INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL MODULE FOR PERSONAL POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MANAGERIAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT.
Background: The development of managerial skills is an important part of higher education in the field of Management, while the personal development of students is considered an important prerequisite for their future professional readiness. **Aims:** The aim of the article is to point out the possibilities of developing the personal potential of students using personality typologies and self-knowledge questionnaires in higher education. **Methods:** The article presents the implementation of these tools within the innovative educational module titled "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills, which was verified at the Faculty of Management and Business, University of Prešov. Within the module, the development of personal potential is understood as a prerequisite for effective management, communication, persuasive and negotiation situations. The analysis is based on a combination of quantitative results of the Big Five and IASR-B5 personality questionnaires and qualitative feedback from students. **Results:** The results indicate that working with these tools contributes to increased student engagement, a deeper awareness of their own personality traits, and the development of the ability to make realistic self-assessments. **Conclusions:** The findings also point to the importance of integrating self-awareness tools into teaching as a means of supporting self-reflection, self-regulation, and the formation of managerial thinking.

Keywords: educational module, management, self-awareness, Big Five, personality typologies, managerial thinking, IASR-B5

JEL Classification: D91, I25, M10

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Introduction

Higher education in the field of Management should go beyond the framework of conveying theoretical knowledge and also focus on the development of students' personal competencies. These are the ones that enable them to function effectively in a complex, dynamic and often unpredictable business environment. The traditional emphasis on knowledge and technical skills is no longer enough – it is increasingly becoming clear that personal potential, self-knowledge and the ability to reflect on one's own thinking and behaviour represent the indispensable basis for successful managerial action (Kopac a kol., 2025; Rauch, Frese, 2007).

One of the key elements of managerial potential is the personality of the individual. Characteristics such as openness to new challenges, the ability to learn from mistakes, emotional stability, conscious self-regulation and realistic self-assessment significantly influence decision-making, problem-solving and interpersonal communication in a business context. Therefore, there is currently an increasing emphasis on universities creating space for the development of these skills through experiential, self-reflective and practically oriented forms of teaching (Thomassen, 2023; Gibb, 2002). In this context, the application of personality typologies and self-knowledge questionnaires is gaining importance, as they allow students to better understand their personality traits, response patterns and preferred communication styles. Their use in education can significantly support the development of metacognitive skills and managerial thinking.

The paper, therefore, focuses on the use of self-knowledge tools within the innovative educational module titled "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills", which was piloted at the Faculty of Management and Business of the University of Prešov. Based on the student feedback, we analyse the benefits of tools such as the Big Five and IASR-B5 for the development of personality potential, metacognition and realistic self-assessment of future managers.

Managerial Personality Potential

Managerial potential represents a complex set of assumptions that enable an individual to identify managerial opportunities, make effective decisions under conditions of uncertainty, manage interpersonal situations, resolve conflicts and lead others (Pashiardis, Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz, 2022). This potential includes not only cognitive abilities, professional knowledge and technical skills, but also intrapersonal factors – particularly personality traits, motivational patterns and the ability to self-regulate.

In contemporary personality psychology, the so-called Big Five model plays a key role, providing a stable framework for describing individual differences (Mammadov, 2022). This model includes five dimensions: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (low, i.e. emotional stability). Research suggests that some of these traits are significantly associated with managerial behaviour and performance. For example, high conscientiousness is associated with perseverance and reliability, openness supports creativity and innovation, and extraversion is associated with risk-taking and the ability to assert oneself in social interactions (Zhao, Seibert, Lumpkin, 2010). In addition, the managerial personality is also characterised by the ability for effective self-regulation and metacognition, which is directly related to the awareness of one's own strengths and development areas (Guo, 2026). Personality therefore represents not only a predisposition, but also a developable aspect that can be purposefully cultivated through educational and self-knowledge interventions (Brandstätter, 2011). In the context of higher education, the personality of future managers thus acquires a new status – as a dynamic component of their development potential, which can be identified, reflected on and consciously shaped through appropriate tools.

Self-Awareness and Metacognition

Self-awareness is the ability of a person to be aware of their own thinking, behaviour, values, needs, and motivation (Carden, Jones, Passmore, 2022). It is a process through which an individual reflects on their inner experiences and the way they interact with the external environment. In the context of management, self-awareness plays a key role – it helps an individual realistically assess their strengths and weaknesses, better understand their decision-making patterns, and communicate more effectively with colleagues, partners, or customers (Morin, 2011). Self-awareness and metacognition are closely linked to the concept of self-regulation – the ability to consciously manage one's emotions,

behaviour, and goals (Antonopolou, 2024). These abilities are essential not only for managing managerial uncertainty but also for building an authentic and sustainable managerial style. Higher education, therefore, has an ideal opportunity to develop these processes purposefully through reflective activities, facilitated discussions, and self-awareness tools that offer students concrete frameworks for analysing their own functioning.

Typologies and Questionnaires in the Context of Education

Self-knowledge tools, such as psychological typologies and personality questionnaires, are an effective way for students to gain a structured view of their own personality traits, communication style, and behavioural preferences. Their use in higher education supports self-reflection, the development of metacognitive skills, and helps students identify areas for further development, which is particularly beneficial in the context of business education (Mumford, 2006). Among the most commonly used tools are typologies such as MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance), and various questionnaires based on the Big Five model (Kim, Lee, Hwang, 2025). Each of these approaches offers a different, yet complementary, view of an individual's personality. While MBTI classifies people into 16 types based on dichotomies (e.g. introversion vs. extraversion), DISC focuses on behaviour in interpersonal settings and work situations.

The innovative educational module titled "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills", used the Big Five instrument by McCrae and Costa (2003) and the IASR-B5 (Interpersonal Adjective Scales Revised – Big Five) created by Trapnell and Wiggins (1990). The questionnaire combines the interpersonal circumplex model of interpersonal traits with the Big Five dimensions, thus providing a comprehensive view of an individual's personality. It allows students to identify not only their preferred style of behaviour and communication, but also potential blind spots that may affect their entrepreneurial decision-making, teamwork or leadership. An important aspect of using these instruments is their correct interpretation and facilitation. Their aim is not to classify the student into a rigid category, but to create a space for discussion, self-reflection and the formulation of individual development goals. In combination with reflective tasks, group feedback and practical exercises, these tools can significantly contribute to the development of entrepreneurial potential and metacognitive skills.

Implementation of Self-Awareness Tools in Teaching

As part of the optional "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module, which was piloted at the Faculty of Management and Business of the University of Prešov, self-awareness questionnaires were included in the teaching as an integral part of the introductory seminars. The primary goal of this methodology was to create a safe space for individualised knowledge of one's own personality traits and to support the development of students' metacognitive abilities. Specifically, the Big Five (McCrae, Costa, 2003) and IASR-B5 (Trapnell, Wiggins, 1990) questionnaires were used, which the students completed individually. They were then guided to interpret their results using a worksheet and facilitated discussion in small groups. The teaching also included a joint reflection at the level of the whole group, during which the students shared their findings, surprises and awareness in relation to communication style, motivations, or tendencies in decision-making. This process was based on the principles of reflective learning (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997), where active work with one's own experiences and their interpretation in the context of personal development plays a key role. The combination of an analytical framework (questionnaire), peer feedback (discussion) and guided reflection allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of their own behaviour in managerial situations and to increase their level of self-assessment. The students' statements indicate that working with the questionnaire provided them with a practical and understandable framework for understanding their personality. They appreciated the combination of individual analysis with group discussion the most, which supported a sense of belonging and opened space for the exchange of opinions. The students also stated that this activity made them feel more engaged in the learning process and that they understood better how their personality influences their managerial behaviour.

Methodology

The research is based on the application of self-knowledge tools within the teaching of a new optional "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module, implemented at the Faculty of Management and Business of the University of Prešov. The aim of the module was to support the development of managerial competencies, personal potential and metacognitive abilities of students through experiential and reflective teaching.

Objectives

The main aim of the research was to examine how working with typologies and reflection influences the development of managerial thinking, metacognition and realistic self-assessment of students.

Research Sample

The research group consisted of 230 full-time students, with an average age of 21.4 years (SD = 2.1), of whom 124 were women (53.9%) and 106 were men (46.1%). Students were randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group (n = 120) that completed the intervention program and a control group (n = 110) that continued standard instruction without intervention.

Research Methods

Although the broader project included both experimental and control groups, this paper focuses solely on the analysis of the experimental group (n = 120) that completed the innovative educational module. During the introductory seminars, students completed the Big Five and IASR-B5 self-report questionnaires, which combine the circular model of interpersonal traits with the dimensions of the Big Five model. The questionnaire results served as the basis for individual personality profile analysis and subsequent group discussions on the impact of personality on managerial behaviour, communication, and decision-making.

Final feedback at the end of the semester was obtained through a written questionnaire that included both structured and open-ended questions. It focused on the subjective perception of the contribution of individual activities (questionnaire, reflection, group discussion) to self-development, metacognition, and awareness of managerial competencies. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes and reflective patterns in the students' responses.

Results

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the profile of students' personality traits, which we obtained through the Big Five questionnaire.

Table 1. Profile of students' personality traits (Big Five questionnaire)

Dimension (Big Five)	Average score (1–5)	Standard deviation	Most frequently observed profile
Openness to experience	4.1	0.6	Curious and creative
Conscientiousness	3.9	0.7	Organised and reliable
Extraversion	3.6	0.8	Socially engaged
Agreeableness	4.2	0.5	Cooperative and empathetic
Emotional stability	3.5	0.9	Averagely balanced

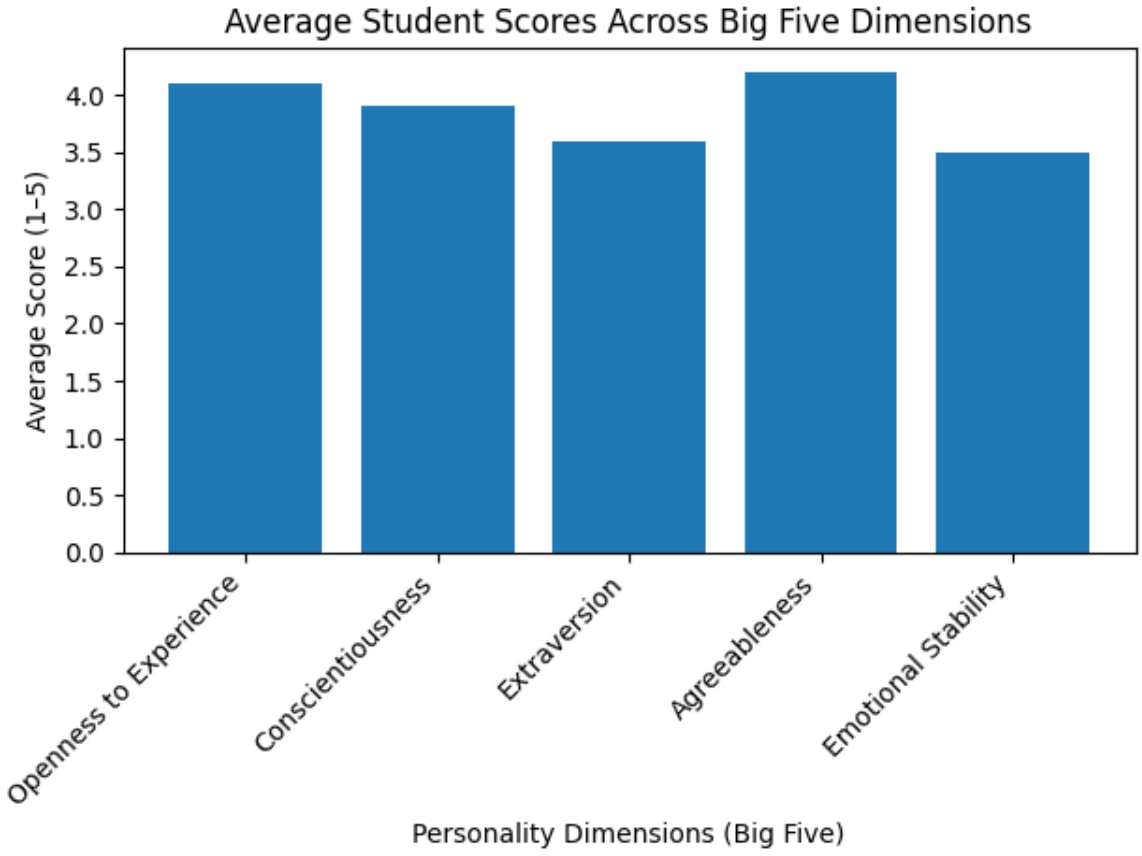


Figure 1. Profile of student personality traits (Big Five questionnaire)
Source: *own data*

Figure 1 and Table 1 reveal some interesting insights about the personality profile of students who completed the "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module:

- The highest average score was achieved by students in the dimension of Agreeableness (4.2), which indicates a high level of cooperation, empathy and willingness to work in a team – important factors in both management and teamwork.
- They also had high scores in Openness to experience (4.1), which confirms their curiosity, creativity and willingness to try new approaches – key in innovation and management.
- The lowest score was recorded in Emotional stability (3.5), which may indicate a higher level of stress or uncertainty in challenging situations – at the same time, this is a potential area for further development, especially in managing failures and risks in business.
- Conscientiousness (3.9) and Extraversion (3.6) are slightly above average, indicating the ability to plan, be responsible and have a certain level of social engagement.

The overall profile of students can be characterised as cooperative, open and creative, with a stable level of conscientiousness, but also with room for increasing emotional resilience. Table 2 and Figure 2 present the profile of students' personality traits, which we obtained through the IASR-B5 questionnaire – Interpersonal Circle Model.

Table 2. Profile of students' personality traits (IASR-B5 – Interpersonal Circle Model)

Subscale	Opposite Trait	Average Score (1–5)	Interpretation
Dominance	Submissiveness	4.0	Confident, proactive
Arrogance	Modesty	3.3	Sometimes overly critical
Coldness	Agreeableness	3.0	Reserved towards others
Introversion	Extraversion	3.2	Quieter, observant type
Submissiveness	Dominance	2.9	Submissive, adaptable
Modesty	Arrogance	3.5	Immodest but honest
Agreeableness	Coldness	4.2	Cooperative, friendly
Extraversion	Introversion	3.6	Sociable, energetic
Neuroticism	Emotional stability	3.1	Emotionally unstable
Conscientiousness	Unreliability	3.9	Responsible, organised
Openness to experience	Closedness	4.1	Creative, curious

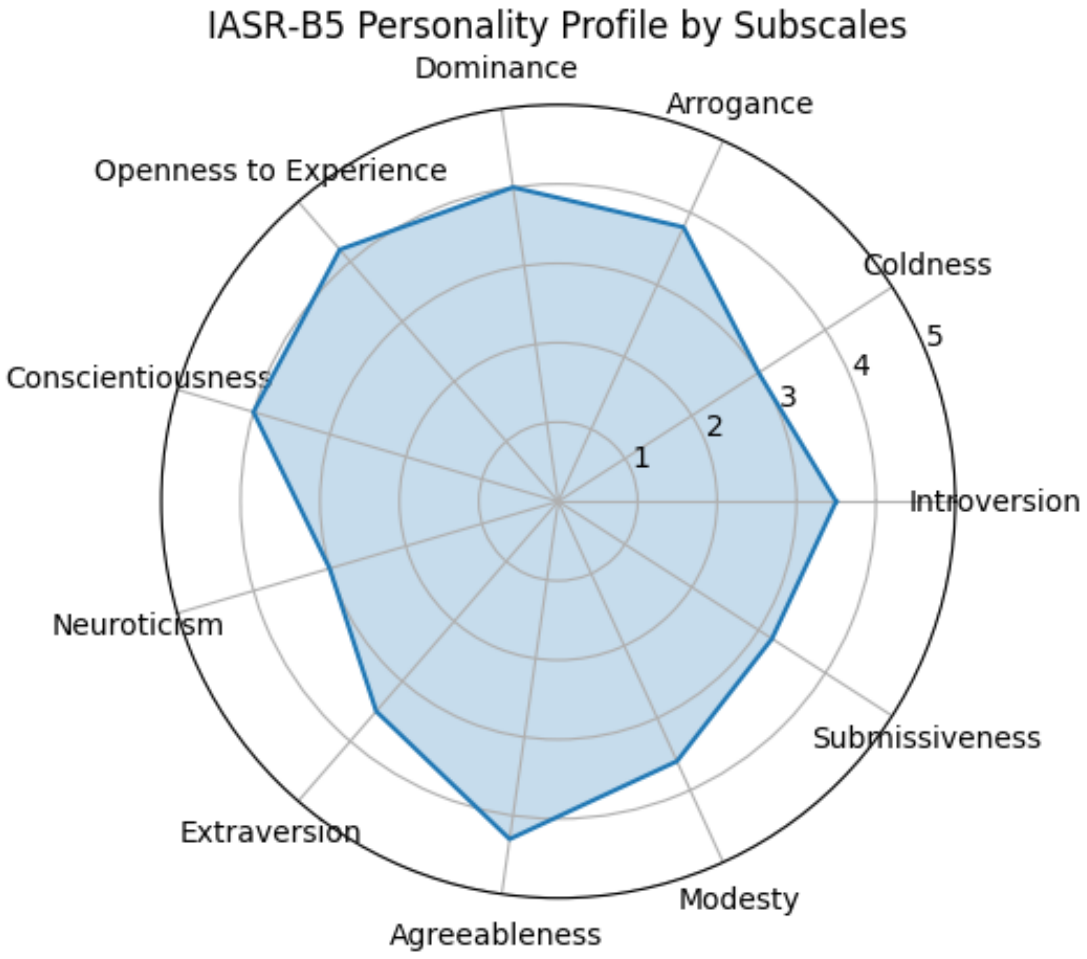


Figure 2. Profile of student personality characteristics (IASR-B5 questionnaire – Interpersonal circle model)
Source: *own data*

Based on the results of the IASR-B5 self-assessment questionnaire, a student personality profile was created that takes into account a wider range of interpersonal traits in the circle model. The radar chart visualises the average scores in individual subscales, which are conceived as mutually opposing dimensions (e.g. Dominance vs. Submissiveness, Agreeableness vs. Coldness). The results indicate several significant tendencies:

- The students achieved the highest scores in the subscales Agreeableness (4.2) and Openness to experience (4.1). This indicates that these are students with a high level of empathy, cooperation, as well as a creative and open approach to new challenges – which are favourable prerequisites for managerial activities.
- Dominance (4.0) and Conscientiousness (3.9) were also relatively high. They show a tendency to take initiative and responsibility – traits important for independent decision-making and perseverance.
- The lowest values occurred in the subscales of Submissiveness (2.9) and Coldness (3.0), which may indicate that most students have a low tendency to passively submit or be emotionally distant.
- A slightly elevated score in Neuroticism (3.1) indicates some emotional vulnerability, which may be a challenge in managing stress and uncertainty in business.
- Extraversion (3.6) and Introversion (3.2) were balanced, indicating that there are different personality styles among students with a stronger or weaker tendency towards social activity.

These results support the intention of the "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module to develop not only technical skills but also self-reflection, interpersonal understanding and conscious work with one's own potential. The combination of numerical outputs and reflection allowed students to identify not only their strengths but also personality areas suitable for development in the context of management.

Intervention Program

The experimental group completed a series of practical seminars over the course of one semester as part of the new innovative "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module. The module was designed to connect self-knowledge with practical management situations. Teaching took place in the form of experiential learning and focused on the active development of personal potential, managerial thinking and metacognitive skills.

Individual thematic modules were designed to support the development of students' personal potential as a prerequisite for effective management of managerial situations, persuasive communication and negotiation processes. The content of the innovative educational module was divided into six thematic modules, which reflected the key areas of managerial competence development:

1. Managerial thinking – forming managerial identity, working with goals, values and a personal approach to leading people.
2. Self-reflection and metacognition – knowledge of one's own thinking, ability to learn from mistakes, regulate one's own learning and reflect on one's own decision-making processes.
3. Decision-making under uncertainty – managing risk, intuition and analytical decision-making in a complex managerial environment.
4. Working with feedback and persuasion – developing the ability to receive and provide feedback, communicate one's ideas convincingly and influence others in work situations.
5. Teamwork and negotiation – effective interaction, sharing responsibility, conflict resolution and development of basic negotiation skills in a team.
6. Simulation of managerial situations – application of acquired skills in an experiential activity simulating real management decision-making, persuasive communication and negotiation.

The training took place in the form of group tasks, self-assessment exercises, model situations and intentional feedback from teachers and classmates. The emphasis was on active self-discovery, reflection and the use of theoretical knowledge in a practical context. Students worked with self-discovery tools, including the IASR-B5 and Big Five questionnaires, and their outputs were processed at the beginning of the course and subsequently used during subsequent modules as a basis for individual planning and development.

Based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' statements (Table 3) after completing the intervention educational module, the main thematic areas of feedback were identified, which reflect the perceived benefit of the program for the personal and professional development of students.

Table 3. Quantitative-qualitative analysis of student feedback

Feedback topic	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)	Typical student response
Self-knowledge and awareness of strengths	32	26.7	I discovered that I can be a natural leader, but I need to work on patience.
Increasing self-reflection ability	28	23.3	For the first time, I realised how much my decision-making is influenced by the fear of failure.
The impact of personality profile on teamwork	20	16.7	My introversion prevents me from participating in discussions, but the team helped me feel safe.
Receiving feedback	18	15.0	Until then, I did not believe in feedback, but now I see it as a key to growth.
Changing perceptions of managerial work and personal responsibility	14	11.7	I thought managerial work was just about ideas. Now I know that it is mainly about working on yourself and your ability to lead others.
Feeling more authentic and confident	8	6.6	I feel more myself and I know that even my limits can be a strength if I recognise them.

The most frequently occurring topics were related to self-knowledge and awareness of one's own strengths (26.7%) and to increasing the ability to self-reflect (23.3%). These findings indicate that working with personality typologies and self-knowledge questionnaires contributed to a deeper understanding of one's own preferences, reactions and decision-making patterns, which is considered an important prerequisite for the development of managerial competencies. A significant part of the responses also included mentions of the influence of personality profile on team cooperation (16.7%) and the ability to receive and reflect on feedback (15.0%). These topics point to the development of social and communication skills, which are key for effective functioning in a managerial environment and when working in teams. An interesting finding is also the category reflecting the change in the perception of managerial work and personal responsibility (11.7%), which indicates a shift in the understanding of the managerial role towards greater emphasis on personal development, self-management and the ability to work with one's strengths and development aspects.

Although statements regarding a feeling of greater authenticity and self-confidence make up a smaller share (6.6%), from the point of view of the pedagogical effect of the program, they represent an important indicator of strengthening the personal identity and managerial self-perception of students. This aspect can be interpreted as one of the longer-term effects of developmental interventions focused on self-knowledge and work with a personality profile.

Overall, it can be stated that the integration of self-knowledge tools and personality typologies into teaching contributes to the development of reflective thinking, to a better understanding of one's own behavior and to the formation of managerial thinking. The findings indicate that educational modules designed in this way can represent an effective tool for supporting students' personal potential and their readiness to handle complex managerial and interpersonal situations.

Discussion

Inclusion of personality typologies and self-knowledge questionnaires in the teaching of the innovative "Training Program for the Development of Personal Potential and Managerial Skills "educational module has demonstrated significant potential for the development of key competencies in the field of management. Based on the student feedback and the results of the IASR-B5 and Big Five questionnaires, it can be stated that such tools support not only an increase in the level of self-

knowledge, but also the development of metacognition, realistic self-assessment and the ability to learn from experience.

The most frequently reflected topics by students concerned awareness of one's own strengths, improvement of self-reflection skills, and understanding the impact of personality on interpersonal interactions. High scores in dimensions such as Agreeableness and Openness indicate positive prerequisites for cooperation and innovative thinking, while the occurrence of reflections on introversion, uncertainty or emotional lability points to the importance of working with individual limits.

The intervention program confirmed that personal self-knowledge can be an effective tool for developing managerial adaptability, the ability to receive feedback, and working in a team. The findings correspond with approaches that emphasise the importance of experiential and reflective learning in management education (Motta, Galina, 2023; Thomassen, 2023; Gibb, 2002; Kolb, 1984, and others).

Conclusion

The results of the presented study indicate that the integration of self-awareness tools, such as the IASR-B5 and Big Five personality questionnaires, into higher education in the field of Management has significant formative and practical benefits. Working with these tools supports the development of self-reflection, metacognitive awareness and self-regulation skills, while at the same time helping students to better understand the relationship between personality traits and managerial behaviour in interpersonal and decision-making situations.

The findings indicate that systematic work with personality typologies and reflective tools can contribute to the formation of more realistic self-assessments of students and the development of their managerial thinking. The integration of these approaches into teaching supports more active involvement of students in the learning process and creates space for a deeper understanding of their own strengths, limits and behaviours in social and managerial interactions.

In terms of study limitations, there is always space for the research sample expansion and more special regard to the cultural background of the respondents-students, which can play a major role in shaping the final personality traits model. Future studies of a similar kind might thus be oriented towards the cultural context and its role in the creation of a more complex personality trait framework.

Based on the above findings, it can be recommended to systematically include self-awareness tools in educational modules aimed at developing managerial competencies. Their use should be combined with experiential activities, reflective exercises and structured feedback, which support deeper processing of the acquired knowledge. An educational environment designed in this way can contribute not only to the development of students' professional skills but also to the formation of their ability to realistically understand themselves and others in complex managerial situations.

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