

PETRA HRICOVÁ¹

Emotional Intelligence as a Key Feature of a Commander

Abstract

This effort is aimed towards to one of the most important skills of the manager-commander in 21st century, which is emotional intelligence. Main target of the effort is to give the reader a better look at the position of a commander, his competences and mainly give the public of Armed Forces a better knowledge about emotional intelligence. In theoretical part of an effort it's the position of a commander, about his personal nature, which he should have, mainly because he manages people daily. I consider emotional intelligence as the most key feature of a manager because in modern age we think it's impossible to handle systems and processes and also guide and lead his employees. In a practical part I used questionnaire method to do a research about sophistication of students of the Armed forces academy of Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš, Slovakia. It's the academy which grows future commanders, who should without a doubt develop this type of intelligence. Main target of this endeavour is to be more effective and also inspire everybody in this resort to grow social and emotional forwardness of future commanders by application of emotional intelligence into practice.

Key words: emotional intelligence, commander, competence, leadership, features

1. INTELLIGENCE, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

A lot of psychologists are interested in intelligence. This is the reason why we use different definitions. Some psychologists think it is the way how people are able to address new situation and problems in their lives. Others think it is the ability to learn and some regard it as ability to develop abstract thinking. Nowadays we know three levels - abstract intelligence, mechanical intelligence and social intelligence. Mathematicians, lawyers and physicists have abstract intelligence. They use numbers and symbols. Mechanical intelligence is associated with various tools and equipment, so workers, technicians and engineers should have the highest level of mechanical intelligence. Social intelligence is used in social and personal relationships. We use it when we work with people. It is about how fast individuals can make friends.

¹ Armed Forces Academy of general Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 1st Degree Private, E-mail: petra.hricova1@gmail.com

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2018. XI. évfolyam 4. szám

1.1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Before we started thinking about emotional intelligence we will talk about emotions. Emotions are in our everyday lives. They are our reactions in miscellaneous situations, responses to internal and external stimuli. We make decisions based on our emotions. We can handle situations which are unmanageable only with intellect. Emotions are not important only in our personal lives. We need them in our professional life, in our job.

I think in the armed forces making a right decision is one of the most essential capabilities. We must choose one choice quickly. Speed of reaction is very important mainly if you are a commander. Many people think that in the armed forces regulations and order mean everything. But in this resort are situations which must be solved immediately and the most effectively. I think intelligent results. It is true, in many crisis situations is not needed emotional result by commander, also soldiers make decisions with their emotions.

In my opinion feelings and emotions are not the same. When we talk about adverse feelings in difficult and important decisions it is not emotional intelligence but feelings of one person. On the one hand feelings are longer lasting phenomena, while emotions are reactions to shock. It is necessary to point out that experts in this area do not have the same opinion. We don't know whether these words are synonyms or semantically different words. When we talk about emotions we need to talk about exaggerated reactions. Above average reactions can make stressful situation and we want to avoid them. Because of that I think that development of emotional intelligence is important mainly (but not just) in soldiers in manager positions and also in other positions. The ability to control emotions is needed in every person, not just in soldiers. But in my opinion in the armed forces this is most important. The ability to manage emotions is the key in work with people. Not just in command and in the leadership. Sometimes it is the most important thing.

2. EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

We can consider emotional intelligence as the ability to identify and the ability to express emotions and mainly the ability of working with emotions. The basic competence is identification of one's own emotions. Before we can do something with emotions of other people we have to know ourselves. We have to use our emotional intelligence if we want to have quality lives.

When we talk about emotional intelligence we have to know emotional awareness. Emotional awareness is associated with the perception of the feelings, the ability to talk about our own emotions and to discern them. Emotional awareness consists of six levels. The lowest level is emotional illiteracy, physical manifestations (warmth, irritation), elemental perception (foreboding), the language barrier, feelings which we don't know and on the top rankings is the causality. It is ability to identify and describe the emergence of feelings and emotions.

Emotional illiteracy is the inability to feel and describe one's own feelings. This person doesn't understand what he or she feels. He cannot work with his emotions. Because of

that we should work with emotional intelligence from childhood. The emotional illiteracy makes our personal lives more difficult and we can have problems mainly in professional life. In some psychologists' opinion, the ability to put yourself in emotions and mind of another person is the way how we can have better relationships with manager or boss and these people can better lead their subordinates.

Because of that I choose emotional competence as one of the main properties of the commander. It is not defined which properties are the main or the most important. In my opinion, it is impossible to create a general scheme where we sort these properties. Every manager or commander has specific position and everybody needs something else. Competence is connected with properties and abilities which manager or commander should have when he is ready to solve problems and do everything what is expected. We can split emotional competence in tree levels:

- a) Professional competence
- b) Leadership and managerial competence
- c) Moral competence

These competences are linked with competences defined by Macháčik. He uses motivational, creative and critical problem-solving competences, working with modern information technologies, language competence and solving problems in military resort.

As it is impossible to define competences of manager in civil sector it is impossible to precisely define competences of a commander in the military.

3. THE COMMANDER

The Academy of the Armed Forces of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik educates future commanders for the armed forces of Slovak Republic as only one military university in the Slovak Republic. What should be a future commander like? The commander should have many abilities. He should be intelligent, he should have general knowledge, ability to work with people, ability to communicate, responsibility, reliability, team working, flexibility, empathy and number of other abilities. I spend a lot of time in the Armed Forces Academy and I see a lot of problems in this area. At the beginning of my article I talk about an obsolete way of managing people in the military. Commanders use old ways of management which was used previously in the Slovak army or Czechoslovak army. Every process works very slowly and modern trends are hardly implemented. Modernisation in this resort is really slow. I believe if the armed forces academy educates students who will have high emotional intelligence, we will have modern armed forces soon. In my opinion, the better way how to get intelligent and modern commanders in armed forces does not exist.

Everybody who works with people should have these properties. I know, in the military emotions are not needed, sometimes they are not desired. However, I think we need this. From my experience I know how demotivated we feel when commanders don't want to solve problems of their soldiers. Not enough empathy and lack of interest in problems can lead to injustice which can demotivate soldiers or employees and they won't work effectively. A lot of commanders don't realize that their performance depends on their subordi-

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2018. XI. évfolyam 4. szám

nates' performance. In my opinion, the feedback is one of the most important things in cooperation. Commanders don't have only formal authority that follows from the position. They should have and mainly use informal authority. The informal authority cannot be forced by words, threats or punishment. The successful commanders and leaders care about interpersonal relationships. Nowadays, we don't talk about a boss. We talk about a leader, leader of group, who can work like a member and he can stimulate subordinates for better performance.

The lack of emotional intelligence or underestimating emotional intelligence can be a big disadvantage of the commander. When the commander loses respect he can't be a good commander. Subordinates have to respect and admire him. If commander say some threats, bans and punishment they should be corrected. I think communication has to be in armed forces in the form of manager-to-subordinate. I do not talk about "civilization" of the military. The armed forces have some rules which do not allow a lot of new innovative management systems. But the armed forces don't have to be behind the times. Nowadays all people in this resort want new equipment, but it is not everything. Modernisation is also important in human resources. Military conduct and emotional intelligence don't have to be opposite in ordinary life.

4. LEADERSHIP

Leadership itself has no clear definition or it has many definitions. Being a leader is not simple. There are a lot of appointments, competences and traits that a good leader should have. The most difficult job is to work with people and lead them like that in the end they will have to work and be comfortable about themselves. It is the most difficult part. It is important for a commander to know how big and how much power he has. Just like he can help to achieve great accomplishments, he can also have negative influence. In my opinion, commanders who serve in armed forces abuse their power more than it happens in civilian sector. Ordering there people to do some work just because "I said that" or "because I can" is the clear example of abusing power. It is a common example of using power in an incorrect way. Everything should have a logical fundament whether it is an order or request. I agree that soldiers should stay soldiers and too much emotional entry is not appropriate. But I also think that giving orders without any rational reason is not correct.

Emotional intelligence is not only important in everyday military life. Commanders often find themselves in situations when then can't depend on anything else except their skill to figure out how their soldiers really feel. It is said that desperate situations need desperate solutions, but I am in favour of intelligent solutions. The commander has to be able to out-guess how soldiers would act in a particular situation. This is particularly important when we talk about critical situations where life is at stakes.

5. INTELLIGENT QUOTIENT, EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT

Everybody has encountered the term IQ (intelligent quotient). Every day we can see advertisements for super-fast IQ test. But is IQ so important for us? Not only in professional life but also in personal life?

Daniel Goleman, psychologist who specializes in emotional intelligence, says that:

“Theoretical skills which we learn in school can’t help us solve a problem in everyday life. High IQ is not a guaranty of prosperity, high social status and happiness. Emotional intelligence has a high impact on your life but schools keep ignoring it. They ignore the fact that the brain without emotional knowledge is completely blind. The fact that high IQ doesn’t postulate success in carrier is really surprising.

Dependence of IQ on success in career is not more than 25%. Some studies say that it’s only 4%. As a result, it’s clear that 75% to 96% of success doesn’t depend on classical school knowledge.

There is no clear connection between EQ and IQ, but they are not opposite – they don’t compete with each other.

EQ (emotional intelligence) consists of some “soft skills”. According to Daniel Goleman, the psychologist” they are divided into personal skills, which are aimed towards ourselves and social skills, which show how human treats others. Self-realization belongs to personal skills – feeling for our own feelings, and realizing of our own pluses and minuses, self-confidence, initiative, optimism, ability to develop endeavour and motivate ourselves. Ability to keep change or satisfaction for later, etc. Last but not least ability according to Goleman is self-control – anger management, stress durability, reliability, ability to adapt, time management, assertion, flexibility, making decisions, etc. Social skills are empathy – understanding of other people’s feelings, ability and will to accept them, ability to encourage personal growing, etc. and an art of interpersonal relationship – communication, presentation skills, social skills, team work, ability to lead, ability to affect other people and cope with conflicts, etc.

People with high level of EQ (emotional intelligence) know themselves and are also able to sense needs of others. It’s said that emotional intelligence is 58% of performance in all types of careers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) I find it easy to explain my feelings.
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always

- 2) Emotions play an important part in my life.
 - a) Never

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2018. XI. évfolyam 4. szám

- b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 3) I accept responsibility for my reactions.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 4) I sense it when a person's mood changes.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 5) I care what happens to other people.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 6) I am able to manage relationships well.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 7) I am good at motivating others.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 8) It is easy for me to make friends.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

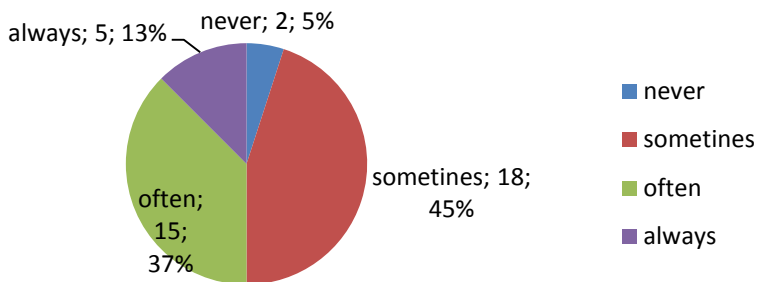
2018. XI. évfolyam 4. szám

- 9) People tell me I am sociable and fun.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 10) I like helping people.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 11) I am reliable person.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 12) I am able to make someone else feel better if they are very upset.
- a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
 - d) Always
- 13) In my opinion, in the emotional intelligence is the most important...
- a) self-awareness
 - b) self-regulation
 - c) motivation
 - d) empathy
 - e) influence

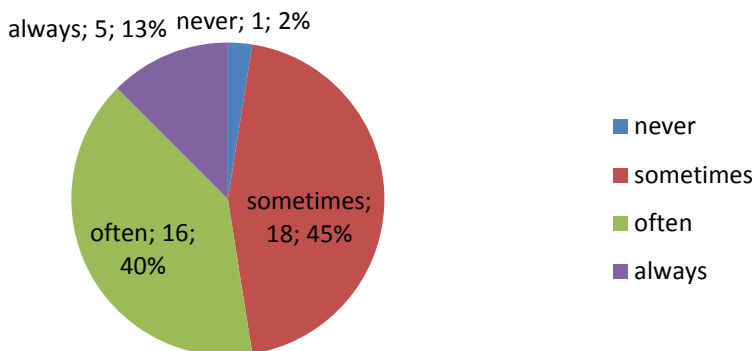
6. THE EVALUATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part of my effort is also a questionnaire in which I aimed towards emotional intelligence of students. How important role in their life is played by emotions and on which level is forwardness of them. I was also interested which area of emotional intelligence is the most important according to them. Questionnaire was given to men and also women in total number of 40 respondents mainly from 1st year but there is also students of other years in this sample.

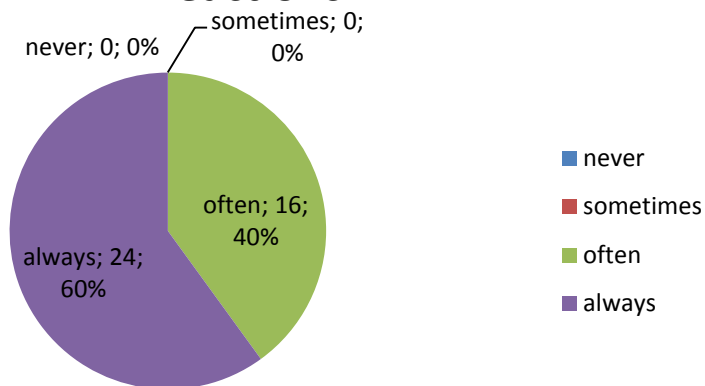
1. I find it easy to explain my feelings.



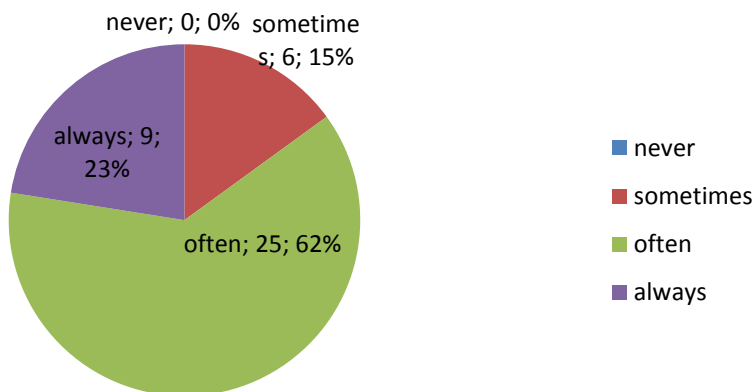
2. Emotions play an important part in my life.



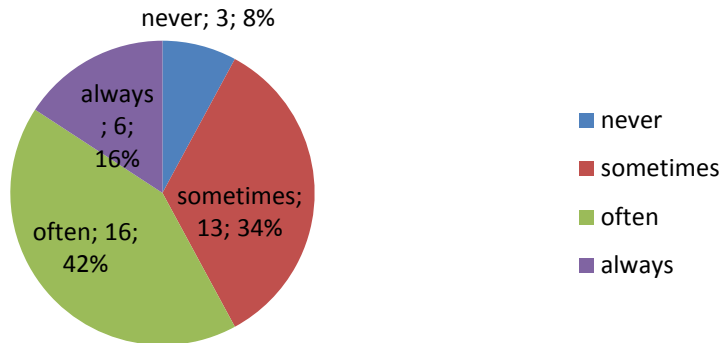
3. I accept responsibility for my reactions.



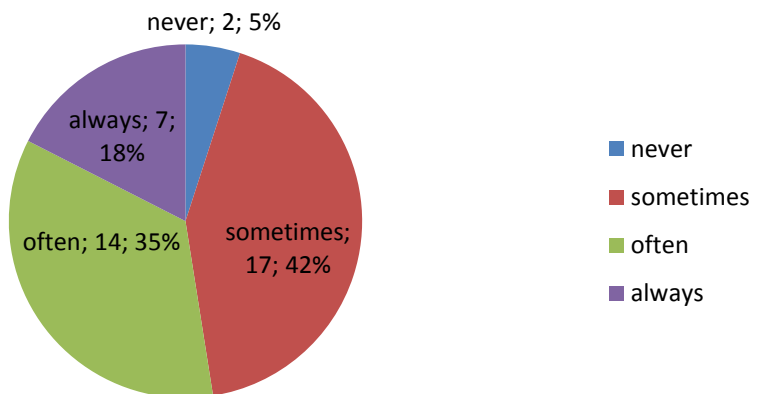
4. I sense it when a person's mood changes.



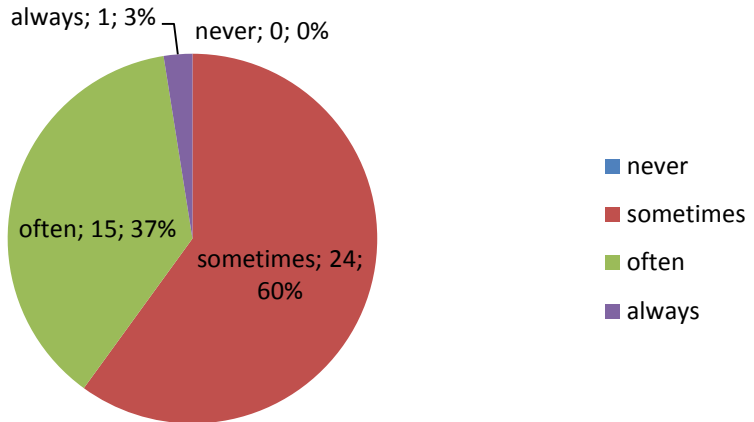
5. I care what happens to other people.



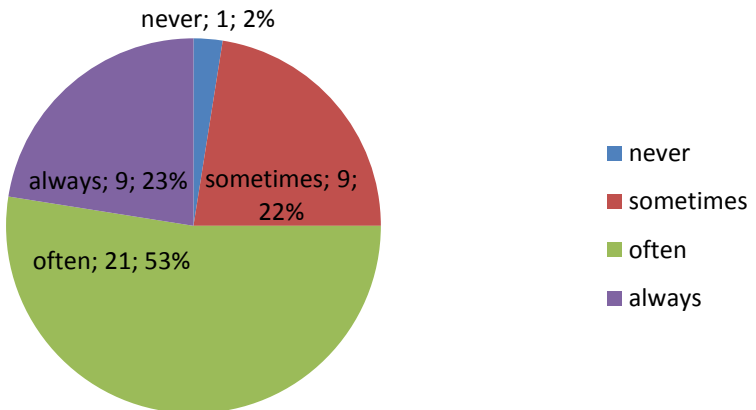
6. I am able to manage relationships well.



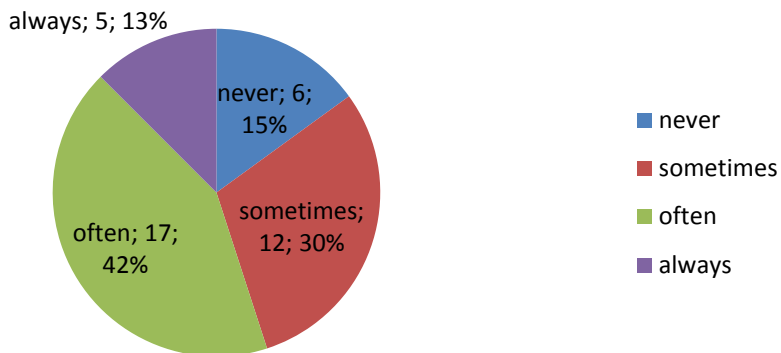
7. I am good at motivating others.



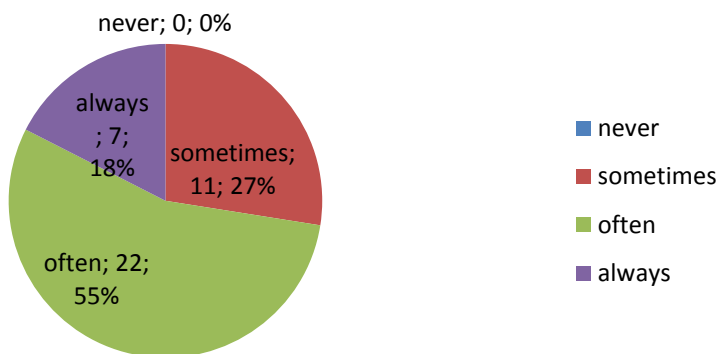
8. It is easy for me to make friends.



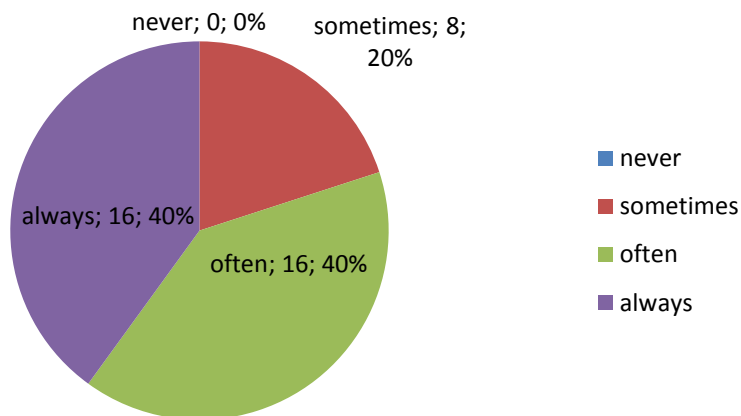
9. People tell me I am sociable and fun.



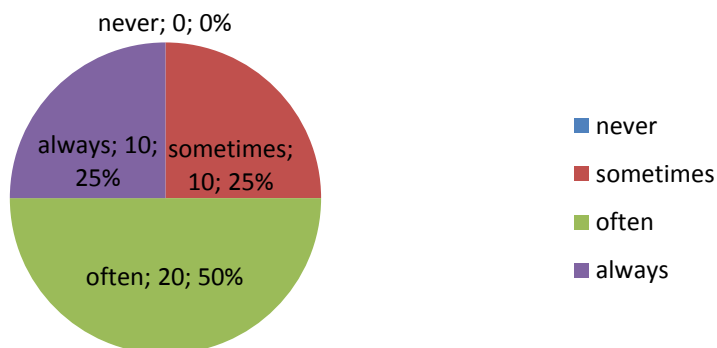
10. I like helping people.



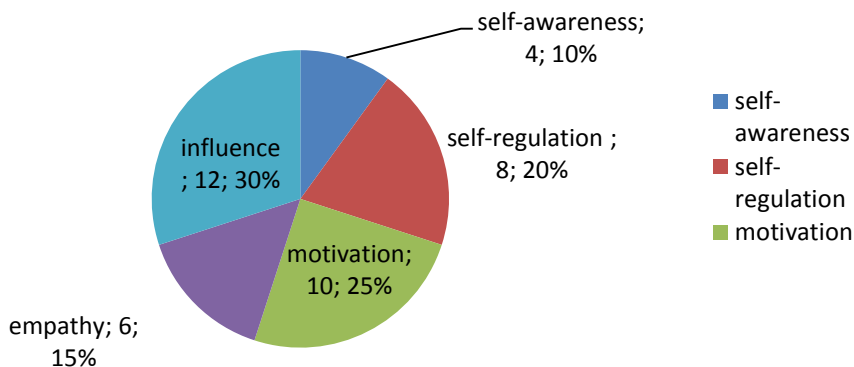
11. I am reliable person.



12. I am able to make someone else feel better if they are very upset.



13. In my opinion, in the emotional intelligence is the most important...



CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence is in every single human being, more or less developed. It is important that we can work on it and develop it. My main target was to find out what level of EQ students of the Armed Forces Academy of Milan Rastislav Štefánik have. By questionnaire I managed to pick up basic sample. I really hope that my effort will bring an interest to develop emotional intelligence of students and also teachers of the academy. In my effort I mentioned multiple times what is important for students who will become commanders and work with people will be their everyday routine.

The fact that students get to know about existence of emotional intelligence and realize how it's important for their future career and professional growth is in my opinion the biggest success of this effort. I believe that they will pay bigger attention to the emotional intelligence. It's proven how big impact it has on the success at work. In my opinion, the development of EQ can help improve the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic. Modernization which we try to implement into every part of the organization must regard material but also human resources. Efficiency which this modernization can bring lies in the fact that future officers graduating from this academy will not only have theoretical skills important for their specialization and military skills but also emotional skills, which can be at higher level that they are now. It's said that young people have future in their hands and a chance to change future. Because of that we should do everything we can to make sure this change will happen. Just because of that we should do our best to make sure that people who graduate from the academy have the highest quality and level of knowledge not only theoretical but also personal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. GOLEMAN, D.: Working with Emotional Intelligence, Bentam Book, 1998, New York.
2. MANAŽMENT ĽUDSKÉHO POTENCIÁLU V PODNIKU: Zborník vedeckých prác. 1. vyd. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici, 2012.
3. JAŠŠOVÁ, E. Profesionalizácia sociálnej komunikácie v armáde. 1. vyd. Bratislava: Ministerstvo obrany Slovenskej republiky, 2001.
4. PETRUFOVÁ, M., HARTMANNOVÁ, E. Emocionálna inteligencia a vojenské vzdelávanie. 1. vyd. Liptovský Mikuláš: Akadémia ozbrojených síl generála M. R. Štefánika, 2012.