



## Strategies for Pedagogical Interventions to Develop Emotional Intelligence (EI) of Employees in a Hybrid Work Schedule

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### Abstract

The purpose of the research article is to identify the educational methods suitable for developing employee emotional intelligence. The focus was on the number of hours that small and medium sized enterprises are willing to invest in training their employees in emotional intelligence and on the benefits, i.e., changes in work outcomes as evaluated by respondents. The questionnaire method and interviews were used to obtain data from respondents, line managers, and education managers. Based on correlation coefficient calculations, brainstorming was identified as a frequently used method of active learning, which is related to the physical presence in the learning premises. The analysis of the responses of the respondents and their calculation using the correlation coefficient surprisingly showed that the lecture method gained great support and was considered by the respondents, i.e., managers and education managers, as very important to achieve the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor goals of education. Moreover, it was assessed as a method suitable for remote learning, i.e., for virtual educational spaces.

### Keywords:

Emotional Intelligence;  
Further Corporate Education;  
Educational Objective;  
Employee Work Performance.

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## 1- Introduction

From the perspective of education participants, educational methods are important stimulative elements of education. Educational methods are explored in the research article in the context of selected features of emotional intelligence (EI). Digital technologies create an extended educational space that stands for a kind of evolution in education. Virtualization is viewed as an enriching form in education that enables the multimedia mode in education, rather than as a mere replacement of a physical form of evolution in education. This type of perceiving extended space enables us to reflect on the application of individual methods in education and use information and communication technologies at the same time. In processing the issues explored in this paper, we start with the concepts applied in learning processes. Virtualization and application of existing technologies as well as developing educational platforms generate numerous data for the purposes of education and create a great deal of educational activities that make education both accessible and flexible.

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Mostly due to the virtualization of education, employees are more motivated to take training [1, 2]. The theory and practice of hybrid work schedules are viewed as one of the main trends in the contemporary business world, reinforced especially after COVID-19, which is also reflected in educating employees [3]. MacNeil [4] defined this trend as follows: “A hybrid work schedule is a flexible work model that combines remote and in-office work. It lets employees work from home on some days and from the office on others”. Its benefits rest in the possibility of combining the physical presence at the workplace necessary for certain work tasks, for example, discussing strategy or planning, while the focus and flexibility are provided by the remote work.

Up to 49% of employees view working from the office as a space for social interaction [4]. The basic assumption of our research is the idea that hybrid work schedules are tied to developing not only information technologies but also to the personality characteristics of employees, and these, in turn, are characteristic of elements of emotional intelligence. For these reasons, we focused on education in this area. Hybrid schedules need employees with well-developed emotional intelligence. A great deal of attention is devoted to the digitalization of society; however, this is not the case for emotional intelligence.

The novelty of our approach is the focus on the scope of education (in terms of time) in developing emotional intelligence and the suitability of educational methods applied in achieving learning objectives and subsequently the changes in employee work results after the education as evaluated by managers (line managers and education managers) and training instructors.

Emotional intelligence was ranked as one of the top 15 skills necessary for both personal and organizational success [5–8]. This pointed to the importance of emotional intelligence for leaders and the development of leadership skills. The issue of emotional intelligence in the corporate environment is frequently discussed nowadays as a factor contributing to the balance of work-life balance and the quality of life also in the corporate setting [9]. Jayadurga [10] made suggestions for developing employee awareness of emotional intelligence, for example, by hiring emotionally mature people, promoting emotional intelligence among employees, and conducting courses and trainings to develop emotional competence. These activities will contribute to organizational success [11]. The question of understanding one’s own and others’ emotions, as well as regulating emotions, appeared to become more important in the period of COVID-19 [12, 13], resulting in an increased utilization of hybrid educational spaces [14].

The authors of the present paper wish to contribute to the discussion of the selection and application of suitable educational methods under these conditions.

However, the theory surrounding educational strategies for developing emotional intelligence in hybrid work schedule environments is still evolving, and several gaps need to be addressed to fully understand and implement such strategies. Here are some of the key areas where theoretical gaps exist:

- **Integration of hybrid work dynamics:** Current educational strategies often do not adequately address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by hybrid work models. There is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate in-person and remote work dynamics, especially regarding how these dynamics impact the development and application of emotional intelligence. This gap is recognized in [15, 16].
- **Personalization of emotional intelligence training:** Emotional intelligence education often adopts a one-size-fits-all approach. However, hybrid work environments are diverse, and employee experiences can vary widely [17–19]. Research is needed on personalized educational methods that consider individual differences in learning styles, work contexts, and emotional needs.
- **Longitudinal impact studies:** There is a scarcity of longitudinal studies that examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence training on the hybrid work schedule. Most existing research, for example [17, 20], focuses on short-term results, leaving a gap in understanding how sustained emotional intelligence development influences employee performance, well-being, and organizational culture over time.
- **Technological tools and platforms:** The role of technology in the delivery of emotional intelligence training in hybrid environments is underexplored [21, 22]. Although there is recognition of digital tools and platforms, more research is needed on their effectiveness, best practices for their use, and how they can be integrated with traditional face-to-face training methods. Our research tends to narrow this gap.
- **Measurement and evaluation:** Measuring the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training in hybrid work environments poses a challenge [23, 24]. There is a need for robust, reliable metrics and evaluation methods that can capture the impact of training on both emotional intelligence and job performance in different work settings.
- **Cultural and organizational contexts:** The influence of organizational culture and the broader cultural context on emotional intelligence training outcomes in hybrid work environments is not well understood, as confirmed in [25, 26]. Research should explore how different cultural backgrounds, and organizational practices affect the development and application of emotional intelligence.
- **Peer and social learning:** A hybrid work schedule can alter traditional social and peer learning dynamics [27, 28]. There is limited research on how to foster social learning and peer interactions that are critical for the development of emotional intelligence in hybrid settings.

- **Stress and well-being considerations:** The hybrid work schedule can introduce unique stressors and challenges to employee well-being, which are not always taken into account in emotional intelligence training programs [29, 30]. Research should investigate strategies to integrate stress management and well-being support into emotional intelligence development initiatives.

Addressing these gaps can help design more effective and comprehensive educational strategies for developing emotional intelligence in hybrid work environments. We can consider our research to be aimed at eliminating these gaps.

## 2- Literature Review

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Vrabcová & Urbancová [31] conducted in enterprises found that employee emotions significantly affect the quality of relationships in enterprise teams and influence employees' attitudes towards customers and clients. These findings were related to the implementation of holistic approaches to Human Resource Management (HRM), which began to be applied at the end of the 1990s [32]. The development of a holistic approach in marketing and HRM was associated with the research of American psychologists Ch. Corneau-Kirschner and L. Wah on business strategies related to customer orientation [33, 34].

The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by psychologists in 1990 [35, 36]. They characterized emotional intelligence properties such as empathy, expressing and understanding feelings, knowledge and managing emotions and moods, independence, adaptability, popularity, ability to manage interpersonal relationships, perseverance, friendliness, kindness, and willingness. They concluded that if these properties are underdeveloped, it affects an individual's work performance and significantly interferes with the results of work teams within departments, as well as the overall performance [37, 38].

In view of the research findings in [39] and the recognition that without emotional intelligence, an individual is unable to fully utilize their intellectual potential [40], we formulate the objectives of our empirical research. The focus was on the number of hours that companies are willing to invest in training employees in emotional intelligence and the benefits, such as changes in work outcomes as evaluated by the respondents. We also analyze the educational methods applied in enterprises for emotional intelligence training, as well as the level of achieving educational objectives as assessed by managers and corporate trainers of further education similar to Orr et al. [41]. To conduct empirical research, we characterized emotional intelligence as a way of employee self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills important in achieving work results and developing good work groups and teams, based on [42, 43].

In addition to the properties required by employers for their employees during the recruitment process and the outcomes of the education and long-term influences on individuals, such as self-confidence, reliability, conscientiousness, adaptability, ambition, and initiative, there are other important properties that allow comprehension and mastery of one's own feelings, as well as understanding other employees' feelings [44].

For the purposes of our research, we focused on the areas of empathy and social skills when exploring emotional intelligence characteristics, similar to [45, 46], i.e., the properties formulated during the pre-research stage together with the requirements of selected employers who joined the pre-research interview. This approach allowed us to gather a comprehensive understanding, described in [47], of how empathy and social skills, as critical components of emotional intelligence, are valued and cultivated within organizational settings.

Furthermore, our study explored how these components of emotional intelligence contribute to forming cohesive teams, improving communication, and enhancing overall organizational performance, as it was researched in [8, 48, 49] (see Table 1). Integrating emotional intelligence training into regular corporate training programs emerged as a key strategy to develop these essential skills among employees [50]. This strategic approach aligns with holistic HRM practices that prioritize the emotional and social well-being of employees as a foundation for achieving sustained business success [51].

**Table 1. Employee characteristics preferred by employers and developed through further corporate education [8, 48, 49]**

Selected Features of Emotional Intelligence	
Empathy	Social skills
Understanding and motivation capacity	Ability to influence
Ability to stimulate the personal growth of others	Communication ability
Orientation to co-workers	Leadership ability
Effort for developing and using diversity	Ability and willingness to create links
Sense of business entity policy and willingness to fulfil it	Ability to cooperate
	Team working ability
	Willingness to prepare and implement changes

Selected characteristics of emotional intelligence can be developed through several educational methods that can also be in further corporate education [46]. Of the various methods used in further corporate education, we have drawn on the traditional educational methods, namely, a frequently used lecture method. Nowadays, active educational methods are recommended and preferred to the traditional ones [52]. Active educational methods are intended to support learners' interests, increase motivation to learn, develop their creativity, and systematize the knowledge acquired during previous training [53, 54]. There are numerous varieties of active educational methods; many of them are described and researched in [55–58].

Currently, there are a variety of active educational methods that exist, emphasizing the crucial role of teacher self-efficacy in their effective implementation [59, 60]. These methods can be broadly categorized into dialogue methods, situational methods, skill development methods, and methods focused on practical implementation. Each category encompasses a variety of techniques tailored to different group sizes and learning objectives. A large group consists of dialogue methods divided by the number of trainees into large and small dialogue teaching methods. There are situational methods, skill development methods, and methods aimed at practical implementation.

In addition to these methods, the incorporation of technology into training programs can further enhance the learning experience. E-learning platforms and online courses provide flexible learning opportunities that can be tailored to individual needs. They also offer interactive elements, such as quizzes, video simulations, and forums for discussion, which can reinforce emotional intelligence training [61].

To maximize the effectiveness of these educational methods, it is crucial to align them with the specific needs and educational objectives of the target group. This alignment ensures that education is relevant and practical, leading to better results for both the employees and the organization [62].

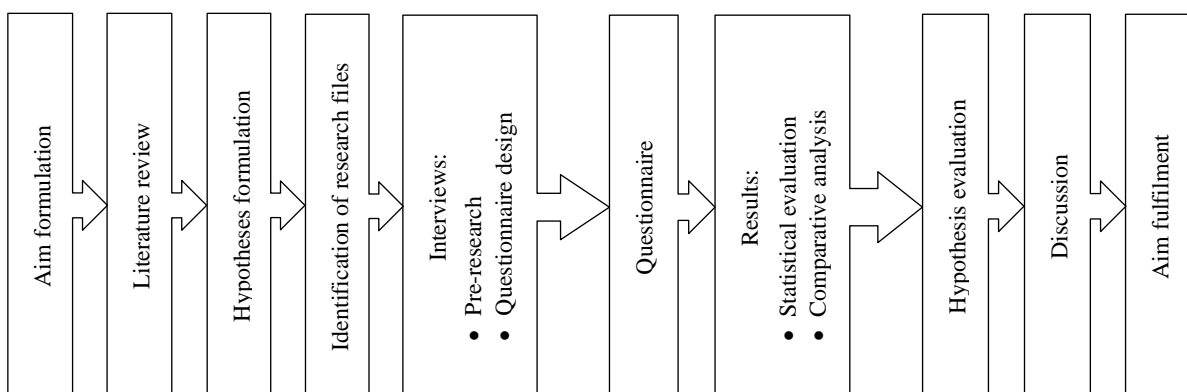
In general, the shift towards active educational methods in corporate education reflects a growing recognition of its value in developing key skills, including emotional intelligence. By creating a more engaging and interactive educational environment, these methods can help employees better understand and manage their emotions, leading to improved performance and job satisfaction [63, 64].

Since individual educational methods have been adequately theoretically elaborated, e.g., in Landøy et al. [65], we did not consider it necessary to deal with their characteristic. The focus of our research is on the representation of these methods in corporate education. On the one hand, the educational method is a procedure chosen by the instructor / teacher for the education; on the other hand, it is a tool that stimulates the participants of the education [66]. By improving and improving the possibilities of the educational environment, different educational methods are also improved and improved, and room is created for the emergence of other educational methods [67].

It is essential that the choice of method corresponds to the content of the issue, the needs and requirements of the target group in education, that is, the trainees, and the educational objectives set to be achieved by training [62, 68, 69].

### 3- Material and Methods

The methodology process flow chart is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Methodology workflow flowchart**

The focus of our research was on education that supports the development of employees' emotional intelligence in small and medium enterprises. Research was carried out in two basic stages:

1. In the first stage, we investigated how many of their working hours the SME is willing to use part of their working hours for education, that is, emotional intelligence training and the respondents' assessment of the benefits of this training in job performance and changes in work outcomes.

2. In the second stage, we focused on the suitability of the educational methods selected for the training and the achievement of the educational objectives desired.

In training, the selection of an appropriate educational method and the ability of the method to meet the stated cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning objectives are the accelerating training factors [70-72]. Based on this, the educational objectives are viewed in this paper as the outcome of education; what the training participants will be able to do and how they are able to behave after the training is completed.

The research was carried out using the interview and questionnaire methods. The interview was used to get a better understanding of the views and experiences of the respondents. The interview was also applied to conducting the pre-research and designing the questionnaire. It was conducted in an unstructured form with 15 learners/instructors of further education who provide educational activities in companies in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. The interviews were conducted in November 2023. The purpose of thirty-minute interviews was to find out which features of emotional intelligence the employers consider important and what are the most often required features in educational activities. Based on their answers, we developed Table 1. As a part of the interviews, the questionnaire developed by the authors was pilot tested, and it was finalized after the interviews as a part of the pre-research.

The questionnaire method was used for practical reasons, as the research required a representative sample of respondents. The questionnaire containing 14 questions (closed questions with multiple choice options) consisted of two parts: an informational part related to basic professional data on the respondent (country of origin, see Table 4, job position, see Table 5), and the second part related to the opinions on the implementation of education in the development of emotional intelligence. The respondents were expected to mark one of the options offered as an answer to the question. The total number of respondents was 370 (see Table 4).

The ethical principles related to the content of the questions and the formulation were adhered to. The questionnaires processed in two language versions, in Slovak and in English, were distributed by email correspondence; questionnaires were filled in person at conferences and research mobilizations, as well as during other joint activities. All the data obtained were processed, and calculations were made in the Jamovi program. Data collection for the questionnaire lasted from December 2023 to February 2024.

These methods were determined during the pre-research stage.

**Table 2. Survey of methods applied in the development of emotional intelligence properties in employee corporate education (Results of empirical research based on Lu et al. [73])**

Educational activity of further professional corporate training	Methods of education	
	Traditional methods	Active methods
Development of EI properties	Lecture	Learning conversation
		Chain discussion,
		Panel discussion
		Brainstorming discussion
		Role playing
		Case studies
		Demonstration

In this research paper, a detailed description of educational methods is not provided. It is taken for granted that experts involved in this topic are familiar with the characteristics of educational methods, for example [52, 53, 56]. The applied methods were evaluated in the interval 0 (no application) up to 5 (maximum application), as follows from Table 3.

**Table 3. Levels of applying methods of education.**

Level of application	Description
0	No application
1	Minimum application
2	Below average application
3	Average application
4	Above-average application
5	Maximum application

For the implementation of research, opinions of the respondents who are part of Section C Manufacturing according to the statistical classification of economic activities SK NACE Rev. 2 and are classified as administrative workers were taken into account. Respondents from three selected countries: the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, and the Hellenic Republic were selected by the random sampling method so that the results were not distorted by the selection tendency. Any SME belonging to Section C could participate in the survey. Completed questionnaires that did not meet these criteria were not considered; for example, respondents may have belonged to other sections of the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities or were not members of administrative staff.

The purpose of the research was to investigate administrative workers in enterprises belonging to the manufacturing section. The target number of respondents was 370; the response structure in terms of country of origin and job positions is specified in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4. Number of respondents by country**

Country	No. of respondents
Slovak Republic	138
Czech Republic	135
Hellenic Republic	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>

Education was studied in relation to the applied educational methods of an emotional intelligence training and the training premises. The respondents were instructors who conduct training in SME as their core or subsidiary business activity. Another group of respondents was made up of managers, namely line managers and education managers. Their number is given in Table 5.

**Table 5. Respondent data**

Countries	Characteristic of the respondents and their job positions				Respondents total
	Learners / instructor in further professional education		Manager		
	Core activity	Subsidiary/Secondary activity	Line manager	Education manager	
Slovak Republic	26	35	40	37	138
Czech Republic	18	24	44	49	135
Hellenic Republic	-	31	33	33	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>370</b>

Other variables explored were the duration of training in hours (see Table 6) and the results perceived in the changes in work performance in particular SME as perceived by respondents (see Table 7).

**Table 6. Duration of trainings in emotional intelligence features in hours on average per year**

Duration of emotional intelligence training in hours on average per year, per employee	Country			Total number of opinions expressed
	SK	CZE	HR	
Up to 5 hours	26	28	7	61
6 – 12 hours	45	42	14	101
13–19 hours	40	40	13	93
20 – 27 hours	10	10	6	26
28 – 34 hours	8	11	26	45
35 – 40 hours	7	4	23	34
over 41 hours	2	-	8	10
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>370</b>

**Table 7. Evaluation of the results in work performance and changes in elements of work after the training in emotional intelligence**

	Country			Total number of opinions expressed
	SK	CZE	HR	
No changes were observed.	-	-	-	
Improvement is recorded in the case of an individual's performance.	-	-	-	
Work performance improvement is recorded in employees performing a given type of job (between jobs and departments).	3	2	-	5
Performance improvement is reflected in teams in which one person at least has taken training.	69	70	47	186
Performance improvement is reflected in departments, in intra-enterprise units, etc.	51	47	40	138
Performance improvement is reflected throughout the organisation.	15	16	10	41
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>370</b>

Statistical descriptive statistics methods were used in the evaluation of research results. MS Excel and Jamovi statistical programs were used for processing information and data analysis.

The following hypotheses were determined for empirical research:

- First hypothesis:
  - **H0:** The number of training hours in the development of emotional intelligence features does not affect changes and work performance.
  - **H1:** The number of training hours in the development of emotional intelligence features affects changes and work performance.
- Second hypothesis:
  - **H0:** In the education and development of emotional intelligence, there is no relationship between the application of educational methods and the countries analyzed.
  - **H1:** In the education and development of emotional intelligence, there exists a relationship between the application of educational methods and the countries analyzed.
- Third hypothesis:
  - **H0:** Cognitive educational objectives are not better achieved through traditional methods of education.
  - **H1:** Cognitive educational objectives are better achieved by traditional methods of education.
- Fourth hypothesis:
  - **H0:** Affective educational objectives are not better achieved by active methods of education.
  - **H1:** Affective educational objectives are better achieved through active methods of education.
- Fifth hypothesis:
  - **H0:** Psychomotor objectives are not better achieved through active methods of education.
  - **H1:** Psychomotor objectives are better achieved through active methods of education.

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in statistics surveys in tables and interpreted in verbal descriptions of findings.

#### 4- Results

The focus of the empirical analysis was on the relationship between the number of hours in emotional intelligence and the work results and changes in the work performance of individual employees, teams, departments, and the entire enterprise. The results are presented in Table 8; dependency was established by correlations.

**Table 8. Correlation between the number of training hours per employee on average per year and changes in employee work performance**

Duration of training in hours per employee per year	Calculation of correlation coefficient	Changes in employee performance after instruction/training
Education in emotional intelligence	Pearson's r	0.302
	p-value	< .001

Based on the calculation of the correlation coefficient and the p-value, it can be concluded that the variables under study show a direct dependence. It means that the more training employees take, the more positive changes in their job performance will be recorded. However, based on the calculated correlation coefficient of 0.302, we have to consider this dependence as a medium. This is due to the fact that job performance is also influenced by the development of hard skills, better organization of work, and not only by emotional intelligence training, which allows improving the soft skills. We accept the alternative hypothesis of the first hypothesis.

The questionnaire used in the empirical research contained questions about other methods; however, respondents did not mention in their responses how methods were applied in training focused on the development of emotional intelligence. The level of application of educational methods (see Tables 9 and 10) was explored in the interval (0 5), where the focus was on comparing the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, and the Hellenic Republic.

**Table 9. Level of application of individual methods of education**

Methods applied	Level of application	Country			Total number of opinions expressed
		SK	CZE	HR	
Lecture	1	–	–	–	
	2	–	–	–	
	3	21	18	10	49
	4	15	16	9	40
	5	102	101	78	281
Learning conversation	1	–	–	–	–
	2	2	3	3	8
	3	30	17	19	66
	4	53	52	37	142
	5	53	63	38	154
Chain discussion	0	–	1	–	1
	1	33	22	39	94
	2	37	38	25	100
	3	41	46	13	100
	4	16	18	11	45
Panel discussion	5	11	10	9	30
	0	27	35	21	83
	1	84	78	47	209
Brainstorming discussion	2	27	22	29	78
	0	–	1	1	2
	1	51	39	41	131
	2	37	45	27	109
	3	50	50	26	126
Role playing	4	–	–	1	1
	5	–	–	1	1
	0	7	6		13
	1	94	92	62	248
	2	30	31	30	91
Case studies	3	7	6	4	17
	4	–	–	1	1
	5	–	–	–	–
	1	–	–	–	–
	2	23	19	14	56
Demonstration	3	35	42	25	102
	4	45	43	23	111
	5	35	31	35	101
Demonstration	1	–	–	–	–
	2	14	15	5	34
	3	63	63	46	172
	4	20	23	16	59
	5	41	34	30	105



**Table 10. Dependency of the educational methods applied in the development of emotional intelligence from the territorial aspect**

Methods of education	Calculation of correlation coefficient	Territory/Country/ SR/CzR/HR
Lecture	Pearson's r	0.065
	p-value	0.214
Learning conversation	Pearson's r	-0.021
	p-value	0.693
Chain discussion	Pearson's r	-0.110
	p-value	0.034
Panel discussion	Pearson's r	0.067
	p-value	0.200
Brainstorming discussion	Pearson's r	-0.065
	p-value	0.212
Role playing	Pearson's r	0.104
	p-value	0.046
Case study	Pearson's r	0.063
	p-value	0.223
Demonstration	Pearson's r	0.047
	p-value	0.363

When applying the methods, there are some peculiarities with regard to the country or territory in the case of chain discussion, where the dependence is indirect, and the role-playing method, where there is a direct dependence according to the calculation of the correlation coefficient. In both methods, the dependence is trivial. Given these two methods and the trivial dependence, the zero hypothesis can be accepted because there is no dependence recorded for the other six methods.

The classification of methods into traditional and active was further exploited in relation to the achievement of educational objectives classified into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The educational methods identified by the respondents as those applied in their training contribute to the achievement of the educational objectives in different ways. For this reason, we separately evaluated the fulfillment of educational objectives for traditional methods and the achievement of these objectives for active learning methods. While the lecture was evaluated in the traditional methods, several other methods were evaluated in the active method group (see Table 7).

To verify the hypotheses, we establish levels for educational objectives (see Table 11).

Based on the calculation of the correlation coefficient, the following can be concluded for the application of the lecture method: There is an indirect dependence for the fulfilment of affective and psychomotor objectives. Considering the calculated amount of the correlation coefficient, it can be described as a small interdependence. In the case of the third hypothesis, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, that is, the cognitive goals of education are better achieved by traditional methods of education (see Table 12).

Based on the responses of the respondents (see Table 13), it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the application of active educational methods and the achievement of educational objectives, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor ones. An exception is the application of the brainstorming method in the education and development of characteristics of emotional intelligence features.

Based on the calculation of the correlation coefficient, there is a small dependence between the application of the brainstorming method and the achievement of cognitive educational objectives. However, no dependence was calculated between the application of this method and the achievement of affective and psychomotor objectives. In the case of the fourth and fifth hypotheses, the zero hypothesis is accepted, i.e.

- The affective objectives of education are not achieved better by active teaching methods.
- Psychomotor objectives are not achieved better by applying active teaching methods.

Despite experts' opinions on education that place active educational methods ahead of traditional methods (namely lecture), it can be stated that it is the lecture method that is important for education, and through it the educational objectives can be achieved in the course of developing emotional intelligence. Respondents assessed one of the active methods, namely brainstorming discussion, as the method that has the most significant use in education.

All other methods are used in further corporate education as well; however, according to the respondents' views, these methods are used to change educational practices and revitalize the education process and increase the attention, motivation, and willingness of learners to learn.

**Table 11. Rating of learning objectives by their difficulty (based on [45, 74-76])**

Educational objectives	Levels	Description of goals
Cognitive objectives, Improving knowledge	1	Recall (define, reproduce, list, repeat, quote).
	2	Understanding (formulate, explain, differentiate, express, expand, outline).
	3	Analysis (analyse, parse, expand, specify, deduce, differentiate, compare, explore). Synthesis (summarise, combine, develop, create, construe, draw conclusions, plan, and derive).
	4	Application (demonstrate, plan, schedule, calculate, utilise).
	5	Evaluative appraisal (assess, defend, evaluate, argument, list advantages and disadvantages, verify, oppose, persuade). Creating something new.
Affective – attitudinal objectives, emotional support, change in attitudes	1	Acceptance (listen to/ look at something from a different perspective).
	2	Response (positive or negative reaction is expected (i.e. showing enthusiasm, interest, empathy).
	3	Appreciation of value (giving an opinion, attitude to something, acceptance, preferring, and the like).
	4	Integration and interrelation of values (proposal for ways of dealing something based on dissatisfaction, mutual interrelation of various values, show interest, establish determinants, create a scale)
	5	Internalisation of values in character – adopting a particular philosophy (creating an individual s value system, showing interest)
Psychomotor – training objectives – focus on mastering skills	1	Readiness for activity – psychic, physical, and emotional readiness for activity – establishing a succession of steps (imitation, manipulation). Imitation - imitation of some activity (a participant repeats the acts shown by the instructor). Manipulation – mechanical activity (continuous independent work according to instructions (one element).
	2	Precision - the ability to implement precise actions in some activity.
	3	Coordination – harmonious implementation of several activities.
	4	Naturalisation - acquire routine in performing activities.
	5	Adaptation and creativity, adjustment to changed conditions; participant is able to change/ modify/ adapt the activity to the changed conditions and use the acquired ways of activity in new, unfamiliar and problematic situations.

**Table 12. Relationship between the application of the lecture method and the achievement of educational objectives**

Methods of education	Calculation of correlation coefficient	Achievement of educational objectives		
		Cognitive	Affective	Psychomotor
Lecture	Pearson's r	0.359	-0.200	-0.299
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001

**Table 13. Relationship of active education methods and achievement of educational objectives**

Methods of education	Calculation of correlation coefficient	Achievement of educational objectives		
		Cognitive	Affective	Psycho-motor
Learning discussion	Pearson's r	-0.049	0.086	0.032
	p-value	0.350	0.097	0.543
Chain discussion	Pearson's r	0.097	0.008	-0.025
	p-value	0.395	0.876	0.638
Panel discussion	Pearson's r	0.044	0.003	0.011
	p-value	0.395	0.961	0.837
Brainstorming discussion	Pearson's r	0.116	-0.003	0.088
	p-value	0.026	0.948	0.092
Role playing	Pearson's r	-0.038	-0.010	-0.061
	p-value	0.467	0.851	0.244
Case study	Pearson's r	-0.092	-0.006	0.064
	p-value	0.076	0.914	0.220
Demonstration	Pearson's r	-0.019	0.075	-0.047
	p-value	0.717	0.149	0.366

## 5- Discussion

The development of features of emotional intelligence in employees has a different course and a different focus than that of professional corporate education. This is also manifested in the stated educational objectives, which are difficult to achieve with commonly applied training methods. The company's intention to develop emotional intelligence is, according to Zeidner et al. [77], connected with:

- Knowledge of one's own emotions; self-awareness, i.e., conscious recognition of emotion at the moment of its occurrence;
- Managing emotions, i.e., dealing with one's emotions in a way that is appropriate for the situation;
- The ability to motivate yourself, i.e., the involvement of emotions in one's own actions, which enables the necessary intensity and long-term focus of motivation;
- Sensitivity to other people's emotions, developing empathy as a basic human quality;
- The art of developing interpersonal relationships;
- The development of social skills such as the ability to influence, the ability to communicate, the ability to lead, cooperate, work as a team, and create the conditions for change and its implementation.

Many education professionals are confronted with the situation that employee training brings about the non-fulfillment of the set educational objectives in practice [62, 78]. Education is expected to deliver the right combination of fulfilling cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives. Combinations of methods that are capable of delivering all these desired educational outcomes are sought [79]. Therefore, traditional educational methods based mainly on one-way communication between the speaker and the listener are often abandoned, and the use of active educational methods is recommended, which put the learner and their active activities in the spotlight [80-82]. In this way, the objectives of education can be achieved through more varied content, practice dynamics, and intensive experience [83].

Our research shows that SMEs want to develop the emotional intelligence features of their employees. Research has also shown the dependence between the number of training hours in emotional intelligence and changes in employee performance and job outcomes. The authors of these studies came to the same conclusions, e.g. [13, 84-86].

The study by Kotsou et al. [84] examines the concept of emotional plasticity, which refers to the ability of adults to improve their emotional competence through targeted interventions. Researchers investigate the conditions necessary to improve emotional competence and the subsequent effects of such improvements on various aspects of life. The study explores how structured training programs aimed at developing emotional skills can lead to significant positive changes in emotional intelligence. This includes improvements in emotion regulation, emotional understanding, and emotional expression. Furthermore, the study evaluates the impact of increased emotional competence on personal and professional outcomes, such as better mental health, improved interpersonal relationships, and improved job performance. The findings suggest that with the right conditions and training, adults can develop their emotional skills, leading to tangible benefits in their daily lives and work environments.

Next, the study by Clarke [85] explores the connection between emotional intelligence and effective project management. Specifically, it investigates how emotional intelligence is related to transformational leadership and essential competencies required for successful project managers.

A hybrid work mode may have a mixed effect on the development of emotional intelligence. This assumption is supported, for example, by Ciriaco [87] or Allen et al. [88]. On the one hand, it promotes greater flexibility, self-awareness, and self-management, which can contribute to the development of emotional intelligence. However, it may limit personal interactions and subtle social skills, which are crucial to the development of emotional intelligence [89, 90]. The balance and structure that an organization establishes within the hybrid model is essential to foster positive aspects of emotional intelligence among its employees [91].

In terms of efficiency of the various methods in training employees in emotional intelligence characteristics, the lecture method was evaluated as the most successful method by the respondents. Based on the analysis and calculation of the responses from the respondents, there is a moderate dependence on meeting cognitive objectives and also a small indirect dependence on meeting affective and psychomotor objectives. Our results are completely correlated with the results of studies by Mayer et al. [92], Saikia et al. [93], or Bradberry & Greaves [94].

Active learning methods focus on activating participants in education. This aspect is highly rated in this paper; ideas of active educational methods need to be further supported and expanded in the learning process, as confirmed in Gabrhelová & Čepelová [95], Duda et al. [96], or Yatsenko [97].

For most of the active educational methods in the study area, the dependence between the use of the method and the achievement of the educational objectives was not confirmed. Of all active educational methods, the brainstorming discussion method was the only one in which the dependence between the implementation of the method and the educational objectives was confirmed.

Many other studies confirm the positive effect of brainstorming on the development of emotional intelligence that we found. We fully identify with Kress & Elias [98]. This study explores how collaborative activities, such as brainstorming, can improve emotional intelligence by fostering empathy, communication skills, and social awareness. Next, Offermann et al. [99] investigate how activities such as brainstorming can improve emotional competence and contribute to individual and team performance. Even Goleman [6] in his book included discussions on how social and collaborative practices, including brainstorming, can develop emotional and social intelligence by improving interpersonal skills and emotional understanding. Very interesting findings that confirm the results of our research are cited in Wolff et al. [100]. This study examines the impact of group activities, such as brainstorming, on group emotional intelligence and overall group effectiveness and confirms the correlation between brainstorming and emotional intelligence. Even Nijstad et al. [101], while primarily focused on cognitive outcomes, discuss the social and emotional aspects of group brainstorming sessions, including how these activities can improve social awareness and emotional regulation skills.

These studies and books provide evidence that brainstorming and other collaborative methods can contribute to the development of emotional intelligence by improving communication skills, empathy, and the ability to regulate one's own and others' emotions and confirm our results.

Weak dependence was confirmed when the method was used to achieve cognitive learning objectives. This is explained by the very nature of this method, which is aimed at stimulating the generation of new ideas and thus enables problem solving, including the problems that are part of the characteristics of emotional intelligence. These features are important for the joint achievement of corporate results: better collaboration, empathetic behavior, team leadership, leadership ability, and willingness to work together to prepare the necessary changes and readiness for their implementation. Dealing with more increasingly complex tasks and nonstandard problems necessitates team problem-solving methods, as evidenced by the results of our research we conducted on the learning and development of emotional intelligence traits.

Our research results indicate the need to develop other methods of education that can also yield positive results in developing individual characteristics of emotional intelligence. In particular, we would bring to the fore the discussion of the Gordon method and the synectics method, which, likewise the brainstorming method, are based on the same foundations; however, they have not yet gained such extensive applicability in corporate education as the brainstorming method. The findings can be supported by the theoretical implication of the Big Five personality model in shaping educational behavior for adult education cited by Czarkowski et al. [102].

The starting point of our reflections is the idea that hybrid work schedules are linked to not only information technologies but also the emotional intelligence of employees. A successful operation of hybrid schedules in corporate education and training requires employees with well-developed emotional intelligence.

The novelty of our approach to dealing with this topic is in focusing on the time scope of training in emotional intelligence and the suitability of applying methods of education in achieving educational objectives and subsequently changes in work results in education evaluated by managers (line managers and education managers) and training instructors.

Based on the research conducted and the examination of the usefulness of different methods to develop emotional intelligence, the importance of traditional monological methods of education should be reconsidered. Despite the criticism of traditional teaching methods about the lack of participation of learners in creative learning activities [103], the lecture method received strong support from the respondents, especially when applied in its modified form. The modified lecture method was found to be significant in meeting not only cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives. Apart from that, it is stated in Parvaie et al. [104] that this method could be successfully applied in the virtual learning space and thus become a useful method of education, which will enable to support a continuous nature of education.

It is completely natural that the lecture method should be supplemented with experiences from practice by giving examples and discussions on issues presented to training participants [105]. By rendering a systematic explanation of the problems and through examples from practice, the lecture method draws training participants in the discussion in which they present their opinions, which supports their active approach to education. The lecture enriches the image of cognition, and when properly applied, this method fulfills the consolidation and reproductive functions in education.

Further professional corporate education is becoming a natural part of each individual's life also as a result of virtualization, since the distinction between learning, work, and leisure is blurred in the virtual space. The instant availability of information, knowledge, and multimedia content is also of great importance; this fact reduces the barriers we know from traditional education carried out in physical space. From the opinions of the respondents, it emerged that one of the active methods of education, which belongs to the group of dialogue teaching methods, brainstorming, is closely tied to the physical environment, and this environment that creates opportunities for a real generation of ideas. Based on the results of our research, this method is indeed also suitable for achieving cognitive educational objectives, which is underlined by Anggraeni et al. [106] and Anaguna & Suhendra [107].

The focus of our research here was on the development of emotional intelligence properties. However, in the case of other educational activities of different content, active educational methods can be expected to stand for a decisive educational method, and all the methods of education mentioned earlier in the article would be applied. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of various educational methods that linked learning content, the target group, and the fulfillment of educational objectives is important in developing further corporate education in the (post)information and knowledge society. Successful educational results will depend on how we manage to innovate education and balance trends in education and expectations of those who are interested in learning. Thus, we can unequivocally confirm the statements made in studies [108–110].

## **6- Conclusion**

The contemporary extensive innovations in technology in combination with hybrid work schedules and possibilities of continuous learning will result in evolutionary changes in education and enable to carry out a complex digital transformation in the corporate sector.

Innovations in education that aim to develop emotional intelligence (EI) are becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of hybrid work environments that combine in person and remote settings. In this new work model, the ability of individuals to recognize and manage their own emotions as well as those of others is key to effective communication and teamwork.

An approach is the integration of online modules focused on EI training into the curriculum. These modules may include videos, interactive exercises, and simulations that help employees better understand the concepts of emotional intelligence. The hybrid model allows participants to share their experiences and practice skills in real time, both during in-person meetings and online discussions.

Another innovative aspect is the use of technology, such as emotion-tracking applications or virtual reality, which enable the simulation of various social situations. These tools help individuals develop empathy and improve interpersonal relationships in a diverse work environment. Thus, the development of emotional intelligence in a hybrid work model contributes to creating engaged and balanced teams that are better equipped to respond to the challenges of the modern world.

## **7- Declarations**

### ***7-1-Author Contributions***

Conceptualization, M.M. and D.A.P.; methodology, M.M. and R.G.; software, M.M. and M.V.; validation, M.M. and D.B.; formal analysis, M.V. and R.G.; investigation, M.M., D.A.P., and D.B.; resources, M.M. and R.G.; data curation, M.M.; writing—original draft preparation, M.M. and D.B.; writing—review and editing, M.M., D.A.P., and M.V.; visualization, M.M.; supervision, M.M.; project administration, M.M.; funding acquisition, M.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### ***7-2-Data Availability Statement***

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

### ***7-3-Funding and Acknowledgements***

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### ***7-4-Institutional Review Board Statement***

Not applicable.

### ***7-5-Informed Consent Statement***

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

### ***7-6-Conflicts of Interest***

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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