

Analysis of Social Intelligence, Personality Characteristics and Machiavellian Manifestations in Business Behaviour

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Abstract – Through the development of the issue at the theoretical level, the contribution, both from a theoretical and an empirical point of view, wants to solve the questions of using social intelligence, investigating personality characteristics and analyzing Machiavellian manifestations in the field of business. The data from the respondents were obtained using questionnaire methods, where they were gradually processed and analyzed using mathematical-statistical methods at the level of descriptive and inductive statistics, as well as more advanced statistical methods. The aforementioned methods were used to collect data on important sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as social intelligence (this is the MESI questionnaire), as well as selected personality traits (this is the B5 questionnaire) and, of course, Machiavellianism (VYSEDI). Mutual statistical differences were found in selected attributes of social intelligence, as well as attributes of personality characteristics and Machiavellianism in the field of educational level of the respondents, the sphere in which the respondents work, as well as within the family of the respondents. The results can be practically used in preparing future businessmen, placing people in trading positions within the organization, training of businessmen.

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Based on the presented results, findings and knowledge, as well as their summary and specification of benefits for practical applications, it can be stated that the goal of the contribution has been fulfilled.

Keywords – Social intelligence, personality characteristics, Machiavellian manifestations, business behaviour, businessmen.

1. Introduction

The development of the business system and the effective work of their members are significantly correlated. It is a system that is built on the continuity of a specific person and a specific organization. The result is ultimately the growth of the entire trading company. The high-quality work of salespeople reflects not only the fulfillment of their needs, but also the fulfillment of the needs of colleagues, subordinates, superiors, the needs of the organization and, ultimately, the needs of the entire company. Therefore, traders manage specific business processes, and at the same time create strategic visions for the future development of the company. They ensure the development and progress of the business company as a whole.

Personality traits and characteristics are predictors that explain the behaviour of individuals [1]. Studies focused on business work have confirmed that personality characteristics have an impact on the success of business people. They concluded that personality influences the goals and strategies a businessman chooses, and these then directly influence success. Personality characteristics have an impact on organizational skills, motivation, vision, and strategy. According to the authors, attempts to determine the specific characteristics required for business work encountered many obstacles, such as uniqueness, the individuality of the individual, differences in the demands of individual functions, and social conditions of organizations. Therefore, the point of view of social conditions, but also the development of business situations in the organization comes to the fore [2].

The practical use of research results in work activities and their relationship to the investigation of the personality of businessmen, as well as the determination of the personality profile of businessmen and the analysis of characteristics that seem to be important in the given work area, are essential for the quality performance of business work [3]. The characteristics that good businessmen should possess are also described. In addition to professional knowledge, they should have well-developed application skills, specifically communication and motivational skills, and the skills necessary for effective teamwork [4]. Their creativity, will, character, emotionality, and physical and mental qualities are also emphasized. Emphasis is placed on the moral personality characteristics of the business subjects, which are formed by their character, temperament, and somatic characteristics of the businessman's personality [5]. Another author supplements them with the innate qualities of a businessman's personality, where temperament, intelligence, sound judgment, empathy, understanding of others, and imagination play an important role in addition to those already mentioned. He also recommends a good mental and physical condition to the acquired qualities of a businessman [6].

Businessmen are required to be versatile in knowledge, skills, and personal profile, emphasizing empathy, resilience, trustworthiness, comprehensiveness, communicativeness, and the like [7]. It is necessary to describe the personality of the businessman from various factors, be it biological, social, or cultural factors. This mainly includes the examination of his knowledge, skills and practical habits, as well as his attitudes towards others, his ability to work, experience and the hierarchy of his values [8]. Another author adds, as necessary, the art of cooperation and self-development [9], good management and planning of one's time, and the art of delegating tasks to subordinates [10].

Emphasis is placed on the personal potential of the businessmen, which is a prerequisite for the achievement of trading skills. Potential allows businessmen to focus on such activities, actions, and decisions in which they can be excellent as much as possible and achieve the set goals [11].

The author started a wave of interest in the issue of socially competent behaviour. In his publication, he discusses the behavioral and cognitive factors of social intelligence. In this understanding, it is the ability to understand other people, to be able to lead them correctly and to carry out one's procedures wisely within the framework of interpersonal relations [12]. Social intelligence is one of the key characteristics of individuals that can be used to interpret their behaviour in social situations.

It is emphasized how individuals understand and express their behaviour, as well as the behaviour of others, and how they can manage it effectively [13]. It can be considered as a real individual characteristic.

2. Methodology

Based on the presented goal of the paper and the concept of the research project, research problems and research hypotheses were formulated, which were solved within the framework of the research project.

Problem 1: Are there mutual differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations in the preparation of salespeople for work?

Hypothesis 1: We assume mutual differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations in the preparation of businessmen for work.

Problem 2: Are there mutual differences in the selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations within the type of business organization?

Hypothesis 2: We assume mutual differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations within the type of business organization.

Problem 3: Are there mutual differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations between male and female businessmen?

Hypothesis 3: We assume that there are mutual differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian traits between male and female businessmen.

The subjects of the research were respondents working in the business sphere. A total of 234 respondents answered the questionnaire, out of which 103 were men and 131 were women. The research was conducted during September and October 2023. The demographic data examined were the gender of the respondents, their educational attainment, and the type of organization in which they work.

In terms of gender, women predominated in research group, making up 56% of the research group. Men made up the remaining 44% of the research population. As for the level of education achieved, in research group, there was a smaller preponderance of respondents with university education, who made up 50.4% of the research group (N = 118). In terms of number, respondents with secondary education followed, representing 49.6% of the research group (N = 116).

According to the type of organization, respondents working in a private organization had a slight predominance in research group, which made up 50.9% of the research group (N = 119). Respondents working in a public organization made up 49.1% of the research group (N = 115).

Age reached the average value of AM = 28.72 years in group, with a standard deviation of SD = 6.67 years. The age in group had a median value of Mdn = 27 years, while the age ranged from Min = 20 years to Max = 48 years.

The data from the respondents were acquired through the already mentioned questionnaires, which were subsequently processed and analyzed using mathematical-statistical methods (descriptive and inductive statistics) and more advanced statistical methods were also used.

With the help of these questionnaires - methods, data were obtained on:

- basic socio-demographic characteristics,
- social intelligence (MESI questionnaires),
- selected personality traits (questionnaire B5),
- Machiavellian manifestations (VYSEDI).

The presented research used the methodologies described below:

MESI methodology [14]

The MESI methodology is intended for the analysis of social intelligence through a psychometric approach and is a development continuation of the EMESI methodology [15], inspired by the PESI methodology [16]. The methodology investigated by us aimed to determine the degree of perception of social intelligence as a performance characteristic. The methodology contains 21 items that are evaluated on a 5-point scale (0 – never, 4 – very often). Three factors were extracted by factor analysis:

Manipulation: people who score higher on this factor are able to persuade others to do anything. They know how to use them to their advantage and convince them to stand on their side. They use the lies of others for their own benefit - reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.854.

Empathy: individuals scoring higher in this factor can recognize other people's intentions, feelings, and weaknesses. They can adapt to new people, estimate their wishes, which they are also able to fulfill - reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.783.

Social irritability: persons characterized by a higher score in this factor are nerved by contact with other people. Other people's feelings upset them, adapting to other people causes them problems. The weaknesses and wishes of others distract them. They are nervous by people who are willing to do anything for them - reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.716.

Questionnaire B5 [17]

The B5 questionnaire [17], which is based on the IASR-B5 questionnaire [18], aimed at measuring the Big Five factors, was used to determine the personal characteristics of the respondents. The questionnaire was translated and verified using the back translation method [17]. Questionnaire B5 consists of 40 characteristics assessed on an 8-point scale (1 – completely inaccurate, 8 – completely accurate) and serves to measure 5 personality factors, named as:

Neuroticism: represents a measure of emotional lability and emotional stability. The scale detects how negative emotions are experienced, such as fear, discouragement, and embarrassment. People with high neuroticism scores are psychologically unstable and their balance is easily disturbed. They often report negative experiences and difficulties in overcoming them. Unlike emotionally stable individuals, they are full of worries, they can be easily embarrassed, they feel insecure, nervous, anxious, they experience intense fear, worry or sadness. They have unrealistic thoughts, experience strong compulsions and have maladaptive strategy management. Emotionally stable individuals do not have such problems, they are calm, balanced, carefree, and manage stressful situations better.

Extraversion: measures the quantity and intensity of interpersonal interactions, degree of overall activity, and need for stimulation. Individuals who score high are described as active, sociable, talkative, cheerful, energetic, and optimistic. Extraverts are people-oriented, seek their company, are part of various groups, and participate in social events. Introverted individuals tend to be reserved, independent, self-contained and withdrawn. They do not suffer from social phobia, nor are they necessarily unhappy and pessimistic. Their reservedness may result from a desire to be alone rather than in company.

Openness to experience: affects the degree of interest in new experiences and impressions. Individuals with high scores are characterized by a high level of proactive search and a desire for experiences. They are curious, inventive, creative, have a rich imagination. They often behave unconventionally, they are willing to experiment and reformulate valid norms and values. People with low openness are usually more conservative, prefer proven and conventional behaviour, and have subdued emotional reactions.

Agreeableness: measures the quality of interpersonal orientation on a continuum from sympathy to hostility, both in actions and in feelings and thoughts [19]. Persons with a high score on the agreeableness scale are willing to help, have understanding with other people, and treat them kindly and friendly.

They tend to trust other people and prefer cooperation. On the contrary, people with low scores prefer to compete rather than cooperate. They are described as self-centered, hostile, suspicious, and manipulative.

Conscientiousness: measures the degree of organization and persistence in goal-directed behaviour. It distinguishes reliable and consistent people from those who are apathetic and messy [19]. The dimension of conscientiousness is also connected with planning, organization and implementation of tasks. Individuals with high scores are characterized as reliable, purposeful, ambitious, hardworking, systematic, disciplined, persistent, principled, and orderly. Conversely, people with low scores are described as careless, indifferent, fickle, lazy, carefree, casual, hedonistic, and weak-willed.

The original conceptual starting point for constructing the B5 questionnaire (Janovská 2011) was the concept of the NEO-FFI methodology. The methodology is designed as a set of statements, and the respondents have to determine whether these statements apply to them or not. They can express this on a five-point scale from the value "it does not apply to me at all" to the value "it applies to me completely". By adding up the values of the items saturating the individual factors, a profile of the given respondent is created in all five dimensions of personality. Factors are conceptualized as polar scales. This means that an individual's personality can be at a different level of the scale of individual factors. For extraversion, it can range from "completely extroverted" to "completely introverted." A considerable number of psychologists have adopted this personality model in their research. The reason is also its multicultural validity and stability over time [20].

VYSEDI methodology [21]

The methodology was designed for the purpose of detecting Machiavellian manifestations in business behaviour. Three factors were extracted by factor analysis: calculation (VY), self-assertion (SE) and diplomacy (DI). The new VYSEDI methodology contains statements referring to the respondent's opinion on manipulation between people. The individual items of the questionnaire were inspired by the Vldar publication [22]. The questionnaire contains 17 items, to which the respondents answer using the scale "0 - definitely not, 1 - no; 2 - rather no than yes; 3 - yes rather than no; 4 - yes, 5 - definitely yes".

Three factors were extracted by factor analysis using the principal component method with Varimax rotation, which confirmed the existence of the assumed factor structure of Machiavellian manifestations in business behaviour.

These factors were characterized as:

Calculation - respondents who score higher in this factor believe more that control over people must be maintained at all costs. These respondents hold the view that it is necessary to tell others what they want to hear and it is necessary to acquire knowledge in order to be able to use it in controlling others. Calculated people are of the opinion that when two are competing, it is necessary to recognize whose victory is more advantageous to them, and in any case, it is beneficial to base their power on the control of other people. Cronbach's alpha: 0.760.

Self-assertion - respondents who score higher in this factor are characterized by the fact that they believe that only such a person is reliable, who relies on himself and his own strength. A successful man must always remember to avoid allies stronger than himself. Also, this factor adheres to the opinion that whoever helps another to seize power cuts himself the branch on which he sits. Consequently, the one who wants to stay in power must consider all the necessary harsh measures in advance and implement them at once so that he does not have to return to them later. Cronbach's alpha: 0.521.

Diplomacy - respondents who score higher in this factor are characterized by the constant gathering of information that can later be used to their advantage. Dexterous diplomacy is used to control others and false and indirect communication is preferred. Respondents surround themselves with capable people and society in general and show them generosity and appreciation at the right moment. Cronbach's alpha: 0.696.

The obtained data were processed and analyzed by mathematical and statistical methods of descriptive statistics, i.e. frequency of occurrence, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and inductive statistics, i.e. differential analysis. The results are displayed in tabular form. All calculations were performed in SPSS 20 statistical software.

3. Results

The used methodologies and methods of analysis of the data obtained from the research samples of the respondents made it possible to present the results and findings in the following sections. The result part of the contribution is structured based on formulated hypotheses.

3.1. Differences in Selected Attributes of Social Intelligence, Personality Characteristics and Machiavellian Manifestations within the Framework of Businessmen's Education

The existence of statistically significant differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations within the achieved education of entrepreneurs was determined using the student t-test. This allowed us to compare secondary-

school-educated and university-educated businessmen in individual attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations.

Mutual statistical differences were found in the investigation of selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations within the education of businessmen. Therefore, the hypothesis can be considered confirmed. The overall results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Educational differences in social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations

	Education	Average	Standard deviation	Tested criterion	Signification
Calculation	Secondary	2.3328	,98155	,677	,499
	University	2.2542	,78301		
Self-assertion	Secondary	2.9677	,82392	2,019	.045
	University	2.7564	,77588		
Diplomacy	Secondary	3.3588	,72897	-2.322	,021
	University	3.5498	,50720		
Manipulation	Secondary	1.6872	,83255	-,519	,604
	University	1.7409	,75059		
Empathy	Secondary	2.4310	,60872	-1.669	,096
	University	2.5521	,49378		
Social irritability	Secondary	1.4557	,61405	,437	,662
	University	1.4346	,50340		
Neuroticism	Secondary	3.9709	,66213	-1.551	,122
	University	4.0996	,60548		
Extraversion	Secondary	5.3869	1.24125	-3.692	,000
	University	5.9386	1.00834		
Openness	Secondary	4.8093	,98335	-3.603	,000
	University	5.2521	,89410		
Conscientiousness	Secondary	5.0485	,93567	-1.820	,070
	University	5.2659	,89089		
Agreeableness	Secondary	5.1412	1.33845	-4.727	,000
	University	5.9227	1.18472		

As part of the investigation of the differences between traders with a high school education and traders with a university education, statistically significant differences are noted. Differences were noted in the attributes assertiveness, diplomacy, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness, where significance was less than 0.05.

From the point of view of self-assertion, as an attribute of Machiavellian manifestations, it is found that its level is higher among secondary school-educated businessmen (AM = 2.9677) than among university-educated businessmen (AM = 2.7564). It follows from the above that businessmen with a secondary education believe to a higher extent than businessmen with a university education that only such persons are reliable, who rely on themselves and their own strengths.

From the point of view of diplomacy, as an attribute of Machiavellian manifestations, it was found that its level is significantly higher among businessmen with a university education (AM = 3.5498) than among businessmen with a secondary school education (AM = 3.3588). It follows from the above that university-educated businessmen believe to a significantly greater extent than secondary-educated businessmen that it is necessary to constantly collect information that can later be used to their advantage.

From the point of view of extraversion, as an attribute of the personal characteristics of businessmen, it was found that its level is significantly higher in businessmen with a university education (AM = 5.9386) than in businessmen with a secondary school education (AM = 5.3869).

It follows from the above that businessmen with a university education believe to a significantly higher extent than businessmen with a secondary school education that being forgiving, enthusiastic and sociable will bring them more success in business than if they chose other personality tactics.

From the point of view of openness, as an attribute of the personal traits of businessmen, it was found that its level is significantly higher among university-educated businessmen (AM = 5.2521) than among secondary-educated businessmen (AM = 4.8093). It follows from the above that, to a significantly higher degree than those with a secondary school education, businessmen with a university degree are characterized as those who are calculated, thoughtful, and inventive within the framework of personality characteristics.

From the point of view of agreeableness, as an attribute of personal characteristics of businessmen, it was found that its level is significantly higher in businessmen with a university education (AM = 5.9227) than in businessmen with a secondary school education (AM = 5.1412). It follows from the above that businessmen with a university education believe to a significantly higher extent than businessmen with a secondary education that being decent, kind and accommodating will bring them more respect and success in business.

Within other attributes, no statistically significant differences were noted for traders with a university degree compared to traders with a high school education.

3.2. Differences in Selected Attributes of Social Intelligence, Personality Characteristics and Machiavellian Manifestations within the Type of Business Organization

The existence of statistically significant differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations within the type of organization was verified through student's t-test. This allowed to compare businessmen from the public sphere and businessmen from the private sphere, in individual attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations.

Statistically significant differences were noted in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations within the type of organization in which entrepreneurs operate. Therefore, the research hypothesis is considered to be confirmed. The overall results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences from the point of view of the organization of businessmen in social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations

	Organization	Average	Standard deviation	Tested criterion	Signification
Calculation	Private	2.2824	,86295	-,189	,850
	Public	2.3043	,91281		
Self-assertion	Private	2.7941	,85905	-1,300	,196
	Public	2.9304	,74306		
Diplomacy	Private	3,4737	,65860	,457	,648
	Public	3,4359	,60751		
Manipulation	Private	1,7239	,73452	,188	,851
	Public	1,7043	,84869		
Empathy	Private	2,4166	,57070	-2,129	,034
	Public	2,5702	,53133		
Social irritability	Private	1,4994	,56316	1,360	,175
	Public	1,4000	,55464		
Neuroticism	Private	4,0116	,61431	-,591	,554
	Public	4,0609	,65965		
Extraversion	Private	5,6355	1.18256	-,392	,695
	Public	5,6957	1.16406		
Openness	Private	5,0704	1.04388	,610	,543
	Public	4,9935	,87499		
Conscientiousness	Private	5,1187	,91507	-,667	,505
	Public	5,1989	,92301		
Agreeableness	Private	5.4548	1.37266	-,948	,344
	Public	5.6185	1.26372		

As part of finding out the differences between public sector traders and private sector traders, significant statistical differences were noted. These were manifested in the selected attribute of social intelligence - empathy, where the significance was less than 0.05.

From the point of view of empathy as an attribute of social intelligence, it was found that its level is higher in entrepreneurs from the public sector (AM = 2.5702) than in entrepreneurs from the private sector (AM = 2.4166). It follows from the above that businessmen from the public sphere believe to a greater extent than businessmen from the private sphere that they can recognize the intentions and feelings of other people. They are more able to adapt to new people and estimate their wishes.

In other attributes, no statistically significant differences between the public and private spheres were found within the type of organization.

3.3. Differences in the Assessment of Attributes of Social Intelligence, Personality Characteristics, and Machiavellian Manifestations between Female and Male Businessmen

The assumption that there are statistically significant differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations from the point of view of the sex of businessmen was verified using the student's t-test. This made it possible to compare businessmen and businesswomen in individual attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations.

It can be concluded that the research hypothesis was confirmed because it was found that there are statistically significant gender differences in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations. The overall results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Gender differences among businessmen in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations

	Gender	Average	Standard deviation	Tested criterion	Signification
Calculation	Man	2.5437	,92309	3,954	,000
	Woman	2.0962	,80588		
Self-assertion	Man	2.7184	,91333	-2,350	,016
	Woman	2.9733	,69216		
Diplomacy	Man	3.4976	,63327	,909	,364
	Woman	3.4218	,63309		
Manipulation	Man	1.9404	,80054	3,961	,000
	Woman	1.5365	,73915		
Empathy	Man	2.5798	,56856	2,156	,032
	Woman	2.4231	,53786		
Social irritability	Man	1.4549	,51537	,106	,916
	Woman	1.4471	,59469		
Neuroticism	Man	4.0133	,58889	-,478	,633
	Woman	4.0534	,67262		
Extraversion	Man	5.6675	1.18269	,028	,978
	Woman	5.6632	1.16694		
Openness	Man	5.0959	,99604	,884	,374
	Woman	4.9828	,93757		
Conscientiousness	Man	5.0206	,98939	-2.046	,042
	Woman	5.2662	,84572		
Agreeableness	Man	5.5133	1.26267	-,225	,822

As part of the investigation of mutual differences between businessmen and businesswomen, statistically significant differences were recorded in selected attributes of social intelligence, personality characteristics and Machiavellian manifestations. Statistically significant differences were noted in the attributes of calculation, assertiveness, manipulation, empathy and conscientiousness.

From the point of view of calculation, as an attribute of Machiavellian manifestations, it was found that its level is higher in male entrepreneurs (AM = 2.5437) than in female entrepreneurs (AM = 2.0962). It follows from the above that male businessmen are more convinced than female businessmen that control over people must be maintained at all costs and that it is beneficial to rely on one's power and control over others.

From the point of view of self-assertion, as an attribute of Machiavellian manifestations, it was found that its level is higher among businesswomen (AM = 2.9733) than among businessmen (AM = 2.7184). It follows from the above that female entrepreneurs believe to a greater extent than male entrepreneurs that only a person who adapts to rapidly changing conditions can be permanently successful.

From the point of view of manipulation, as an attribute of social intelligence, it was found that its level is significantly higher in male entrepreneurs (AM = 1.9404) than in female entrepreneurs (AM = 1.5365). It follows from the above that male businessmen believe to a significantly greater extent than female businessmen that they are more likely to succeed in convincing others to do what they need from them.

From the point of view of empathy, as an attribute of social intelligence of businessmen, it was found that its level is significantly higher in male businessmen (AM = 2.5798) than in female businessmen (AM = 2.4231). In conclusion, it can be added that business men are more of the opinion that they can adapt to others and estimate their wishes. Male traders have these assumptions visible to a greater extent than female traders.

From the point of view of conscientiousness, as an attribute of personal characteristics of businessmen, it was found that its level is significantly higher among female businessmen (AM = 5.2662) than among male businessmen (AM = 5.0206). From the above, it follows that female businessmen are characterized to a significantly higher degree than male businessmen as being more self-disciplined, principled, diligent, with a sense of accuracy and orderliness.

For other attributes of the selected issue, no statistically significant differences were recorded in the comparison of male and female traders.

4. Discussion

Research that has been conducted within the question whether businessmen differ in certain personality characteristics has concluded that they differ in several different psychological characteristics. Differences in personality traits were analyzed by the authors using the big five questionnaire. They noted differences in extraversion (important for making contacts, dealing with other people) and openness to experience (necessary for discovering new opportunities). As expected, businessmen achieve high values in the dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, openness to experience, and conscientiousness [23].

It is interesting that the beginnings of solving the problem of social intelligence are connected with the debate about its ethical context, which is still ongoing today. Analyzes [24] investigating social intelligence confirm the information of its inclusion in categories that do not belong to ethical ones, because the results indicate that a higher degree of manipulation with others is directly connected to a higher degree of social intelligence, or use of social skills. In this context, it is also interesting to find that the manipulation factor is positively correlated with social skills and, at the same time, with the factors of lying and cynicism.

Other authors proposed a five-factor model of this construct in line with the multidimensional understanding of social intelligence [25]. Individual attributes of social intelligence were specified as social manipulation, social facilitation, social feeling, extraversion, and social adaptability. The authors proceed from the analysis of the definitions of the construct of social intelligence, which was gradually viewed as a personality trait [26], [12], [27], as a social judgment [28], as an interpretation of social stimuli and regulation [29], problem-solving skills and knowledge on social rules [30] and more recently as interpersonal competencies that facilitate effective human behaviour [31].

According to the authors, social intelligence is one of the central areas of social research. The increase in its popularity is associated with the increase in the importance attributed to factors such as social development, social skills, social success, interpersonal relationships, mental health, and positive psychology [32].

Businessmen who have social skills, or with a higher degree of social intelligence, they are able to use this "gift" in certain situations, either in complex business situations or in conflict resolution. Which results in a positive impact on everyone involved. However, on the other hand, they can use it to cheat, deceive, or manipulate others [33].

According to several authors [34], [35], [36], on the one hand, social intelligence is part of the personality characteristics of prosocial behavior, but on the other hand, it is associated with manipulation and other undesirable forms of behavior, such as Machiavellian intelligence.

According to the conducted qualitative research [37], the way of working and the structure of the entire organization correspond to male characteristics and abilities. In this research, women described their male colleagues as aggressive, competitive, self-confident, but also realistic and calm. Businesswomen described themselves and their way of working as emotional, systematic, communicative, careful, and critical.

There is also a theory of patriarchy [38]. This theory assigns power and control to men, which is reinforced by placing women in lower job positions. It represents the superiority of men in the so-called gender system. Women are seen as less capable, passive victims in their relationship with men in the field of competition and rivalry in the business market.

According to results, women scored higher than men in terms of conscientiousness and assertiveness. It is believed that the theory of patriarchy is gradually changing, and the motivation for similar research in this area can bring interesting results in the future. From the point of view of the performance of business activities, it is not possible to assume that female businessmen and male businessmen will behave in the same way. It is not right to have such expectations either. Both men and women bring typical, socialized specifics of their behaviour to the store. This factor is decisive from the point of view of the discussion on the holding of business positions by women, and at the same time, it is a factor that can contribute to increasing the quality and efficiency of business work.

In the research [39], it was determined in which business organizations more manipulative behaviour occurs, whether in the private or public sphere. The results indicated that manipulative behaviour occurs in the private sphere, thus in favor of the public sphere. A business in the private sector often has its own rules, its own steps to achieve business goals. This sphere is influenced by self-management, where there are often different rules than in the public sphere. Management chooses how it will manage business processes, chooses a program, sets standards, how it will act to fulfill them and, on the contrary, how it will sanction standards that are not followed. These results are consistent with this research, where higher empathy scores were found in public sector entrepreneurs.

In another study [40], self-employed people found that high-quality information in the business process is valued by those whose highest education is university, compared to those with lower levels of education. As the level of education increases, so does the level of demandingness of businessmen. It is worth pointing out that they are the ones who will suffer from higher quality work. Similar to our research, college-educated business people scored higher on the attributes of diplomacy, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness.

According to the authors [38], the key factors influencing who occupies which business position are not only gender but also the individual's social circumstances. The results of research [41] are presented, according to which the main cause of unequal status in trade, and especially in trade positions, is not primarily the gender category, but the position that the trader currently holds. The location of the individual in the organizational structure is the basis for explaining his behaviour and attitudes. Therefore, as part of the future direction of research, the authors would like to follow this path and try other possibilities for investigating individual differences in the field of business behaviour.

5. Conclusion

Business work is directly related to solving difficult situations. How businessmen deal with these situations affects their lives and the lives of their co-workers. At the same time, the effectiveness of handling business situations has an impact on the operation and efficiency of the entire organization that these businessmen manage. In the presented research project, the focus is on solving questions related to specifying the differences between selected attributes of social intelligence, selected personal characteristics of businessmen, and manifestations of Machiavellianism in business situations among selected socio-demographic indicators. In this context, personality characteristics as predictors of businessmen's behaviour in business-social situations are understood. Of the personality characteristics, emphasis was placed primarily on the issue of social intelligence and Machiavellianism.

The project of the research part of the paper was focused on three basic areas. Specify mutual differences between social intelligence, personality characteristics, and Machiavellian manifestations. Based on the presented results, findings, and knowledge, as well as their summary and specification of benefits for practical applications, it can be stated that the goal of the paper has been fulfilled.

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