman correlations were applied. Shcheglyagina conducted a narrative review of the literature on cognitive models of insomnia (Morin, 1993; Harvey, 2002; Perlis et al., 2011; Riemann et al., 2023; Edinger et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2023), synthesising data from PubMed, Scopus, and PsycINFO for the period 1980–2024.

This diversity of methodological approaches ensures comprehensiveness of coverage, from the micro-level of cognitive processes and personality traits to the macro-level of organisational culture and linguistic practices, allowing a transition from fragmented descriptions to a systemic understanding of irrationality as a multi-level phenomenon.

3. Results

The contemporary world, which we increasingly characterise as a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) or

even a BANI world (brittle, anxious, non-linear, incomprehensible), presents humanity with challenges that our evolutionarily developed cognitive mechanisms are increasingly ill-equipped to handle. Information overload, the pace of change, and the high cost of error expose the limitations of our rationality, compelling us to seek new ways of understanding and managing our own irrationality. The cumulative analysis of the materials included in this issue has revealed several robust findings that, despite the diversity of subject areas, converge into a coherent picture.

The issue opens with an article by M. V. Bogdanova and O. S. Khaidarova, "The Irrational and the Rational in Decision-Making from the Perspective of Clinical Psychology and Corporate Anthropology." The authors pose a fundamental question: what constitutes the "rational" at a time when traditional management tools such as SWOT analysis and risk assessment are failing under conditions of high uncertainty? They propose seeking answers at the intersection of clinical psychology and corporate anthropology. Their key thesis is that a manager's irrational behaviour may be entirely rational within the context of their corporate culture (Douglas, 1986; Hasbrouck, 2024; Kramer & Brown, 2015). The article analyses mechanisms that generate irrationality in organisations: groupthink (Andreeva, 2000), ritualisation (Fromm, 2022; Kramer & Brown, 2020), mythologisation of past experience (Cameron & Quinn, 2001), and defence of areas of responsibility (Tett, 2015). Particular attention is devoted to the phenomenon of "dark leadership," leaders with traits of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Boddy, 2017; Mathieu et al., 2014; Diller & Jonas, 2020; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Peterson et al., 2012; Furtner et al., 2017). The authors demonstrate that such leaders can be effective in the short term, but their decisions, lacking empathy, often lead to destructive long-term consequences (Haar & de Jong, 2023; Sutton & Stapleton, 2023; Elbers et al., 2023). The case of Miranda Priestly from the film *The Devil Wears Prada* is used as an illustration, rendering theoretical constructs tangible. It has been empirically confirmed that a deficit of empathy, traditionally considered a condition of rationality, in practice generates an atmosphere of fear and authoritarianism that impedes the free exchange of ideas and, consequently, reduces the quality of managerial decisions (de Waal, 2009; Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023).

Another aspect of irrationality, namely its cognitive origins, is explored in the article by

V. K. Dvoynina and A. M. Dvoynin, "Do Cognitive Abilities and Rationality Protect Against Susceptibility to Epistemically Unjustified Beliefs?" This review challenges the naive assumption that high intelligence or well-developed critical thinking serves as a reliable defence against pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, and belief in the paranormal (Stanovich, 2009; Kahneman, 2011; Epstein, 1994). The authors demonstrate that empirical data present a complex and contradictory picture. The relationship between intelligence and unjustified beliefs exists but is weak to moderate and varies considerably depending on the type of belief (Jastrzębski & Chuderski, 2022; Jastrzębski et al., 2024; Andersson et al., 2022). Creativity can both facilitate finding unconventional solutions and, conversely, render individuals more vulnerable to original but false ideas when not accompanied by critical evaluation (Bunce & Woolley, 2021; Boden, 2004; Gligorić et al., 2021; Dagnall et al., 2025). Intuitive thinking style is a consistent risk factor, whereas rational thinking style most often serves as a negative predictor of such beliefs (Pennycook et al., 2015a; Pennycook et al., 2015b; Svedholm & Lindeman, 2013; Irwin, 2015); however, even this is not a universal rule (Majima, 2015). The key conclusion, which fundamentally revises the conventional understanding of the protective functions of intelligence, is that cognitive abilities alone do not guarantee protection against indoctrination; they can be beneficial only if an individual consciously suppresses intuitive impulses and deploys intelligence as a fully utilised mental resource (Stanovich, 2011; Erceg et al., 2019; Bensley et al., 2023). This article lays the theoretical foundation for understanding why even educated and intelligent people can believe in manifestly unfounded theories.

A logical continuation of this theme is the empirical study by I. A. Lukianova, "Psychological Characteristics of Magical Thinking in Adolescence." The author focuses on the age-related aspect of irrationality, filling a gap in the scientific literature (Rosengren et al., 2000; Bolton et al., 2002; Peltzer, 2003; Sagone & De Caroli, 2014). In a study conducted on a sample of 300 adolescents, magical thinking is examined comprehensively in relation to cognitive styles, creativity, emotional intelligence, behavioural control, and the moral domain (Epstein, 2003; Kahneman, 2011; Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Van Mulukom et al., 2024). The obtained data paint a portrait of the magically thinking adolescent as a person inclined toward an intuitive thinking style, with reduced emotional regulation and less developed

understanding of their own emotions (Eddy & Hansen, 2021; Canli et al., 2015; Gregory & Mustata, 2012). The most striking and unexpected finding was the strong positive association between magical thinking and mechanisms of moral disengagement, the capacity to justify immoral acts through displacement of responsibility, advantageous comparison, and euphemistic labelling (Bandura et al., 1996; Moore, 2015; Blasi, 1984; Hoffman, 2000). Regression analysis identified intuitive processing, advantageous comparison, and displacement of responsibility as the strongest predictors, with volitional control emerging as an additional predictor enabling the translation of magical beliefs into stable behaviour. This finding allows for a novel perspective on adolescent irrationality: it emerges not as a resource deficit but as a preference for a particular, evolutionarily more ancient mode of information processing that helps cope with uncertainty (Frydenberg, 2019; Vetrova, 2009). Importantly, the study revealed significant gender differences in how magical thinking is integrated into the psyche (Spinelli et al., 2002; Vetrova, 2012): in boys, it is associated with a broader range of psychological characteristics, whereas in girls, with more selective associations. This finding has serious practical implications for psychological counselling and educational work with adolescents.

The next article, "Medical Discourse as a Sphere of Representation of Rational and Irrational Worldviews," shifts the discussion to the linguistic domain. Its author, I. I. Sazhenin, addresses the question of how differences in the perception of reality are reflected in language. By comparing the instructions for the drug Paracetamol (an example of evidence-based medicine) and the Tibetan remedy Rinchen Ratna Sampel (an example of traditional medicine), the author demonstrates differences in discursive practices (Karasik, 2000; Golovanova, 2013; Fedosova & Koroleva, 2018). The description of Paracetamol is replete with terminology, precise dosages, indications of pharmacokinetics, drug interactions, and contraindications, all hallmarks of a rational approach. In contrast, the description of the Tibetan medicine abounds in vague formulations, imagery ("struggle between blood and wind," "defilement of sins"), references to mystical prescriptions (auspicious lunar days, mantras), and evasive dosage instructions. The key marker of irrationality in language is the category of uncertainty, realised both at the lexical level (words such as "approximately," "may," "usually") and at the level of entire missing informational blocks (Paducheva, 1985;

Evgenieva, 1981–1984). The author concludes that language as an instrument of logic and reason proves insufficiently adapted for describing irrational worldviews, giving rise to the phenomenon of "linguistic insufficiency" and compelling adherents of irrational worldviews to resort to metaphors, symbols, and figurative constructions reminiscent of a "linguistic cartogram" requiring decoding.

The theme of rationality receives an unexpected refraction in V. K. Solondae's article "Users' Understanding of Artificial Intelligence." Whereas the preceding articles examined irrationality as a human attribute, here the author investigates how rationally users perceive one of the major products of modern civilisation, artificial intelligence (Ushakov, 2023; Menovshchikov, 2025; Boyd & Markowitz, 2026). In a pilot study conducted on Valentine's Day, the author tested users' responses to an invitation to discuss questions of love with AI. The results proved revealing. An overwhelming majority (88.2%) of respondents stated that such a discussion might interest someone, and the participants themselves generally evaluated their AI experience positively. In open-ended responses, key motives were identified: seeking help in difficult situations, practicality, playful interest, psychological safety, and loneliness. The author concludes that in users' understanding, AI is a functional, instrumental, and interactive phenomenon applicable in any sphere of life, including intimate and emotional domains (Gado et al., 2022; Bonnefon et al., 2024). The risks of AI use are perceived as manageable, and its boundaries of application are not perceived as psychologically insurmountable. The study raises a profound question about the boundaries of rationality: users attribute to AI properties that extend far beyond its algorithmic essence, which in itself constitutes a manifestation of irrational, anthropomorphic projection (Harris, 2024; Zhao et al., 2022). The article demonstrates that our perception of technology is as susceptible to biases as our perception of any other complex reality.

Alekseeva and Danilova (2026) found that telephone fraud victims ($n = 27$) differed from those who terminated contact ($n = 56$) by higher suggestibility, sensitivity, and magical thinking, lower aggressiveness and spontaneity, and the loss of protective correlations between suggestibility and spontaneity. Anxiety was a risk factor only in combination with suggestibility and magical beliefs.

The issue concludes with M. B. Shcheglyagina's article "Cognitive Interventions in the Therapy of Chronic

Insomnia: Mechanisms, Targets, and Methods of Correction." This work, remaining within the framework of clinical psychology, offers a practical perspective on how to work with irrational beliefs entrenched at the behavioural and physiological levels. Chronic insomnia is a classic example of how an initial trigger (stress) initiates a cycle of "irrational" cognitions that maintain the disorder (Spielman, 1986; Morin, 1993; Harvey, 2002). The author describes in detail the central cognitive distortions in insomnia: catastrophising the consequences of sleep loss, dichotomous thinking, rigid and unrealistic expectations, and personalisation (Carney & Edinger, 2006; Palagini et al., 2017; Harvey, 2003; Tang et al., 2023). These beliefs heighten anxiety, which in turn impedes falling asleep, confirming initial fears. Cognitive-behavioural therapy for insomnia offers a systematic set of interventions to break this vicious cycle (Perlis et al., 2011; Edinger et al., 2021; Riemann et al., 2023; Walker et al., 2022). The article provides a detailed analysis, with dialogue examples, of cognitive restructuring techniques: Socratic dialogue (Beck, 2024), probability estimation of catastrophes (Leahy, 2020), cognitive continuum (Beck, 2024), and behavioural experiments (Perlis et al., 2021; Perlis et al., 2011). Particular attention is devoted to working with metacognitive beliefs, the conviction that thought control is necessary and that worry is useful (Wells, 2008; Ong et al., 2012; Tang et al., 2023). The author demonstrates that cognitive interventions are most effective when integrated with behavioural methods and allow for impact not only on thought content but also on the relationship with one's own cognitive processes.

4. Discussion

The articles presented in this issue, despite their diversity of themes and approaches, paint a coherent and integrated picture. Irrationality ceases to be something marginal or pathological. It emerges as a fundamental, evolutionarily entrenched feature of the human psyche that, unlike slow and energy-intensive rationality (Kahneman, 2011; Stanovich, 2009), enables rapid decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. The magical thinking of adolescents, patients' superstitions, belief in the "special mission" of dark leaders, the specific language of traditional medicine, and even the anthropomorphisation of artificial intelligence are all links in the same chain in which irrationality performs an adaptive function (Boyer, 2001; Vyse, 2014; Shermer, 2015).

The comparison of results allows for several generalisations of both theoretical and practical significance. First, all studies converge on the

finding that irrationality is neither a deviation nor a pathology but a fundamental characteristic of the psyche that enables rapid responding to uncertainty. Magical thinking and superstitions serve functions of creating an illusion of control and reducing stress (Keinan, 1994; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008; Bayramova & Enikolopov, 2021; Rudski & Edwards, 2007). Second, cognitive abilities and rational thinking style do not constitute absolute protection against indoctrination (Jastrzębski & Chuderski, 2022; Erceg et al., 2019; Čavojská et al., 2020), which implies the necessity of incorporating into educational programmes not only the training of analytical skills but also instruction in recognising and managing one's own intuitive responses (Stanovich, 2011; Pennycook et al., 2015b; Svedholm & Lindeman, 2013). Third, the context-dependence of irrationality compels a revision of the traditional opposition of rational and irrational as universal categories: what appears irrational to an external observer may be deeply rational for a bearer of a given culture (Douglas, 1986; Hasbrouck, 2024; Kramer & Brown, 2015; Habermas, 1992). Fourth, irrationality permeates not only thinking and behaviour but also language and attitudes toward technology, and the category of uncertainty and anthropomorphic projections possess their own logic requiring specialised methods of investigation (Boyd & Markowitz, 2026; Taylor & Taylor, 2021). Fifth, clinical work demonstrates that cognitive interventions that take into account irrational beliefs can be highly effective, particularly when they combine the restructuring of thought content with the modification of metacognitive attitudes (Perlis et al., 2011; Morin, 1993; Harvey, 2002; Edinger et al., 2021; Riemann et al., 2023; Wells, 2008; Ong et al., 2012).

The practical conclusion of the article by Bogdanova and Khaidarova is that managing irrationality requires a two-component approach: from clinical psychology, the development of emotional intelligence and ethical values (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; de Waal, 2009; da Silva et al., 2024); and from corporate anthropology, the search for and actualisation of cultural "totems" that unite the collective and render strategic decisions "their own" and "understandable" (Kramer & Brown, 2015; Kramer & Brown, 2020; Cameron & Quinn, 2001). The article by Dvojnina and Dvojinin adds an important note of epistemic sobriety to this discussion: cognitive abilities are not a panacea but merely a tool, the effectiveness of which depends on our willingness to use it (Stanovich, 2011; Bensley et al., 2023; Pennycook et al., 2015b).

Irrationality can be not only adaptive but also victimogenic: in telephone fraud, magical thinking, suggestibility, and anxiety form a vulnerability complex, making critical thinking, desuperstition, and assertiveness training relevant for prevention (Alekseeva & Danilova, 2026).

5. Conclusion

The central challenge of our time, as virtually all authors emphasise, is not to eradicate irrationality but to learn to recognise it, understand its hidden logic, and use this understanding for more balanced decision-making in business, education, healthcare, everyday life, and fraud prevention. A promising direction for future research is the integration of metacognitive approaches into various protocols for working with irrational beliefs (Wells, 2008; Ong et al., 2012), as well as the development of applied methodologies that take into account cultural context and individual differences (Viale & Shye, 2025; Bueno-de la Fuente et al., 2025; Elbers et al., 2023).

Thus, the "ocean of irrationality" is not so dangerous if we cease to perceive it as chaos and begin to study its currents, depths, and reefs. Psychology and related sciences have already done considerable work in mapping it (Boyer, 2001; Vyse, 2014; Irwin, 2009; Subbotsky, 2001; Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Shermer, 2015). The task of this issue is to offer readers navigational tools for this journey, demonstrating that even the most puzzling human actions possess their own internal logic, and that understanding this logic is the key to more effective interaction with the world and with ourselves.

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Highlights:

- Irrationality is an evolutionarily entrenched adaptive mechanism for rapid decision-making under uncertainty, not a cognitive deficit.

- High intelligence and critical thinking do not guarantee immunity to pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, or paranormal beliefs.
- Magical thinking in adolescence is linked to intuitive processing, reduced emotional regulation, and moral disengagement mechanisms.
- Irrationality is context-dependent, permeating language, technology perception, corporate culture, and clinical practice.

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Океан иррациональности: от когнитивных иллюзий до управленческих парадоксов

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Резюме. Актуальность и проблема. В современном мире, характеризующемся высокой неопределённостью, информационной перегрузкой и быстрыми изменениями, человек всё чаще сталкивается с ограничениями собственной рациональности. Иррациональность, долгое время воспринимавшаяся как отклонение или ошибка, сегодня рассматривается как фундаментальная характеристика человеческого мышления и поведения, которая не исчезает с развитием науки и технологий, а трансформируется и проявляется в различных сферах жизни – от принятия повседневных решений до функционирования крупных корпораций. Несмотря на обилие эмпирических данных, остаётся не до конца осмысленным, как различные проявления иррациональности (когнитивные искажения, магическое мышление, эпистемически необоснованные убеждения) взаимосвязаны между собой и какое место они занимают в адаптационном репертуаре человека. **Цель.** Настоящая вводная статья представляет тематический номер журнала и ставит своей целью интегрировать междисциплинарные подходы к изучению иррациональности, объединяющие психологию, поведенческую экономику, лингвистику, корпоративную антропологию и другие науки, а также предложить читателю инструменты для более глубокого понимания принятия решений и поведения людей в условиях неопределённости. **Методы.** Для достижения поставленной цели авторы провели систематический обзор ключевых современных исследований, посвящённых когнитивным искажениям, магическому мышлению, эпистемически необоснованным убеждениям и их роли в различных контекстах. Анализ охватывает как классические работы Д. Канемана, А. Тверски (Kahneman, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), К. Становича (Stanovich, 2009) и Д. Ариэли (Ariely, 2008), так и более поздние эмпирические исследования, в том числе межкультурные и клинические (Keinan, 1994; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008; Hamerman et al., 2018; Taher et al., 2020; Latifnejad Roudsari et al., 2015; Fluke et al., 2014; Rudski & Edwards, 2007). Кроме того, применён метод сравнительного дискурс-анализа медицинских текстов, а также пилотажные исследования восприятия искусственного интеллекта пользователями и исследование жертв телефонного

мошенничества. Такой комплексный подход позволяет выявить как универсальные, так и культурно-специфические механизмы иррациональности. *Результаты.* Проведенный анализ свидетельствует, что иррациональность не является простой совокупностью ошибок, а представляет собой особый способ адаптации к сложности и неопределённости мира, имеющий как деструктивные, так и конструктивные аспекты. Магическое мышление и суеверия выполняют функции создания иллюзии контроля, снижения стресса и объяснения случайных событий (Keinan, 1994; Whitson & Galinsky, 2008), что подтверждается данными, полученными в разных странах – Израиле, Иране, Португалии, Колумбии, странах Африки и Азии. Выявлена устойчивая связь между иррациональными убеждениями и личностными чертами, включая нейротизм, внешний локус контроля и тревожность (Perdue, 2013; Wise, 2011; Wiseman & Watt, 2004). Показано, что даже высокий интеллект не гарантирует защиты от псевдонауки и конспирологии, если не задействуются сознательные рациональные стратегии (Jastrzębski & Chuderski, 2022; Čavojová et al., 2020; Erceg et al., 2019). В статьях номера дополнительно продемонстрированы: феномен «тёмного лидерства» в организациях (Boddy, 2017; Mathieu et al., 2014; Diller & Jonas, 2020), возрастные и гендерные особенности магического мышления у подростков, лингвистические маркеры иррациональности в медицинском дискурсе, антропоморфные проекции при взаимодействии с искусственным интеллектом, эффективные когнитивные интервенции при хронической инсомнии (Morin, 1993; Harvey, 2002; Perlis et al., 2011; Riemann et al., 2023), а также психологические особенности жертв телефонного мошенничества. *Заключение.* Представленные материалы позволяют переосмыслить иррациональность не как патологию, а как эволюционно закреплённый механизм быстрого реагирования на неопределённость. Главный практический вывод состоит в том, что управление иррациональностью требует не её искоренения, а осознанного распознавания, понимания её скрытой логики и использования этого понимания для принятия более взвешенных решений в бизнесе, образовании, здравоохранении и повседневной жизни. Номер журнала даёт читателю навигационные инструменты для исследования «океана иррациональности», показывая, что даже самые странные поступки имеют внутреннюю логику, а её понимание – ключ к эффективному взаимодействию с миром и с самим собой.

Ключевые слова: иррациональность, когнитивные искажения, принятие решений, магическое мышление, эпистемически необоснованные убеждения, поведенческая экономика, корпоративная культура, виктимизация, телефонное мошенничество

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