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Big Five Personality Traits and executive meta-competencies: Implications for Strategic decision making

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Abstract
Purpose: This study aims to analyze the relationship between Big Five Personality Traits and strategic decision-making effectiveness at the executive level, while exploring the role of intrinsic meta-competencies that emerge when leaders face moments of isolation and make decisions independently.
Methodology/approach: Using a mixed-methods design, the study applies Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Data sources include Big Five personality assessments of 50 senior executives and in-depth interviews with eight directors from various strategic industries.
Results: Findings reveal that openness to experience and conscientiousness consistently correlate with reflective, structured, and visionary decision-making patterns. The study also identifies that intrinsic meta-competencies such as productive solitude, deep reflection, and resilience in isolation enhance the positive manifestation of these personality traits.
Conclusion: The research provides a conceptual foundation for developing a more holistic talent development and succession planning framework, integrating personality traits and internal capacities often overlooked in leadership assessments.
Limitations: The study focuses on senior executives in strategic industries, limiting generalizability to other leadership levels or sectors. Additionally, qualitative methods may introduce subjective interpretations.
Contribution: This study contributes to leadership psychology and talent management by highlighting the interplay between personality, meta-competencies, and decision-making. It offers practical insights for executive coaching, leadership development programs, and organizational succession planning.

Keywords: *Big Five Personality Traits, Executives, Intrinsic Meta-Competencies, Strategic Decision-Making, Talent Management*

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1. Introduction

The quality of decision-making at the executive level frequently serves as the determining factor that distinguishes organizations capable of weathering turbulence from those ultimately eliminated from competition (Alibasic et al., 2022; Kushwaha, Kar, & Dwivedi, 2021; Maroufkhani, Wagner, Wan Ismail, Baroto, & Nourani, 2019). In boardrooms, strategic decisions rarely emerge from straightforward calculations. They are born from a combination of analytical skills, intuition, and psychological characteristics that shape leaders' perspectives on problems. Within this framework, the Big Five Personality Traits openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness,

and Emotional Stability serve as a widely utilized lens for understanding how individuals in top positions process information and execute strategic choices (Aljohani, Aslam, Khadidos, & Hassan, 2022; Bevilacqua, Masárová, Perotti, & Ferraris, 2025).

Previous research has demonstrated that specific traits within the Big Five exhibit strong correlations with strategic decision-making effectiveness (Pejić Bach, Krstić, Seljan, & Turulja, 2019; Schmidt, van Dierendonck, & Weber, 2023). For instance, Openness to Experience relates to the ability to explore alternatives and accept new ideas, while Conscientiousness is associated with thoroughness, perseverance, and long-term goal orientation (Huynh, Nippa, & Aichner, 2023; Oesterreich, Anton, Teuteberg, & Dwivedi, 2022; Sarwar, Song, Ali, Khan, & Ali, 2025). However, within the context of Indonesian executives, particularly in sectors laden with public interests and operational complexities, understanding of these relationships remains limited to the conceptual level. However, the quality of strategic decisions is influenced not only by "what" is decided but also by "how" and "through what mental framework" these decisions are made (Korherr & Kanbach, 2023; Sabharwal & Miah, 2021).

Furthermore, the modern workplace demands leaders capable of integrating technical competencies, interpersonal capacities, and psychological readiness into a comprehensive leadership package. This psychological preparedness often remains intrinsic and unrecorded in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), yet it significantly impacts cognitive clarity in high-pressure situations. Management literature refers to this as metacompetence, an advanced capability that functions as a catalyst for other competencies (Fernandez-Vidal, Perotti, Gonzalez, & Gasco, 2022; Imran, Shahzad, Butt, & Kantola, 2021; Shabbir & Gardezi, 2020). Although this concept is beginning to gain attention, research connecting it to executive personality profiles and decision-making effectiveness remains scarce, particularly in Indonesian organizations (Harahap & Yosepha, 2025; Khusna, Sukarno, & Fauziyyah, 2025; Wijaya, 2025).

This research gap forms the foundation of the current study (Braojos, Weritz, & Matute, 2024; Mikalef, Krogstie, Pappas, & Pavlou, 2020; Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021; Tagscherer & Carbon, 2023). By analyzing Big Five Personality Traits data from 50 executives along with in-depth interviews with eight directors, this study seeks to map the connections between personality profiles and the quality of strategic decision-making (Elia, Solazzo, Lerro, Pigni, & Tucci, 2024; Schiuma, Santarsiero, Carlucci, & Jarrar, 2024). This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how psychological characteristics shape decision-making behavior while simultaneously creating opportunities to identify new metacompetencies that could enrich executive talent development frameworks (Khaw, Teoh, Abdul Khalid, & Letchmunan, 2022; Orero-Blat, Palacios-Marqués, Leal-Rodriguez, & Ferraris, 2025; Tigre, Henriques, & Curado, 2025).

This study introduces several significant novel aspects in the examination of leadership and strategic decision-making at the executive level. First, it extends beyond focusing solely on linear relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits dimensions and decision-making effectiveness by introducing the concept of intrinsic metacompetence as a mediating variable that strengthens or weakens these relationships (Müller, Konzag, Nielsen, & Sandholt, 2024). Intrinsic metacompetencies, such as the ability to deeply reflect on information in solitude or manage psychological pressure when making crucial decisions, have been largely unexplored in the management literature, particularly within the Indonesian executive context. By integrating this concept, this study provides a more dynamic perspective on how personality and internal capacities interact to produce quality strategic decisions (Karakose et al., 2023).

Second, this study addresses an empirical gap in the Indonesian context, where studies on executive personality and strategic decision-making remain limited. Most existing literature originates from Western contexts, which may not fully align with Indonesia’s cultural and business dynamics. For example, the agreeableness dimension in collectivist cultures, such as Indonesia, may have different implications for decision-making compared to individualist cultures. By analyzing data from 50 senior executives and eight directors across various strategic industries, this study provides findings that are

both contextually relevant and practically applicable to leadership development in Indonesia (McCarthy, Sammon, & Alhassan, 2024).

The methodological contribution of this research lies in its combination of quantitative personality assessments with in-depth qualitative analysis through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This mixed-methods approach enables a more holistic understanding by examining not only "what" influences strategic decisions but also "how" and "why" personality and metacompetencies play their roles. Consequently, this study not only confirms previous findings regarding the importance of Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness but also reveals the psychological mechanisms underlying these relationships, such as the role of self-reflection and emotional resilience in isolation.
This study has important implications for executive talent development and organizational succession planning. The findings regarding intrinsic metacompetencies, for instance, could be integrated into leadership training programs to help prospective leaders develop internal capacities that are frequently overlooked by leadership training programs. Additionally, the framework resulting from this research could be utilized by HR teams to design more comprehensive leadership assessments that encompass not only technical competencies but also personality tendencies and the ability to productively manage isolation.

At the policy level, this study encourages organizations to consider psychological factors and metacompetencies in the executive recruitment and promotion processes. Currently, KPIs and technical experience often serve as primary metrics, whereas aspects such as mental preparedness and reflective capacity are rarely measured. By advocating for a more balanced approach, this study has the potential to transform talent management practices in Indonesia, particularly in sectors requiring high-risk strategic decisions, such as banking, energy, and public services.

Finally, this study paves the way for further research on metacompetencies and leadership in non-Western settings. The findings regarding how Indonesian executives manage isolation and pressure could form the basis for comparative studies in other countries while simultaneously enriching the global literature on leadership psychology. Thus, the contributions of this research extend beyond the academic realm to include practical and strategic dimensions, bridging the gap between personality theory, management practice and executive-level decision-making.

2. Literature review

2.1. Upper Echelons Theory and Leaders' Psychological Characteristics

Upper Echelons Theory, introduced by Hambrick and Mason (1984), asserts that top executives' personal characteristics, including values, experiences, and personality traits, directly shape organizational strategic choices. According to this theory, executives' strategic decisions reflect their cognitive bases and values, which are shaped by their psychological backgrounds and professional experiences. In the context of the Big Five Personality Traits, this theory explains why two executives in similar positions with comparable resources may make vastly different decisions: their thought processes, risk preferences, and information processing styles differ (Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

Subsequent studies by Karakose et al. (2023) demonstrated that personality dimensions such as Openness and Conscientiousness strongly correlate with innovation-driven, sustainability-oriented, and long-term risk management strategies. This positions personality assessment not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a predictor of the direction and quality of executive decision-making. Thus, Upper Echelons Theory provides a robust conceptual framework for linking personality profiles to the quality of strategic decision-making at the highest organizational level (McCarthy et al., 2024).

2.2. Big Five Personality Traits and Their Relevance in Executive Decision-Making

Personality plays a central role in shaping leaders' leadership styles and decision-making patterns. One of the most widely used theoretical frameworks for measuring personality is the Big Five Personality Traits, or the Five Factor Model, developed through longitudinal research by (McCrae & Costa, 1987). This model comprises five core dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion,

Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (or Emotional Stability). Each dimension influences how leaders receive information, process complexity, and respond to strategic pressure.

In the executive context, Openness to Experience contributes to the ability to embrace new ideas, think creatively, and engage in cross-disciplinary strategic exploration, while conscientiousness relates to consistency, accuracy, and perseverance in managing long-term priorities (McCarthy et al., 2024). These two dimensions often serve as strong predictive traits for strategic decision-making effectiveness, as they balance a long-term vision with measured execution. Previous studies indicate that executives with high scores in these dimensions tend to be more reflective, systematic, and decisive in uncertain situations (AlNuaimi, Singh, Ren, Budhwar, & Vorobyev, 2022; Klus & Müller, 2021; Wook et al., 2021).

2.3. Pressure, Psychological Responses, and Their Impact on Decision-Making

Strategic decision-making by executives never occurs in isolation; it always unfolds under time constraints, stakeholder expectations and high-risk conditions. In such scenarios, classical psychology literature introduces the concept of the fight-flight-freeze response, first proposed by Walter Bradford Cannon in the 1920s and later expanded by contemporary research to include the freeze element (Farhan, Chaudhry, Razmak, & El Refae, 2024; Heubeck, 2023; Rialti & Filieri, 2024). This mechanism explains the automatic physiological and cognitive reactions to threats or acute stress.

At the executive level, the fight-or-flight-freeze response can significantly influence decision quality. For instance, leaders with high Openness and Conscientiousness are more likely to utilize the freeze phase as a strategic pause for deeper analysis before choosing between confrontation (fight) or avoidance (flight). Conversely, leaders with low Emotional Stability may remain stuck in freeze mode for too long, losing the momentum to act. This framework is crucial in linking personality profiles to executive stress management styles, as these responses determine whether decisions are reflective, reactive, or even counterproductive (Adie, Tate, & Valentine, 2024; Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025; Matli, 2024).

2.4. Big Five as Predictive Traits in Strategic Decision-Making Management

In strategic management literature, predictive traits are defined as personality dimensions or psychological characteristics that can forecast leadership performance or success (Hossain, Fernando, & Akter, 2025; Saarikko, Westergren, & Blomquist, 2020; Schiuma, Schettini, Santarsiero, & Carlucci, 2022). The Big Five Personality Traits, particularly Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness, have been repeatedly identified as significant predictors of executive decision-making. Openness enables leaders to consider diverse alternatives and identify unconventional opportunities, whereas conscientiousness ensures the systematic and measured execution of ideas.

However, research also emphasizes that successful strategic decision-making depends not only on the strength of individual traits but also on the interaction between traits, organizational context, and supporting metacompetencies (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Korherr, Kanbach, Kraus, & Mikalef, 2022; Sacavém et al., 2025). These metacompetencies, including self-awareness, reflective capacity, and psychological stress management, act as catalysts that amplify the positive effects of predictive traits. By understanding this relationship, organizations can develop talent management models that focus not only on technical skills but also on the psychological foundations that influence clarity and boldness in strategic decision-making.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design to conduct a nuanced investigation of the relationship between executives' personality traits and their strategic decision-making processes (Sugiyono, 2017). The primary, in-depth qualitative component is central to capturing rich contextual insights into how psychological characteristics manifest in real-world leadership scenarios. A supplementary quantitative phase was integrated with the specific intent of providing a foundational, broad-based assessment of personality traits across a larger executive pool. This synergistic approach

allows researchers to first map the general terrain of executive personalities before zooming in to explore the complex interplay between personality dimensions, cognitive processes, and decision outcomes in high-stakes organizational contexts. The overarching methodological focus is on uncovering the intrinsic meta-competencies that act as catalysts, bridging inherent personality traits with the quality of strategic choices (Ghozali, 2018).

3.2. Sampling Strategy and Participant Profile

The sampling strategy was meticulously crafted using a purposive sampling technique to identify participants who were information-rich cases relevant to the core research phenomenon of this study. The selection criteria specifically targeted senior executives, such as CEOs, CFOs, COOs, and Managing Directors, who held significant authority and had a demonstrated history of making high-stakes strategic decisions. The research involved a distinct two-phase data collection process to ensure depth and diversity of the data. The initial phase consisted of quantitative assessments administered to a broader pool of 50 executives in the automotive industry. This quantitative layer aimed to establish a baseline understanding of personality distributions, which strategically enabled the identification and selection of a diverse and insightful subset for the subsequent qualitative phase of the study. Eight primary participants for the in-depth interviews were selected from this pool to represent a variety of industry sectors, including technology, manufacturing, financial services, and healthcare, ensuring a wide range of strategic contexts and challenges.

3.3. Data Collection

Data were collected in two sequential phases using a mixed-methods approach. In the first phase, quantitative data were gathered through a standardized psychological assessment administered to a broader pool of 50 executives. This assessment utilized validated instruments to measure core personality dimensions, providing a foundational dataset that enabled systematic profiling of personality traits across a diverse executive population. The primary objective of this quantitative phase was not generalizability but rather to establish a robust sampling frame and identify potential patterns that would inform participant selection for the subsequent qualitative phase (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025; Matli, 2024).

The second phase constituted the core of the research, employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect rich qualitative data from eight carefully selected top executives. Each comprehensive interview lasted 90-120 minutes, allowing for a deep exploration of the participants' strategic decision-making experiences, cognitive processes, and leadership challenges. The semi-structured protocol ensured consistency while maintaining flexibility in pursuing emergent themes and unique insights. Interviews were designed to elicit not only the decisions made by executives but more importantly, how and why they approached complex problems in particular ways, thereby revealing the underlying psychological dynamics and meta-competencies that bridge personality traits with strategic outcomes (Adie et al., 2024; Farhan et al., 2024). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and supplemented with field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual elements, ensuring comprehensive data for subsequent analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis Framework

The qualitative interview data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to systematically identify patterns and themes. This involved immersing the data through repeated readings, generating initial codes, developing potential themes, and refining them through iterative reviews. This process captures both explicit decision-making strategies and the underlying psychological dynamics that shape them (Hossain et al., 2025; Saarikko et al., 2020; Schiuma et al., 2022). Complementing this, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis provided a deeper understanding of how individual executives experienced and made sense of their decision-making processes. This dual approach allowed the researchers to balance the identification of common patterns with the appreciation of individual differences in leadership psychology. Special attention was given to moments of pressure, uncertainty, and cognitive challenge, where personality traits and meta-competencies became most visible in influencing decision pathways (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025; Sacavém et al., 2025).

3.5. Ensuring Research Rigor

This study implemented multiple strategies to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. Prolonged engagement with the participants helped establish rapport and gather nuanced data, while member checking validated the accuracy of the interpretations by sharing preliminary findings with the participants. Regular peer debriefing sessions with organizational psychology experts provided critical reflections on potential researcher biases and alternative interpretations. A comprehensive audit trail documented all analytical decisions and methodological choices, creating transparency in the research process. The rich, contextual reporting of findings through thick descriptions allows readers to assess the transferability of insights to other organizational settings. Together, these measures strengthened the study's contribution to understanding the psychological foundations of executive decision-making while maintaining the integrity of qualitative research standards (Abositta, Adedokun, & Berberoğlu, 2024; Korherr et al., 2022; Mollah, Masud, & Chowdhury, 2024).

This qualitative methodology was specifically designed to illuminate the complex and often implicit psychological processes underlying strategic leadership decisions. By focusing on depth rather than breadth, this approach reveals how personality traits interact with situational demands and cognitive resources to shape organizational outcomes. This research provides valuable insights into the meta-competencies that enable executives to leverage their personality characteristics effectively when facing high-pressure, ambiguous decision-making scenarios (Batistič & van der Laken, 2019; Ertiö, Eriksson, Rowan, & McCarthy, 2024).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Result

4.1.1. Research Findings Overview

This study examined two primary data sources: Big Five Personality Traits assessments from 50 top executives across various industries and in-depth interviews with eight directors representing diverse strategic sectors. Initial quantitative analysis revealed distinct personality score distributions, with Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness emerging as the most prominent dimensions, averaging above 70 on a 100-point scale (Sugiyono, 2017). Emotional Stability scores remained relatively high, while Agreeableness and Extraversion showed greater variability among respondents.

Qualitative interviews demonstrated clear correlations between personality profiles and decision-making approaches. Executives with high openness scores emphasized exploring multiple alternatives and incorporating diverse perspectives before reaching conclusions, whereas those scoring high in conscientiousness focused on structured processes, thorough verification, and maintaining consistent standards throughout decision-making (Abositta et al., 2024; Mollah et al., 2024). These patterns suggest that personality traits actively shape cognitive frameworks and strategic approaches rather than simply serving as passive background characteristics.

4.1.2. Thematic Analysis Insights

This research employed Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis alongside Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to examine interview transcripts from eight directors. This dual approach revealed three central themes related to strategic decision-making processes. Directors with elevated Openness to Experience described decision-making as an exploratory journey, actively seeking unconventional insights beyond formal data sources (Batistič & van der Laken, 2019; Ertiö et al., 2024; Roodt, Bracht, Dick, & Hernandez Bark, 2025). One participant illustrated this by explaining how valuable perspectives often emerged from informal conversations or observational details rather than from standard reports. This cognitive expansiveness represents a deliberate broadening of perspective before committing to a decision.

In contrast, executives with strong conscientiousness traits emphasized rigorous frameworks, performance metrics, and systematic validation processes when approaching strategic choices. Several studies have described the creation of detailed decision maps and testing of each component thoroughly before proceeding, demonstrating what the study terms procedural integrity. The analysis also identified distinct patterns in high-pressure situations, where directors with greater Emotional Stability tended to

make calculated, strategic responses rather than freezing or reacting impulsively during crises. These interconnected themes highlight how different personality dimensions complement one another during complex decision-making processes (Qiao, Li, & Hong, 2024; Tursunbayeva & Gal, 2024).

4.1.3. Metacompetence as a Strategic Catalyst

Beyond the five core personality dimensions, the analysis uncovered a cross-cutting layer of metacompetence that enhances the manifestation of traits in executive decision-making. These intrinsic capacities emerged clearly in the directors' interviews, particularly among those who combined high Openness and Conscientiousness scores. Such individuals demonstrate the ability to maintain cognitive clarity while synthesizing broad exploration with disciplined execution, even in ambiguous or high-pressure contexts (Henderikx & Stoffers, 2022; Murire, 2024; Senadjki, Yong, Ganapathy, & Ogbeibu, 2023). This study identifies this as intentional cognitive composure, or mental readiness to reframe perspectives before finalizing decisions.

Metacompetence catalytically amplifies the strategic effectiveness of inherent personality traits, without altering their fundamental nature. For instance, it transforms openness from simply generating novel ideas into producing innovations that align with organizational objectives and include measurable plans for implementation. The findings also position metacompetence as a cognitive-emotional filter that helps executives avoid reactive biases during stressful situations, thereby enabling more measured and sustainable strategic responses. These insights open new possibilities for developing executive talent frameworks that cultivate both core personality strengths and enhancing metacompetencies (Z. Cheng, Jin, & Kwak, 2025; Z. M. Cheng, Bonetti, Regt, Ribeiro, & Plangger, 2024; Lin, Yousaf, Grigorescu, & Popovici, 2025).

4.1.4. Personality Traits and Decision Quality

The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates how specific personality configurations influence strategic decision-making approaches. Among the 50 executives assessed, Openness to Experience was the most prevalent primary trait, appearing as the highest score for 46% of the respondents. This dimension's association with flexible thinking and exploration manifested clearly in directors who described decision-making as an iterative process of scenario testing and perspective gathering (Philip, Gilli, & Knappstein, 2023; Quaquebeke & Gerpott, 2023). Conscientiousness emerged as the second most prominent trait, with high-scoring executives emphasizing systematic verification and risk assessment before committing to a strategy.

Notably, individuals combining strong Openness and Conscientiousness demonstrated particularly effective decision patterns that were both exploratory and structured, which the analysis linked to intrinsic metacompetence. These executives also showed a greater capacity to pause reactive responses during crises and processed information deliberately before acting. The findings substantiate that personality traits influence not only the decisions executives make but also how they approach the entire decision-making process, with important implications for leadership development programs targeting strategic decision competencies (Becker, 1962).

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The Influence of Big Five Personality Traits on Strategic Decision-Making Effectiveness

The findings demonstrate that executives' Big Five personality profiles significantly shape the effectiveness of strategic decision-making at the organizational level. Openness to Experience is particularly influential, enabling executives to consider diverse alternatives and unconventional perspectives during decision-making processes. This trait correlates with what the study identifies as cognitive expansiveness - the capacity to explore multiple strategic scenarios before commitment (Murire, 2024; Senadjki et al., 2023).

Conversely, high conscientiousness scores associated with systematic verification processes and long-term orientation help maintain decision quality under uncertainty. The data reveal that these traits do not operate in isolation but interact dynamically; for instance, openness generates innovative options, while conscientiousness ensures their practical implementation. Notably, Emotional Stability plays a

crucial moderating role, allowing executives to maintain decision clarity during crises. These findings align with Upper Echelons Theory while providing new insights into how specific trait combinations create distinct decision-making patterns in Indonesian organizational contexts (Z. M. Cheng et al., 2024; Henderikx & Stoffers, 2022).

4.2.2. Metacompetence as a Catalytic Enhancer of Personality Traits

This study provides compelling evidence that metacompetence functions as a critical catalyst that amplifies the positive expression of personality traits in strategic decisions (Abositta et al., 2024; Korherr et al., 2022; Mollah et al., 2024). This research identified what we term intentional cognitive composure - a metacompetence allowing executives to integrate broad exploration (openness) with disciplined execution (conscientiousness) while maintaining emotional equilibrium. This higher-order capacity explains why some executives with similar trait profiles demonstrate superior decision-making effectiveness in their organizations. The catalytic mechanism operates through three pathways: first, by enabling trait-consistent behaviors in high-pressure situations where they might normally diminish; second, by integrating complementary traits (e.g., balancing Openness's exploration with Conscientiousness's caution); and third, by mitigating cognitive biases associated with fight-flight-freeze responses. These findings extend Winterton's metacompetence framework by demonstrating its specific operationalization in executive decision-making contexts (Hossain et al., 2025; Saarikko et al., 2020).

4.2.3. Psychological Mechanisms Linking Personality to Reflective Decision-Making

This study illuminates three key psychological mechanisms connecting personality traits to reflective, humanistic decision-making. First, high openness facilitates cognitive flexibility and mental agility to reframe problems from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Second, Conscientiousness contributes to procedural integrity, ensuring that decisions undergo systematic ethical and operational vetting (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025; Matli, 2024). Third, the interaction between Emotional Stability and metacompetence creates emotional bandwidth, which is the capacity to make value-based decisions amidst turbulence. These mechanisms collectively foster what the data reveal as a distinctive humanistic decision-making style among certain executives, characterized by the simultaneous consideration of quantitative metrics and qualitative human impacts. The findings suggest that these mechanisms develop through experiential learning in leadership roles rather than being innate, offering important implications for leadership development approaches (Farhan et al., 2024; Rialti & Filieri, 2024).

4.2.4. Integrating Metacompetence into Talent Development Frameworks

This study proposes a paradigm shift in executive development by demonstrating how metacompetence can be cultivated systematically. Four integration pathways emerge from the findings: first, incorporating metacompetence assessment into existing personality evaluation tools; second, designing experiential learning programs that simulate high-pressure decision scenarios; third, developing reflective practices that strengthen intentional cognitive composure; and fourth, creating organizational cultures that value both decisiveness and contemplative space (AlNuaimi et al., 2022; McCarthy et al., 2024; Wook et al., 2021). The data particularly supportincorporating these elements into succession planning systems to prepare more adaptive and ethical future leaders. This approach addresses the current limitations in talent management that overemphasize technical competencies while neglecting these critical meta-level capacities. The study outlines concrete metrics for tracking metacompetence development over time, enabling a more holistic evaluation of leadership potential beyond traditional personality trait assessments (Heubeck, 2023; Johnson, Sihi, & Muzellec, 2021; Klus & Müller, 2021).

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

This study provides compelling evidence that the Big Five Personality Traits—particularly Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness—significantly influence strategic decision-making effectiveness among executives. The integration of intrinsic metacompetencies, such as intentional cognitive composure and resilience under pressure, further amplifies the positive impact of these traits. The findings underscore the importance of considering both inherent personality characteristics and cultivatable metacompetencies in leadership development, offering a more holistic framework for talent

management and succession planning in organizations. By bridging psychological theory with practical organizational needs, this study advances our understanding of how executives navigate complex decision-making scenarios while maintaining ethical and sustainable outcomes.

5.2. Limitations

The scope of this study is constrained by its focus on senior executives in strategic industries, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other leadership levels or sectors. Although qualitative methodology is rich in depth, it introduces potential subjectivity in the data interpretation. Additionally, the sample size of 50 quantitative assessments and eight qualitative interviews, although sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not capture the full diversity of executive decision-making styles across cultural and organizational contexts. Future research could benefit from longitudinal designs that track how personality traits and metacompetencies evolve over time in response to leadership challenges.

5.3. Suggestions

To address the identified limitations and expand this research, several directions are recommended. First, large-scale studies across diverse industries and cultural settings can validate the universality of the findings. Second, developing standardized tools to assess metacompetencies would enhance their integration into existing talent management systems. Third, organizations should design experiential training programs that simulate high-pressure decision-making scenarios to cultivate metacompetencies in emerging leaders. Finally, fostering an organizational culture that values reflective practices and cognitive flexibility could further strengthen the interplay between personality traits and decision quality.

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