

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING TOOLS FOR BUSINESS

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Abstract This study aims to present practical tools for developing emotional intelligence (EI) in training entrepreneurs, managers and business students. The study proposes innovative tools that allow consistent development of each part of the 4-component instrumental model for emotional intelligence development. The systematic approach is based on contemporary theoretical research and uses applied software. An alarm clock is one of the promising Emotional Intelligence Training Tools. Alarm clocks are created using chatbots in the Smart Sender program. The dynamics of emotional intelligence development of entrepreneurs, managers and business students is tracked through questionnaires and building emotional intelligence profiles. The practical value of Emotional Intelligence Training Tools lies in their simplicity and effectiveness in an educational environment.

Keywords:

emotional intelligence, model, tools, training, entrepreneurs

JEL:

A20, C83, O35

1 Introduction

Sustainability goals include quality education, good health and well-being (United Nations, 2015). The current challenge in the training of highly skilled managers, entrepreneurs and business students is the development of soft skills. The Future of Jobs Report 2020 proclaimed emotional intelligence a key and high-demand soft skill (The Future of Jobs Report 2020; 2020). EI can be the foundation for crucial soft skills such as leadership and social influence, resilience, stress tolerance, flexibility, etc. One of the preconditions for the successful development of EI is using Emotional Intelligence Training Tools (EITTs) in the educational environment (Almeida & Buzady, 2022). Implementing EITTs enhance the use of time, age advantages and potential of learners. The up-to-date software has the potential to diversify the process of building self-awareness, self-management, cognitive empathy, teamwork, and effective communication. Documents presented at learning platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, Prometheus and scientific results from Scopus and Web of Science databases are also essential sources of information that can enliven the learning process and maximise its effectiveness.

This study aims to present EITTs we have developed to contribute to the successful training of managers, entrepreneurs and business students. The tools proposed in this study have been tested in an educational setting and may interest educators and researchers interested in EI development.

2 Theoretical Background

Emotional intelligence creates additional opportunities throughout the professional activity of entrepreneurs, managers and business students. In the beginning, EI increases the learning of new knowledge and boosts the formation of other soft skills necessary for a successful career. EI enhances entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy, increases stress tolerance, openness, and knowledge-sharing behaviour (Hornung & Smolnik, 2021), increases communication effectiveness and improves decision-making (Çetin & Karakaş, 2021). EI helps realise leadership skills, increases team cohesion and collaboration, and saves time in achieving results (Zhang & Shengyue, 2022; Brečko, 2021). Furthermore, EI ensures stable social connections (Zhang & Adegbola, 2022), a good reputation and success.

Overall, EI positively affects job performance and productivity in the professional activities of entrepreneurs (Lu et al., 2022). Employees with high EI increase the company's value and lead to an increase in company revenues, cash flow and customer loyalty. EI is particularly relevant for human management research. The higher the position managers hold, the more significant the impact of their EI. Managers' EI affects not only the quality of work but also the financial performance of companies. Managerial EI also impacts employee well-being, satisfaction, and health (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2021).

Research studies likewise proved the importance of EI for business students, as highlighted in recent research (Lu et al., 2022). Karimi and Ataei (2022) suggested that the students' higher emotional intelligence is a precondition to acquiring and reinforcing entrepreneurial skills. The researchers proved a significant positive correlation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and EI (Karimi & Ataei, 2022; Halliwell et al., 2022). The university study is considered an ideal entrepreneurial period, especially for vocational college students who pay more attention to entrepreneurship and innovation education (Wen et al., 2020). However, despite the undeniable value of EI, a literature review revealed a need for practical tools for developing the EI of entrepreneurs, managers and students (Nurhas et al., 2022).

There are three main theories behind EI development: the non-cognitive theory of EI developed by Bar-On, the theory of emotional and intellectual abilities by Meyer and Salovey, and the mixed theory of emotional competence by Goleman. However, the proposed models do not fit the entrepreneurial and business environment well. Therefore, we developed a 4-component instrumental model for developing EI (4EI Model). The 4EI Model was developed as a result of the generalisation of fundamental and recent scientific publications, including Goleman's model (Wolff, 2005). This model is the basis for the evolution of EITTs. Using EITTs develops Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-awareness and Relationship management of entrepreneurs and managers.

3 Methodology

This study uses the 4-component instrumental model to develop EI (4EI Model). The 4EI Model is adapted to the entrepreneurial and business environment and includes 19 competencies (Mikuš et al., 2021). We use the “Emotional Intelligence in Business” questionnaire to monitor the learning outcomes of the 4EI Model

(Mikuš et al., 2021). The questionnaire allows us to visually display the results as an EI diagram of four quadrants – emotional intelligence profile (EI profile). The questionnaire has been empirically proven, and demonstrator and confirmation analysis was carried out using the programs MS Excel, SPSS, STATISTICA, FACTOR, and R-Studio.

To develop EITTs, we used the Smart Sender program. Self-awareness Alarm Clocks and Self-management Alarm Clocks are projects in the Smart Sender program with separate funnels. By following the links, students sign up for the chatbot on Telegram and receive messages for a set period of study. Subscription to the Alarm clocks is free and voluntary.

Testing is part of the learning process. We offer students to take the "Emotional Intelligence in Business" questionnaire before and after their training. The proposed EITTs have been implemented and validated in the elective course "Emotional intelligence in youth and senior entrepreneurship" at Comenius University Bratislava and "Leadership and emotional intelligence" at the Ukrainian engineering pedagogics academy.

4 Results

In the educational course, we selected EITTs for the development of each component of EI: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-awareness and Relationship management. We implement Challenge Based Learning (Leijon et al., 2021) by solving real-world challenges. In addition to revealing the theory for each quadrant, we use the following practical tools.

4.1 Self-awareness tools

The alarm clock is one of the promising Emotional Intelligence Training Tools. To form the Self-awareness skill, we use three types of Alarm Clocks.

Self-awareness Alarm Clock 1 helps students better understand their limitations, fears, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Procedure. During the week, every 3-4 hours, students receive questions to which they can immediately write an answer (Figure 1). Students cannot see each other's answers. The alarm clock invites them to reflect on one's self-perception and forms the habit of thinking.

Result. Accurate self-assessment and self-confidence are formed.

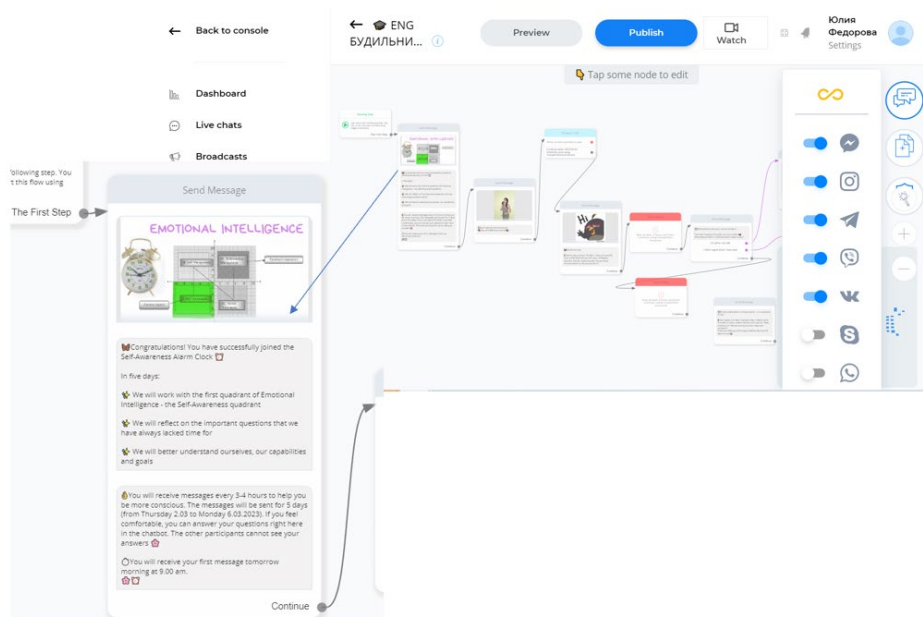


Figure 1: Fragment of Self-awareness alarm clock 1, own elaboration

Source: https://t.me/Clock_SEID_bot?start=ZGw6MzU3MDU

Self-awareness Evening Alarm Clock 2 forms the habit of reflecting on the day that has passed.

Procedure. During the week, students receive evening messages. The message offers to describe the three main emotions of the past day. It is vital to describe emotions and the events that caused them.

Result. Increased awareness of one's most experienced emotions and moods.

Self-awareness Stop Alarm Clock 3 is a stopping tool that helps to track and clarify the internal state.

Procedure. During the week, at various time intervals, students are given a question to track their current emotions. A prerequisite is using an emotion dictionary to describe their feelings in clear and precise words.

Result. The accuracy of perception of one's emotions increases.

4.2 Self-management tools

We use the Alarm Clock and the Presentation to form the competencies of this component.

Self-management Alarm Clock introduces students to possible non-standard situations at work.

Procedure. During the week, several times a day, students receive short video assignments with problem situations at work. For example, the video material from training courses on Coursera is used. Students can send their solutions to prevent conflict and stressful situations at work.

Result. Awareness of the importance of self-control at work is growing. There is an identification of unacceptable actions in professional activities.

Presentation of ways to control conditionally negative emotions.

Procedure. Students are encouraged to watch the video, for example, the cartoon "Inside out". Then, they can suggest possible problem situations at work for each conditionally negative emotion in the video. Students must propose a solution to the situation. The practical application of this tool indicates an increase in interest and participation of students in discussions.

Result. The ability to predict the consequences of one's behaviour at work is being developed.

4.3 Social- awareness tools

We use the "Pay attention to faces and body" presentations and the "Reading others' emotions" exercise to develop Social-awareness.

"Pay attention to faces and body" presentations contain short video questions and photos to determine emotions.

Procedure. In dynamic mode, students view pictures and videos. They are offered answers. Students guess emotions not only by facial expressions but also by a person's posture. For example, we use an illustration from Pease and Pease (2008).

Result. Increased cognitive empathy.

Exercise "Reading others' emotions"

Procedure. The roles of speakers, face decoders, body decoders and speech decoders are distributed among students. Speakers are given tasks to portray different emotions. Decoders focus on verbal and non-verbal characteristics for guessing emotions (3-Emotional-Intelligence-Exercises-1.pdf positivepsychology.com).

Result. Organisational awareness improves.

4.4 Relationship management tools

In the last stage, assertive behaviour, teamwork, and effective communication skills are formed. ***Public speaking with arguments*** is the primary tool.

Procedure. Students are invited to prepare a speech on one of the issues on which society has different opinions. The student's task is to convince the audience of the correctness of his point of view. For persuasion, they can use the Argumentation Algorithm, Figure 2. The identifier of success is the number of votes of classmates who believed the speaker.

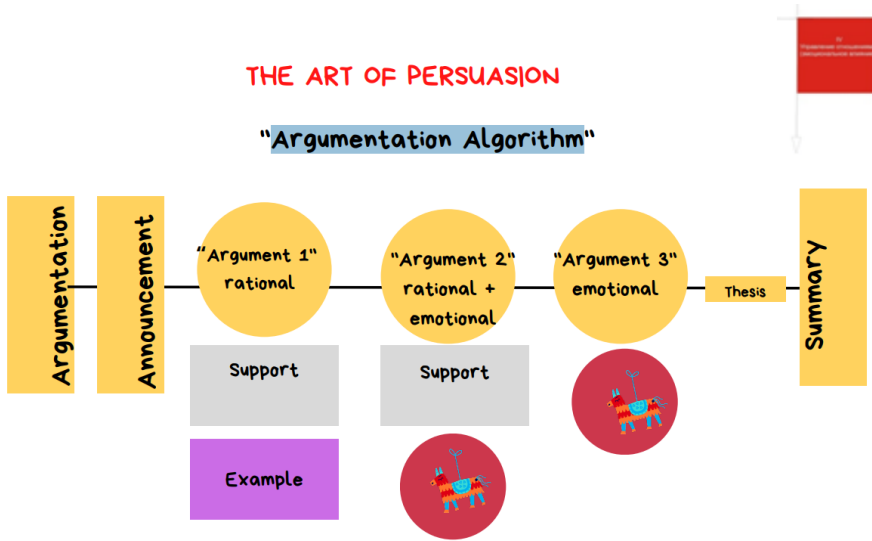


Figure 2: Argumentation Algorithm, author's elaboration.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Nepryakhin (2016).

In that way, the training course contains dynamic, engaging tools. Involving entrepreneurs and managers in the training process improves the use of their time and potential. Evidence for the effectiveness of the proposed EITTs is the numerical increase in the components of the EI profile, Figure 3.

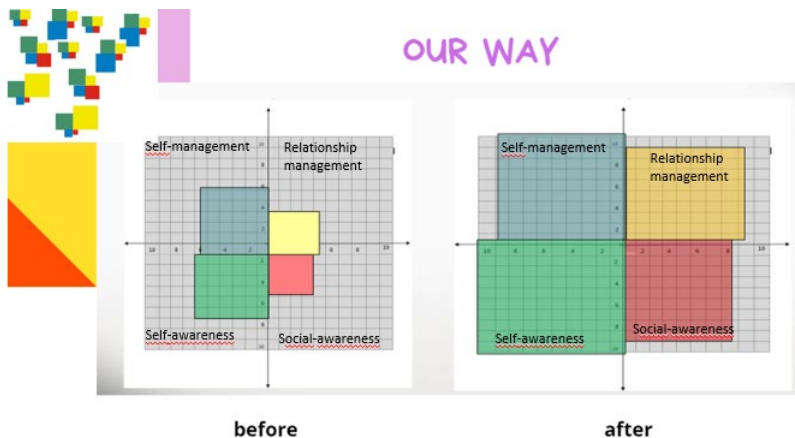


Figure 3: The EI profiles of students before and after applying EITTs

Source: Authors's elaboration.

The effectiveness of EITTs has been confirmed in practice. Thus, presented EITTs develop all four components of the model, Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-awareness and Relationship management of entrepreneurs and managers.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the importance of EI for entrepreneurs, managers and business students, teaching these skills in universities is still at an early stage. Therefore, the application of EITTs is an essential practical step. Our approach uses the latest theoretical research, modern software, and visualisation elements. Purposeful consistent development of each component makes it possible to increase the level of training of successful entrepreneurs, managers and business students. EITT can enrich modern education. We follow Challenge Based Learning, which enhances the prospects and effectiveness of entrepreneurs', managers' and business students' training. The EITTs are visual, engaging, and involve trainees in learning.

Moreover, in addition to teacher assessment, trainees track their progress by changing their EI profile. We continue to conduct statistical research. Further directions of our research are expanding the arsenal of EITTs and evaluating the effectiveness of EITTs based on statistical studies.

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