

THE IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) TO CHANGES IN THE AREA OF PERSONAL AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS ON SELECTED MAYORS AND DEPUTY MAYORS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the last 20 years affected all sectors of human activity. The changes also affected education that offers more accessible and high-efficiency learning using ICT to all people interested in broadening their knowledge and skills. Information and communication technologies have brought great potential for the part-time forms of education which meet the requirements of our time and offers efficient and most flexible model of education. Graduating in college or University is much easier.

Regard to the requirements of our time, namely the emergence and the life in the information society, the lack of jobs ... etc., people with many years of experience, which are considered as experts in their profession, are going back to schools. This not only about people from the private sector, but a similar situation is also in the public sector. It is common when filling vacancies in public administration that is given priority for applicants with a university degree and then for candidates without a university education. Another situation occurred at positions based on the results of the elections, such as the mayor, town councillors, members of parliament, senators and others who do not pass the traditional selection procedures and for their functions are not set qualifications. Despite the fact that for the execution of their jobs is not required university degree, many of them are expanding key competencies.

This paper is focused on the impact of a one-year professional education program MBA (Master of Business Administration) specialized on the public administration sector with representatives of small and medium-sized Municipalities in the Czech Republic (mayors, deputy mayors) in order to ascertain the changes especially in the area of personal and managerial skills.

Keywords: Research, education, lifelong learning, MBA, personal skills, managerial skills

1 INTRODUCTION

Development of the information and communication technologies in the last 20 years has brought changes to all spheres of human life. Active usage and adaptation of these technologies has become a critical factor for creation of and access to power, wealth and knowledge.[1] The changes are obvious in education as well. Part-time form of studies, which has been introduced in response to students' needs and requests in relation to the today's societal requirements, is accentuated. This form of studies focuses predominantly on individuals who feel the need to continue their education but cannot attend the regular full-time instruction. This represents a very effective, flexible and variable model which can be adapted, from an organizational as well as a content-related point of view, to the students' needs and provides them with material and wide-ranging advantages.[2] Information and communication technologies have brought changes in the sources of information that students use as well. Traditional sources of information, such as photocopied university textbooks, published textbooks and other printed materials are being abandoned and replaced by interactive electronic resources. The importance of e-learning is also substantiated by the support given to research by the European Union (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme [3]) and by the strategic documents concerning development of the information and communication technologies (The e-Learning Action Plan; eEurope 2005 with the follow-up e-Learning Conference 2006, i2010 – European Information Society 2010).

As Rosman says, permanent, systematic training as well as self-education has become a necessary and common part of every individual's life.[4] This trend is particularly obvious at private universities

which are highly sought after compared to public colleges and universities, thanks to the greater diversity and adaptability of the fields of studies to the needs of the labour market that they offer. In addition, private universities offer students an individual approach, which is especially welcome for busy students. In Table 1 you can see a visible difference between the number of students in the full-time, part-time and distance forms of learning between the public universities and three major private universities in the Czech Republic. [5],[6],[7]

Tab. 1 — Comparison of numbers of full-time and part-time students in public and private high schools and universities

School	Full-time	Part-time	Value
Public high schools and universities	1 391 048	555 731	40%
Univerzita J. A. Komenského	2 041	5 968	292%
Vysoká škola finanční a správní	2 224	2 834	127%
Bankovní institut vysoká škola	1 059	2 578	243%

The purpose of this article is to contribute to the discussion of the effectiveness of the part-time form of studies as one of the key instruments of life-long education.[8] This paper is focused on the impact of a one-year professional education program MBA (Master of Business Administration) specialized on the public administration sector with representatives of small and medium-sized Municipalities in the Czech Republic (mayors, deputy mayors) in order to ascertain the changes especially in the area of personal and managerial skills.

MBA is a management educational program intended for all managers with work experience who are interested in extending the knowledge they have already acquired and in acquiring vocational education across all fields of study. MBA studies are understood as vocational management education, they are included in the so-called life-long education and they do not have the status of university education in the Czech Republic. The MBA degree is not an academic degree within the meaning of the law.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Goals and organization of the research

Changes in education do not affect only the area of college or university education. They influence informal education, which does not result in integrated education as well. An interesting contribution to this issue was made by Gunes and Altintas (Fig.1), who described the historical development of distance education and introduced five developmental stages relating to distribution of educational content including the technologies employed, which reflected the technical possibilities of the time.[9]

The cornerstone of contemporary distance studies is e-learning. Advanced information and communication technologies facilitate education and make it available. Regard to the requirements of our time, namely the emergence and the life in the information society, the lack of jobs ... etc., people with many years of experience, which are considered as experts in their profession, are going back to schools. This not only about people from the private sector, but a similar situation is also in the public sector. It is common when filling vacancies in public administration that is given priority for applicants with a university degree and then for candidates without a university education. Another situation occurred at positions based on the results of the elections, such as the mayor, town councillors, members of parliament, senators and others who do not pass the traditional selection procedures and for their functions are not set qualifications. Despite the fact that for the execution of their jobs is not required university degree, many of them are expanding key competencies.

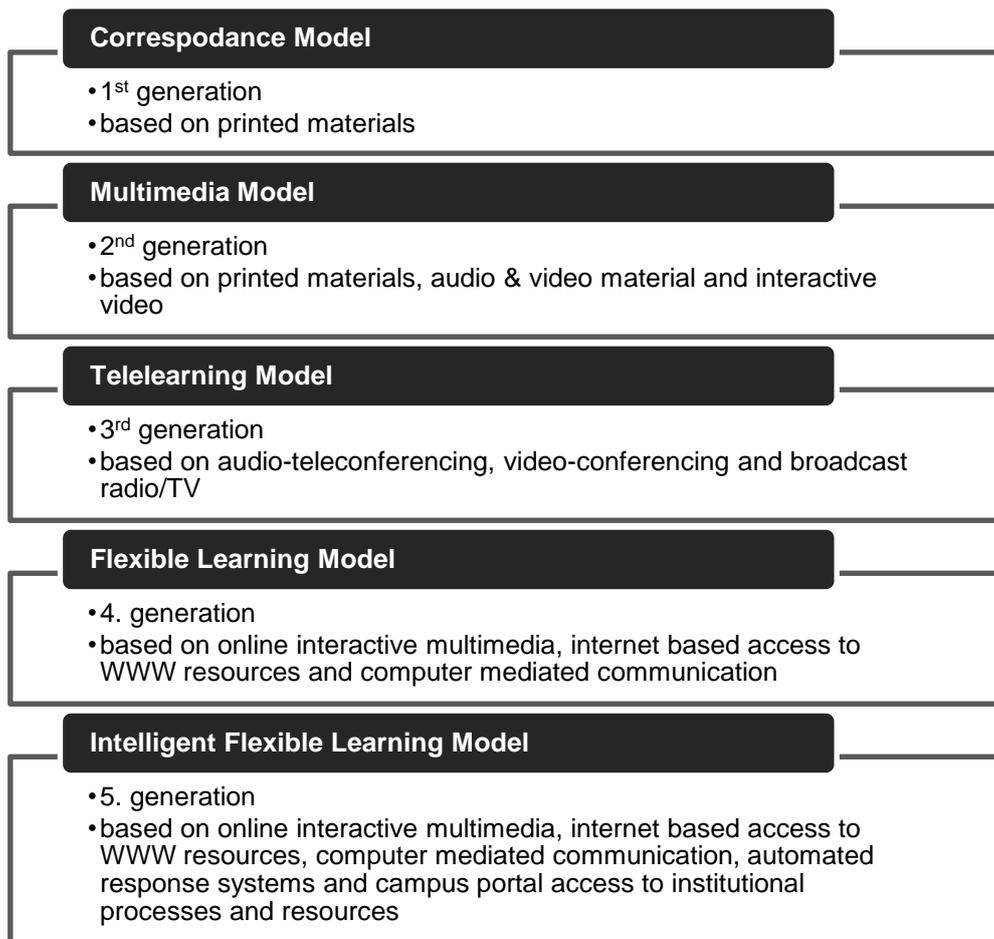


Fig. 1 – Five distance education models based on delivery technologies

This research focuses on mayors and deputy mayors in small and medium-sized municipalities who are public representatives with a mandate resulting from election results. The purpose of the research is to check with the help of respondents the influence of one-year MBA management studies on the change of complementary skills applied in teamwork using the The Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory (BTRSPI) and the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) tests. EPI is regarded as a supplementary test which might provide the respondents with interesting results for their further personal development.

2.2 Respondents participating in the study

Respondents included in the research are mayors and deputy mayors of small and medium-sized municipalities who enrolled in MBA management studies. In total, 14 representatives of municipalities were approached who fulfilling the required target group and enrolled in part-time studies at a private educational institution in Prague specializing exclusively in MBA programs. Of the 11 respondents participating in the study, 9 underwent the entrance as well as final tests and their results form the content of this contribution. The testing proceeded in the academic years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

Tab. 2 – Respondents and tests schedule

Responder	Sex	1 st test (BTRSPI)	2 nd test (EPQ)	3 rd test (BTRSPI)	4 th test (EPQ)
R1	M	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	21. 5. 2012	21. 5. 2012
R2	M	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	21. 5. 2012	21. 5. 2012
R3	M	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	21. 5. 2012	21. 5. 2012
R4	F	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	21. 5. 2012	21. 5. 2012
R5	M	15. 10. 2012	15. 10. 2012	20. 5. 2013	20. 5. 2013
R6	M	15. 10. 2012	15. 10. 2012	20. 5. 2013	20. 5. 2013
R7	M	15. 10. 2012	15. 10. 2012	20. 5. 2013	20. 5. 2013
R8	M	15. 10. 2012	15. 10. 2012	20. 5. 2013	20. 5. 2013
R9	M	15. 10. 2012	15. 10. 2012	20. 5. 2013	20. 5. 2013
R10	M	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	-----	-----
R11	M	17. 10. 2011	17. 10. 2011	-----	-----

2.3 The Belbin Team Role Self- Perception Inventory

The Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory focuses on identification of prerequisites for teamwork. Belbin Team Role Theory was devised as a result of the studies conducted by Meredith Belbin in the 1970s.[10]

The original version of BTRSPI was introduced in 1981 and contained 8 team roles, including their specifications. In 1993 some of the roles were renamed and 1 new role was added.[11] The list of the roles in the latest version of the test with a classification into 3 basic categories is provided in Fig.2.

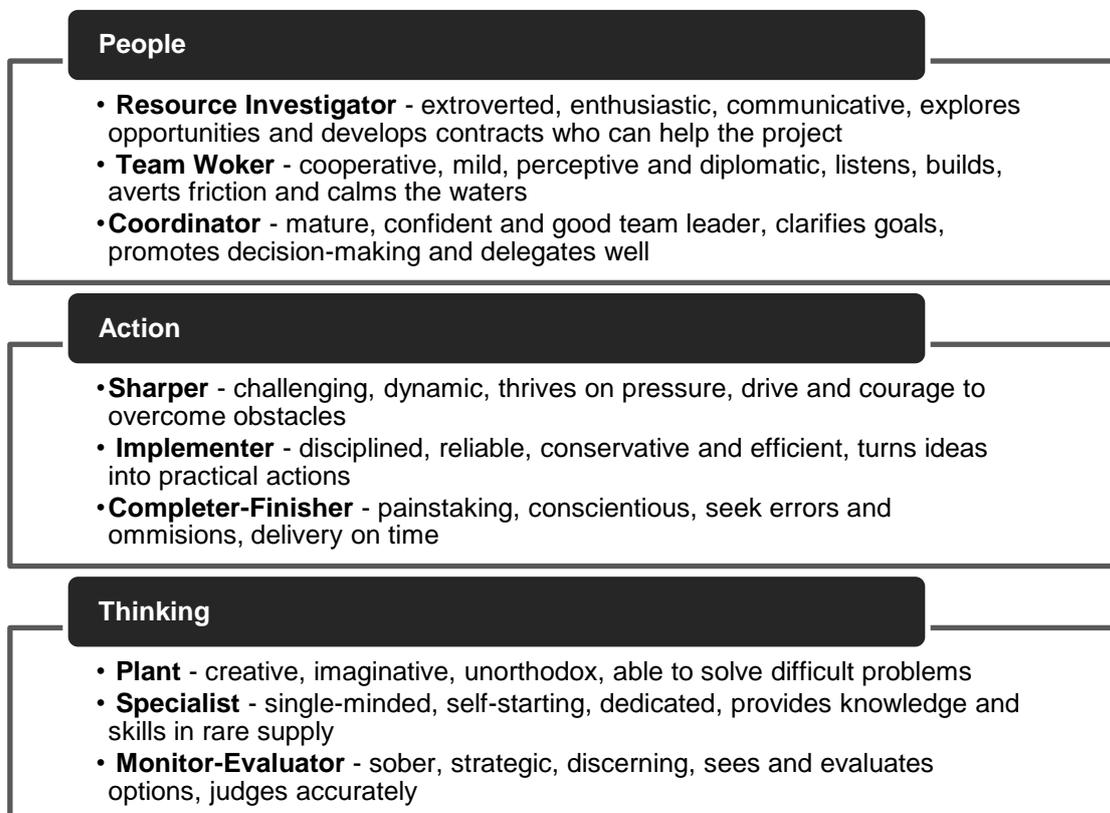


Fig.2 –Belbin's Nine Team Roles model [12]

The test includes seven statements and the respondent is requested to assign always 10 points for every statement. The points are divided in an arbitrary proportion. Therefore, it is possible to assign all 10 points to one option or to divide the points among all options depending on how well they fit the respondent's answers. The test is designed in a manner where individual options represent individual team roles. Due to the limited number of points, the roles are assessed differently, which means that roles with higher scores are strengthened at the expense of the remaining ones. The testing time varies between 10 to 20 minutes.

2.4 The Eysenck Personality Inventory

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) dates from 1964 and stands among those psycho-diagnostic methods based on subjective statements of the person under review concerning the person's features, emotions, attitudes, opinions, interests and ways of reacting in various situations. EPI ranks among the most widely used questionnaires worldwide. This test is perceived as a supplementary one as it is practically impossible to influence the individual's character during a 7-month study implemented on a part-time basis.

The test is based on determining a person's factor of introversion and neuroticism (instability). Eysenck relates the factors of introversion and neuroticism to four standard temperaments. The questionnaire consists of 57 items, of which 24 items measure introversion, 24 items measure neurotic tendencies and 9 items form a lie scale.[13] The person under review answers "yes" or "no" to all questions. The testing time varies between 5 to 15 minutes. The Eysenck system can be best imagined as a dimensional and category-specific model, see Fig. 2.[14]

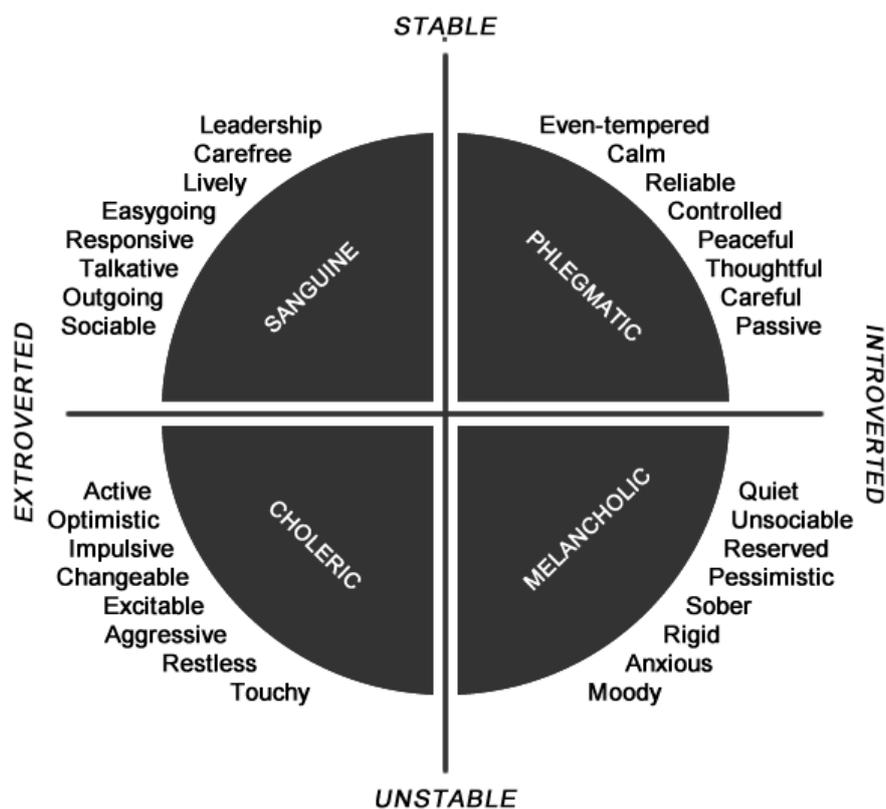


Fig. 3 – Eysenck dimensional classification of temperament

3 RESULTS

During the study the BTRSPI test was repeatedly submitted to the respondents in the course of seven months with a view to determining the influence of the one-year studies in the MBA program on changes to the complementary skills in teamwork. In the Belbin Team Role Self-Perception

Inventory test, always the results of the two most important team roles were compared, which means the roles with the highest scores.

From Tab. 3 the results of the BTRSPI test application are obvious. In case of two respondents (R1, R6) no change in the team roles in the first two places occurred. Only the scores of the roles changed, which means that these team roles strengthened in the second test (R1) at the expense of the other roles, or weakened (R6). The remaining respondents attested a change in one of the positions under review only. No subject thus demonstrated a full change of the team roles in the first two positions under review. In three cases a change in a team role in the positions under review occurred together with a change in the order under review as well (R5, R8, R9).

Tab. 3 – Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory results

Responder	1 nd test (BTRSPI)		2 nd test (BTRSPI)	
	Score	Team Role	Score	Team Role
R1	17	Team Worker	19	Team Worker
	16	Sharper	16	Sharper
R2	31	Resouce Investigator	23	Team Worker
	18	Team Worker	17	Coordinator
R3	26	Resouce Investigator	18	Team Worker
	15	Sharper	18	Resouce Investigator
R4	24	Completer-Finisher	20	Completer-Finisher
	16	Team Worker	17	Sharper
R5	34	Monitor-Evaluator	20	Sharper
	14	Team Worker	18	Monitor-Evaluator
R6	23	Resouce Investigator	21	Resouce Investigator
	14	Coordinator	16	Coordinator
R7	18	Coordinator	26	Coordinator
	16	Monitor-Evaluator	17	Resouce Investigator
R8	23	Plant	27	Sharper
	14	Sharper	12	Completer-Finisher
R9	16	Completer-Finisher	21	Coordinator
	14	Monitor-Evaluator	18	Monitor-Evaluator

An interesting comparison is provided in Fig.4., which shows the scores for the two most significant team roles for each respondent in the first and the second test.

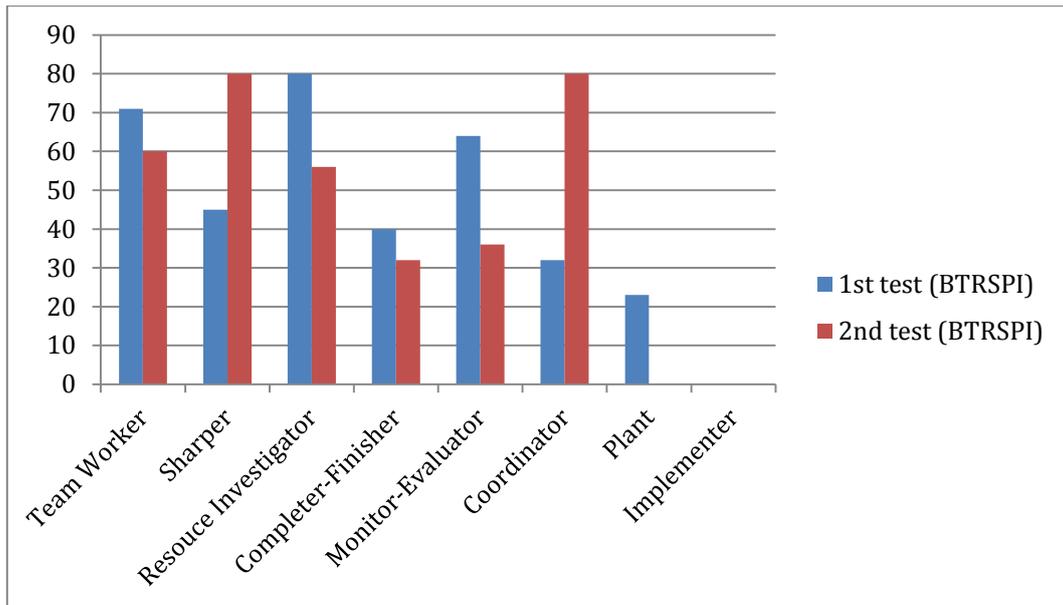


Fig. 4 – Score for the two most significant team roles for the respondents

From the table it is obvious that two team roles showed an increase in the second test compared to the first test: Sharper with an 178% increase and Coordinator with a 250% increase. On the other hand, the other team roles weakened compared to the first test. The aforementioned roles with the highest scores are most frequently stated in the two most important positions in the results of the respondents concerning the second test, see Fig.5.

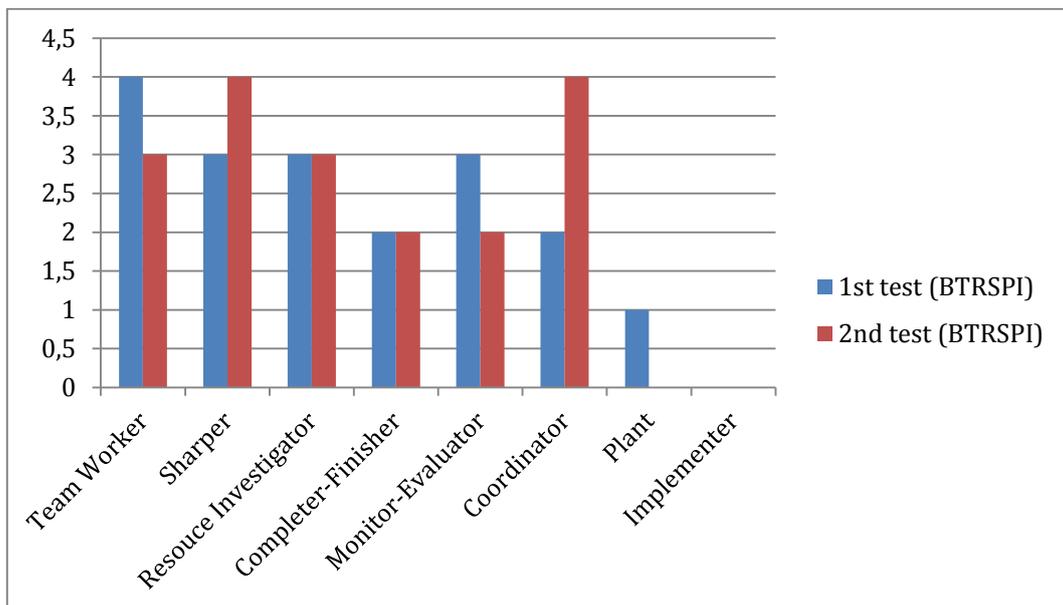


Fig. 5 – Frequency of the two most significant team roles for the respondents

The scores of the individual team roles are closely related to two team roles which did not appear in the results at all (Implementer), or which appeared in the first testing only (Plant) and which were later edged out by other team roles.

The results of the temperament test did not bring any surprising results. From the beginning the test was regarded as a supplementary test intended primarily for the purposes of the respondents. The results of the initial and final EPI test confirm that the MBA management education had no influence on temperament. The results are provided in Tab.4.

Tab. 4 – Eysenck Personality Inventory results

Responder	1 st test (EPI)		2 nd test (EPI)		1.T /2. T %
	Temperament	Lie Score	Temperament	Lie Score	
R1	Choleric	5	Choleric	5	100%
R2	Phlegmatic	2	Phlegmatic	1	50%
R3	Choleric	5	Choleric	8	160%
R4	Sanguine	4	Sanguine	3	75%
R5	Melancholic	6	Melancholic	7	117%
R6	Sanguine	2	Sanguine	3	150%
R7	Sanguine	4	Sanguine	5	125%
R8	Melancholic	4	Melancholic	5	125%
R9	Choleric	3	Choleric	6	200%

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the BTRSPI test showed a high increase in the Coordinator role, which is defined in Fig.2 as "mature, confident and good team leader; clarifies goals, promotes decision-making and delegates well", which is in accordance with goals and planned competences of graduates of the MBA management program. The same applies to the other team role with a significant increase – Sharper (challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure; drive and courage to overcome obstacles), which corresponds with goals of the MBA program. The remaining team roles weakened as far as their scores are concerned, or even did not appear in the two most important positions for the respondents.

The results of the EPI test confirmed that the one-year MBA management studies did not result in any change in the character of the respondents. This was in accordance with the hypothesis as temperament is inherited, and can be influenced at young age but not changed. [5] Nevertheless, certain changes are obvious in the results of the test. In 6 of 9 respondents, the Lie Score increased (Tab.4), in one respondent the value remained unchanged and in two respondents the value decreased. The average score of all respondents during the first testing was 3.89, during the second testing 4.78, which means an increase by 23%. The highest increase was demonstrated in respondent No. 9 where the increase was one hundred percent, which means from 3 to 6 points. The interesting thing is that the two highest increases (R9 and R3) are associated with the choleric type temperament.

Therefore, it is possible to say that in the sample of mayors and deputy mayors under review, the influence of the MBA vocational educational program focused on the public sector has been demonstrated. Considering the small number of respondents and a focus on one course within the framework of the educational institution only, this contribution must be seen as only an initial study and the results are valid for the sample under review only and cannot be generalized in any manner.

In conclusion, it is necessary to say that the acquired knowledge cannot be used for evaluation of the respondents' success in independent work or teamwork. The cornerstone of a successful team is its balance and representation of all team roles. Therefore it is important that managers put together teams where all team roles are represented. This is the only way to get a balanced and effective team.

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