



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES WITH A FOCUS ON THE AUTOMOTIVE AREA

Autoreferát disertační práce

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04. srpna 2026

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Vzdělávání a rozvoj zaměstnanců se zaměřením na automobilový průmysl

Neustálý rozvoj lidského kapitálu představuje klíčový strategický pilíř v současných organizacích, a to zejména v technologicky vyspělých a vysoce náročných prostředích, jakým je středoevropský automobilový průmysl.

S cílem reagovat na strukturální vzdělávání a rozvoj (L&D) zaměstnanců v automobilovém průmyslu si tato disertační práce klade za cíl identifikovat, systematizovat a odhalit klíčové determinanty rozvoje zaměstnanců v prostředí automotive za účelem vytvoření konceptuálního modelu L&D. Výzkum využívá kumulativní design smíšených metod (kombinující kvalitativní a kvantitativní metody), jehož cílem je propojit teoretické konstrukty s aktuální praxí.

Empirická část práce je založena na smíšeném výzkumném designu s cílem propojit teoretické konstrukty s realitou průmyslové praxe. Pro doložení rozsahu výzkumu bylo formulováno 14 výzkumných otázek a testováno 11 hypotéz. Sběr dat probíhal v letech 2022–2026 a zahrnoval několik fází: kvantitativní dotazníková šetření mezi vysokoškolskými studenty ($n = 141$) a zaměstnanci v automobilovém průmyslu ($n = 68$), kvalitativní polostrukturované rozhovory s manažery v oblasti HR a L&D ($n = 13$), závěrečnou expertní fázi využívající metodu Accelerated Delphi s panelem seniorních expertů z praxe ($n = 9$) a návrhem finálního konceptuálního modelu L&D.

Tato disertační práce přispívá k oborům řízení lidského kapitálu a organizačního chování tím, že posouvá paradigma L&D od vnímání školení jako izolované časově omezené události směrem ke strategickému a prediktivnímu životnímu cyklu. Manažerům z oblasti lidských zdrojů (HR) a tvůrcům vzdělávacích programů tak nabízí koncepční směry nezbytné k maximalizaci investic do vzdělávání, čímž zajišťuje, že iniciativy v oblasti lidského kapitálu přinesou trvalé a měřitelné zlepšení výkonnosti v komplexním průmyslovém prostředí.

Klíčová slova: Vzdělávání a rozvoj zaměstnanců; Formování lidského kapitálu; Připravenost ke vzdělávání; Automobilový průmysl; Integrace do pracovních procesů; Microlearning; Efektivita vzdělávání; Transfer znalostí do praxe.

Training and Development of Employees with a Focus on the Automotive Industry

The continuous development of human capital is a critical strategic imperative in contemporary organisations, particularly within technologically advanced and highly pressured environments such as the Central European automotive. To address current structural inefficiencies of employee learning and development (L&D), the primary goal of this dissertation is to identify, systematize, and empirically examine selected key determinants influencing employee L&D across the pre-training, training, and post-training phases within the Central European automotive. Based on these findings, the dissertation proposes an integrated conceptual L&D model that conceptualises workforce development as a continuous and multi-dimensional process rather than as an isolated training activity.

The research employs a mixed-method design to bridge theoretical constructs with practical realities. To demonstrate the scope of the study, the research addressed 14 research questions and tested 11 hypotheses. Data collection took place between 2022 and 2026 and involved multiple phases: quantitative surveys with university students (n=141) and automotive employees (n=68), qualitative semi-structured interviews with Human Resource (HR) and L&D managers (n=13), and a final validation phase utilising the Accelerated Delphi method with a panel of senior industry L&D experts (n=9), including the final conceptual integrated L&D model.

Ultimately, the dissertation contributes to the fields of human capital development and organisational behaviour by shifting the L&D paradigm from a tactical instructional event to a strategic, predictive lifecycle. By integrating learner readiness, training execution, and post-training effectiveness into a single conceptual framework, the integrated conceptual L&D model provides an evidence-based roadmap. It equips HR and L&D executives, instructional designers, and operations managers with the structural guidelines necessary to maximize training investments, ensuring that employee development initiatives yield permanent, measurable performance improvements in complex settings.

Keywords: Employee L&D; Human Capital Formation; Learner Readiness; Automotive Industry; Workplace Process Integration; Microlearning; Training Effectiveness; Transfer of Learning.

Content

List of Abbreviations.....	7
List of Tables	8
Introduction.....	9
1 Current State of Knowledge in L&D.....	11
2 Research Goals, Questions, Hypotheses and Methods.....	13
3 Main Results and Contributions of the Dissertation	17
Conclusions.....	24
References	25
List of Author's Publications.....	26
Citations on Author's Publications.....	28
Structured Curriculum Vitae	31

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing
CVI	Content Validity Index
H	Hypothesis
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
I-CVI	Item-level Content Validity Index
L&D	Learning and Development
PG	Partial Goal
RQ	Research Question
S-CVI/Ave	Scale-level Content Validity Index, Average Method
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
VR	Virtual Reality

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: Research Questions and Their Connection to the Partial Goals</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Table 2: Research Hypotheses</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Table 3: Methodological Phases and Their Contribution.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Table 4: Fulfilment of the Primary and Partial Goals.....</i>	<i>17</i>

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: Research Logic and Methodological Development of Conceptual L&D Model.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Figure 2: Integrated Conceptual L&D Model</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Figure 3: Theoretical Contributions of the Dissertation to Employee L&D Research.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Figure 4: Practical Application of the Three-Phase Employee L&D Model.....</i>	<i>22</i>

Introduction

Human capital development has become an essential condition for organisational adaptability and competitiveness in contemporary economies. In technologically intensive industries, human capital can no longer be understood only as a static stock of knowledge and qualifications acquired through formal education. Instead, it should be viewed as a dynamic resource that is continuously shaped through education, organisational learning, and targeted employee development activities (Mazurchenko and Zelenka, 2022). As organisations face rapid technological transformation, digitalisation, and changing competency requirements, employee learning and development has moved from a routine HR activity toward a strategic organisational priority (Lemmetty and Billet, 2023; Mazurchenko and Zelenka, 2022; Trávníčková et al., 2024)

Despite the recognised importance of employee L&D, many traditional approaches still focus mainly on the training activity itself. Less attention is paid to the conditions that prepare employees before training and to the organisational mechanisms that support the application of newly acquired skills after training. This creates a structural limitation in current L&D practice and research: training is often treated as an isolated event rather than as a continuous process consisting of preparation, training implementation, and post-training application (Cohen, 1990; Howard and Lee, 2020). Therefore, this dissertation responds to the need for a more integrated process-oriented perspective on employee L&D.

The automotive environment represents a suitable context for examining this issue because it is strongly affected by technological complexity, automation, digital transformation, strict quality standards, and continuous pressure for skill renewal. These conditions create high demands on employee adaptability across different organisational levels, including administrative, technical and managerial positions (Hašková and Zatkálík, 2018; Mazurchenko and Zelenka, 2022; Trávníčková et al., 2024).

The primary goal of the dissertation is to **identify, systematise, and empirically examine selected key determinants influencing employee L&D** across the pre-training, training, and post-training phases within the **Central European automotive**. Based on these findings, the dissertation proposes an **integrated conceptual L&D model** that conceptualises workforce development as a continuous and multi-dimensional process rather than as an isolated training activity.

The research applies a cumulative mixed-method design. First, the theoretical foundation was developed through a literature review and a systematic literature review (SLR). Second, selected assumptions were examined through questionnaire surveys among university students and automotive employees. Third, the theoretical determinants were refined through pilot and primary semi-structured interviews with HR, L&D, and industry representatives. Finally, the complete framework was assessed through expert-based validation using the Accelerated Delphi method and Content Validity Index (CVI). This methodological design allowed the dissertation to combine theoretical synthesis, empirical evidence, selected statistical examination, qualitative refinement, and expert judgment.

The contribution of the dissertation lies in the development of an integrated conceptual L&D model that links learner readiness, training design, and post-training application into one structured process. The conceptual L&D model is not presented as a fully causal model. Rather, it is theoretically grounded, empirically informed, partially statistically examined in the pre-training segment, and expert validated as a complete framework. Its practical value lies in providing HR, L&D experts and managers with a structured perspective on how employee L&D can be planned, implemented, and supported in technologically demanding organisational environments.

1 Current State of Knowledge in L&D

The theoretical foundation of the dissertation is based on the concept of human capital and its connection with employee L&D. In contemporary organisations, human capital is no longer understood only as a static stock of qualifications acquired through formal education. It is increasingly viewed as a dynamic resource that is continuously developed through education, organisational learning, training, and practical work experience. Zhang et al. (2023) emphasise that the development of human capital is closely connected with organisational competitiveness and adaptability. Similarly, Mazurchenko and Zelenka (2022) and Trávníčková et al. (2024) point out that technological change and digital transformation require organisations to continuously renew employee skills.

From this perspective, employee L&D cannot be reduced to one-time training activities. Lemmetty and Billet (2023) and Kirilov and Kazakova (2022) indicate that employee L&D has become a strategic organisational issue because companies need employees who are able to adapt to new technologies, processes, and work requirements. This is particularly relevant in technologically intensive sectors such as the automotive, where employees must respond to automation, Industry 4.0, digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and changing competency profiles (Kirilov and Kazakova, 2022; Zhang, 2023).

A key theoretical step in the dissertation was the clarification of the concepts **training**, **learning**, and **development**, because these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature. Based on the reviewed literature, training is understood as a **structured educational activity** usually organised by the company and focused on specific work-related knowledge or skills. Learning represents the **process of knowledge acquisition, understanding, and behavioural adjustment**. Development is broader and refers to the **long-term growth of employee capabilities, professional potential, and human capital** (Trávníčková et al., 2024; Mazurchenko and Zelenka, 2022; Lemmetty and Billet, 2023; Anlesinya, 2018).

The dissertation therefore treats these three concepts as connected but not identical levels of the L&D process. This distinction created the theoretical basis for structuring the proposed conceptual L&D model into three phases: **pre-training, training, and post-training**:

Pre-training phase focuses on learner readiness before the formal training activity begins. It includes conditions such as goal clarity, digital confidence, access to preparatory content, and lecturer or peer support (Howard and Lee, 2020; Cohen, 1990). **Training phase** focuses on the delivery and execution of learning activities. It includes practical and simulation-based learning, blended learning, digital tools, and workplace-oriented training design (Anlesinya, 2018; Hašková and Zatkalík, 2018). **Post-training phase** focuses on the application and reinforcement of newly acquired skills. It includes managerial evaluation, incentives, workplace process integration, and continuous skill application (Trávníčková et al., 2024; Lemmetty and Billet, 2023). The dissertation therefore builds on the view that employee L&D should be understood as an integrated process.

The SLR further narrowed the theoretical focus to employee L&D in the automotive context. This step showed that the existing literature can be grouped into several thematic categories. The most important categories were **training content and methodology, technology and digital training integration, managerial influence and support, employee engagement and motivation, and evaluation and effectiveness of training programmes within automotive** (Trávníčková et al., 2024; Mazurchenko and Zelenka, 2022; Anlesinya, 2018; Lemmetty and Billet, 2023).

The literature review and SLR identified three principal gaps that informed the empirical phase of the dissertation. First, existing research tends to emphasise the training event itself, while the pre-training and post-training phases receive less attention, particularly regarding learner readiness and the sustained application of acquired skills. Second, contemporary studies of microlearning, eLearning, and blended learning are frequently technology- or instruction-oriented, with more limited consideration of how these approaches are applied by employees and managers. Third, the literature provides few integrated L&D frameworks tailored to the Central European automotive, despite its technological complexity, process orientation, and continuous demand for workforce reskilling.

Overall, the findings indicate that employee L&D should be understood as a strategic, process-oriented, and context-sensitive activity. Although human capital development, digital learning, workplace integration, and managerial support are widely recognised, these elements are often examined separately. The dissertation therefore addresses the **need for an integrated conceptual model** linking pre-training readiness, training implementation, and post-training application within a coherent framework for the automotive environment.

2 Research Goals, Questions, Hypotheses and Methods

The primary objective of the dissertation is to **identify, systematise, and empirically examine selected key determinants influencing employee L&D across the pre-training, training, and post-training phases within the Central European automotive industry**. Based on these findings, the dissertation proposes an **integrated conceptual L&D model** that understands employee development as a continuous and multidimensional process rather than as an isolated training activity.

To fulfil this objective, five interconnected partial goals (PG) were formulated. PG1 established the theoretical foundations and initial determinants of the model. PG2 examined prior educational experience as a Foundational Investment. PG3 focused on pre-training readiness; PG4 addressed current L&D trends; and PG5 examined managerial and organisational support across the L&D lifecycle, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Research Questions and Their Connection to the Partial Goals

PG	Research Questions (RQ)
PG1 – Employee Development Framework	RQ1: How is the employee L&D framework understood and formed within the literature? RQ2: Which current models of employee L&D exist and which specific elements do they include?
PG2 – Education as an Investment	PG2 was operationalised primarily through H1–H5 .
PG3 – Pre-Training Determinants	RQ3: How does an employee’s comfort with digital tools affect their interest in getting help from a peer or lecturer? RQ4: How much do clear goals and simple instructions help employees feel ready to learn new skills? RQ5: In what format do employees prefer to receive support from the lecturer?
PG4 – Learning Trends	RQ6: What are the primary digital trends currently transforming human capital development within the modern automotive environment? RQ7: In what ways are time constraints and the need for constant access shifting training from the classroom to flexible, short-form formats? RQ8: How do generational differences among the workforce influence the adaptation to and acceptance of new digital learning technologies? RQ9: What specific factors help bridge the gap between theoretical training content and practical workplace application within the automotive L&D context? RQ10: How can digital and personal instruction be best combined?
PG5 – Managerial Support	RQ11: What determines the efficient use of skills after training? RQ12: What is the role of managers during and after training? RQ13: What motivates long-term commitment to development? RQ14: What organisational conditions and managerial mechanisms support the sustained application of newly acquired skills after training?

Source: Author’s own elaboration

The RQs presented in **Table 1** are embedded within the broader model-building process.

Figure 1 summarises this logic and links the theoretical, empirical, and validation stages to the final integrated conceptual L&D model.

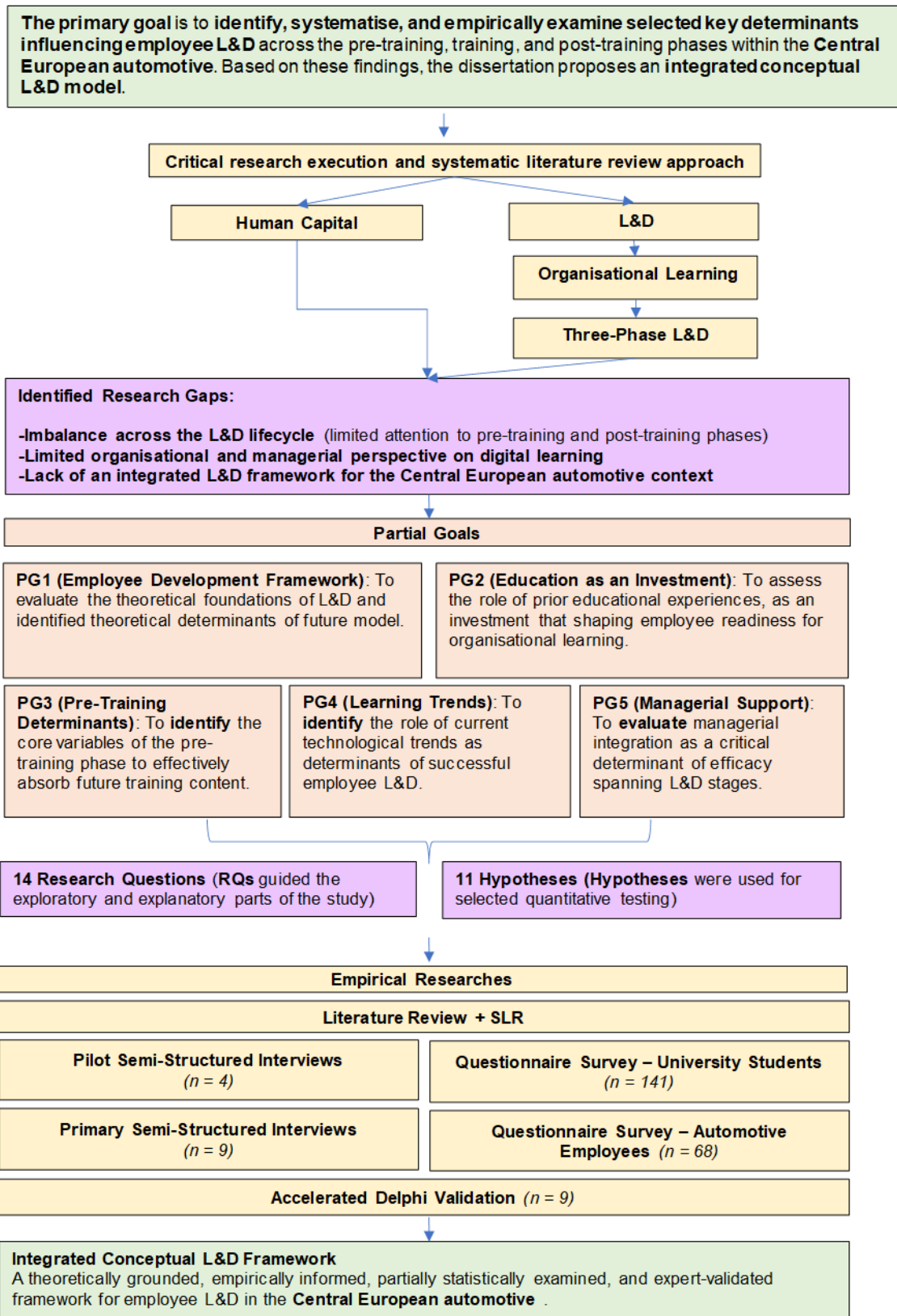


Figure 1: Research Logic and Methodological Development of Conceptual L&D Model
Source: Author's own elaboration

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the RQs guided the theoretical and exploratory stages of the dissertation, while hypotheses (H) were formulated for selected quantitative stages, as summarised in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Formulation	Function in the dissertation
H1	A positive attitude toward lifelong learning as a necessity for career success is positively correlated with a student's willingness to participate in extracurricular courses during their studies.	Examines the relationship between learning orientation and proactive development behaviour.
H2	A stronger perceived ability to connect theoretical university knowledge with real business problems is positively associated with higher internal motivation to apply this knowledge in a professional context.	Examines the role of theory–practice linkage in learning motivation.
H3	The belief that university-acquired skills reduce the need for initial workplace training is positively associated with the expectation of faster contribution to organisational goals.	Examines perceived educational contribution to future work integration.
H4	Students with a higher declared willingness to regularly update their professional skills report significantly higher expected salary levels at the 10-year career mark than students with lower declared willingness.	Examines the relationship between development orientation and long-term income expectations.
H5	The perceived income advantage associated with a university degree is significantly higher at the 10-year career mark than immediately after graduation.	Examines perceived long-term income advantage of higher education.
H6	There is a meaningful association between participants' comfort with utilising digital technologies for pre-training and their interest in participating in pre-training support facilitated by peers or lecturer.	Connects digital comfort with demand for lecturer/peer support.
H7	Instructional-Engagement Content is positively associated with Microlearning Accessibility.	Tests a core content–accessibility relationship in the pre-training segment.
H8	Microlearning Accessibility is positively associated with Self-Paced Learner Readiness.	Tests the role of accessible microlearning in learner readiness.
H9	Self-Study Goal Clarity is positively associated with Self-Paced Learner Readiness.	Tests the role of goal clarity in learner readiness.
H10	Digital Technology Adaptation is positively associated with Self-Paced Learner Readiness.	Examines digital adaptation as a potential direct or contextual factor.
H11	Lecturer-Learner Collaboration Importance is positively associated with Self-Paced Learner Readiness.	Examines lecturer–learner collaboration as a potential direct or contextual factor.

Source: Author's own elaboration

The hypotheses did not serve to validate the complete L&D model statistically. H1–H6 examined selected input and pre-training assumptions, while H7–H11 tested the reduced pre-training segment. The training and post-training phases were examined primarily through qualitative evidence and expert-based content validation.

In accordance with the logic presented in **Figure 1**, the dissertation applied a cumulative mixed-method design in which each research phase informed the subsequent stage of model development. As shown in **Table 3**, theoretical review generated the initial determinants, the surveys examined selected assumptions and relationships, the interviews refined the determinants according to organisational practice, and the Accelerated Delphi method assessed the complete framework.

Table 3: Methodological Phases and Their Contribution

Research phase	Method and sample	Main contribution
Theoretical grounding	Literature review and SLR; 115 initial records, 16 final studies	Clarification of concepts, identification of research gaps, and derivation of theoretical determinants
Student quantitative phase	CAWI survey, $n = 141$	Examination of Foundational Investment and H1–H5
Employee quantitative phase	CAWI survey, $n = 68$; regression sample $n = 64$	Examination of RQ3–RQ5 and H6–H11
Qualitative calibration	Pilot interviews, $n = 4$; primary interviews, $n = 9$	Refinement of determinants across the pre-training, training, and post-training phases
Expert assessment	Accelerated Delphi and CVI, $n = 9$	Assessment of the relevance, coherence, and practical applicability of the complete framework

Source: Author's own elaboration

The individual datasets served different but complementary purposes. The student survey examined developmental assumptions formed before organisational entry, while the employee survey focused on selected pre-training conditions in the automotive environment. The qualitative and expert phases subsequently extended the analysis to the training and post-training phases of the conceptual model.

The employee survey primarily captured technical-administrative, specialist, office-based, in the automotive environment rather than direct production-line operators.

The research design was intended to support model development and contextual understanding rather than broad population-level generalisation. The empirical phases used targeted, non-probability sampling, and the quantitative data were cross-sectional. Consequently, the findings identify associations and selected predictive relationships rather than confirmed causal effects or long-term skill transfer.

The following chapter presents the principal theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, and expert-based findings and explains how they contributed to the final integrated conceptual L&D model.

3 Main Results and Contributions of the Dissertation

The primary objective of the dissertation was fulfilled through a cumulative, multi-stage model-building process that integrated theoretical synthesis, quantitative research, qualitative investigation, statistical examination, and expert-based content validation. These stages resulted in an integrated three-phase L&D model covering pre-training readiness, skills acquisition, and post-training effectiveness. The final framework contains several phase-specific inputs and predictors organised around the central constructs of Learner Readiness, Skill Acquisition, and Training Effectiveness. The complete model achieved an S-CVI/Ave of 0.98 in the expert-validation phase. All assessed components were retained: eight achieved unanimous expert agreement and an I-CVI of 1.00, while the remaining two achieved an I-CVI of 0.89. **Table 4** demonstrates how the primary objective and each of the five PGs were fulfilled and how their results contributed to the final model.

Table 4: Fulfilment of the Primary and Partial Goals

Research goal	Evidence and quantified result	Contribution to the final model
PG1 – Employee Development Framework	The SLR progressed from 115 identified records to 75 screened studies and 16 studies included in the final synthesis . The findings were systematised into five determinant categories and demonstrated the imbalance between the pre-training, training, and post-training parts of the L&D lifecycle.	Established the theoretical architecture of the integrated three-phase model and defined its initial determinants.
PG2 – Education as an Investment	The student survey included n = 141 respondents. The strongest result showed that a higher perceived connection between university theory and real business problems increased the odds of greater motivation to apply knowledge by a factor of 3.89 .	Introduced Foundational Investment as an empirically informed input condition preceding organisational learning.
PG3 – Pre-Training Determinants	Employee survey included n = 68 , with a 62% response rate and n = 64 complete cases used in regression analysis. H7–H9 formed the statistically supported core. The final regression model was significant, F(4,59) = 7.688, p < .001 , explained 34.7% of adjusted variance in Learner Readiness.	Created the statistically examined core of the pre-training phase through Instructional-Engagement Content, Microlearning Accessibility, and Self-Study Goal Clarity.
PG4 – Learning Trends	Findings from 13 interviews , four pilot and nine primary identified practical simulation, blended learning, and workplace integration as central mechanisms. All three resulting training-phase components achieved 100% expert agreement and I-CVI = 1.00 .	Refined and expert-supported the training phase through Practical & Simulation Focus, Blended Learning Balance, and Workplace Process Integration.
PG5 – Managerial Support	Nine primary interviews and an Accelerated Delphi panel of n = 9 supported Managerial Evaluation & Involvement, Performance-Linked Incentivization, and Continuous Skill Application. Each component achieved 100% agreement and I-CVI = 1.00 .	Established the organisational and managerial mechanisms supporting post-training application and Training Effectiveness.
Primary objective	The complete framework achieved S-CVI/Ave = 0.98 . All 10 assessed components were retained , and consensus was achieved in 1st Delphi round.	Produced an integrated conceptual L&D model.

Source: Author's own elaboration

The fulfilment of PG1 demonstrated that employee L&D should be conceptualised as a continuous process rather than as an isolated training intervention. The theoretical synthesis revealed that existing research frequently examines instructional methods, digital technologies, learner engagement, managerial involvement, or evaluation separately. The dissertation integrates these areas into a single sequence comprising preparation before training, skill acquisition during training, and reinforcement and application after training.

The fulfilment of PG2 extended this process beyond the organisational boundary. The student survey demonstrated that individuals enter employment with established beliefs about the value, applicability, and expected return of education. The most substantial result showed that stronger perceived theory–practice linkage increased the odds of greater motivation to apply university knowledge by a factor of 3.89. Foundational Investment was therefore incorporated into the final model as an empirically informed input condition, while recognising that the student and employee samples were independent and did not provide longitudinal evidence.

The fulfilment of PG3 provided the principal statistical anchor for the final model. Instructional-Engagement Content was positively associated with Microlearning Accessibility ($\beta = 0.648$, $p < .001$). In the multiple regression model, Microlearning Accessibility ($\beta = 0.289$, $p = .009$) and Self-Study Goal Clarity ($\beta = 0.261$, $p = .022$) remained statistically significant predictors of Self-Paced Learner Readiness. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 59) = 7.688$, $p < .001$, and explained 34.7% of the adjusted variance in readiness. These results established the statistically examined core of the pre-training phase. By contrast, Digital Technology Adaptation and Lecturer–Learner Collaboration did not remain statistically significant as independent direct predictors in the multivariate model. Their positive bivariate associations nevertheless indicate that they may operate as supportive, contextual, or indirect conditions.

The fulfilment of PG4 showed that contemporary L&D technologies create value only when they are integrated with learning design and operational practice. The qualitative findings transformed broad trends such as digitalisation and microlearning into three operational training-phase components: Practical & Simulation Focus, Blended Learning Balance, and Workplace Process Integration. Their subsequent unanimous expert support demonstrated that training effectiveness depends not merely on the availability of technology but on the connection between learning methods, job requirements, and workplace processes.

PG5 extended the model beyond the completion of formal training. The qualitative and expert evidence showed that the sustained use of acquired competencies requires managerial evaluation, motivational reinforcement, and repeated workplace application. Managerial Evaluation & Involvement, Performance-Linked Incentivization, and Continuous Skill Application were consequently retained as the three principal inputs of the post-training phase.

The primary research objective was completed through the synthesis of these five partial achievements into the final integrated conceptual L&D model. The model was assessed by nine experts for relevance, coherence, and practical applicability and achieved an overall S-CVI/Ave of **0.98**. All assessed components reached the predetermined content-validity criterion and were retained in the final conceptual L&D model.

The final and primary output of the dissertation is the **integrated conceptual L&D model**, shown in **Figure 2**. The model connects the results of the literature review, SLR, student survey, employee survey, semi-structured interviews, regression analysis, and Accelerated Delphi validation.

The model shows that employee L&D should be managed as a connected process. First, employees need to be prepared for learning through clear goals, accessible content, and suitable readiness conditions. Second, training should be designed around practical application and an appropriate balance between digital and personal instruction. Third, the application of skills should be supported after training through managerial involvement and continuous use in the workplace.

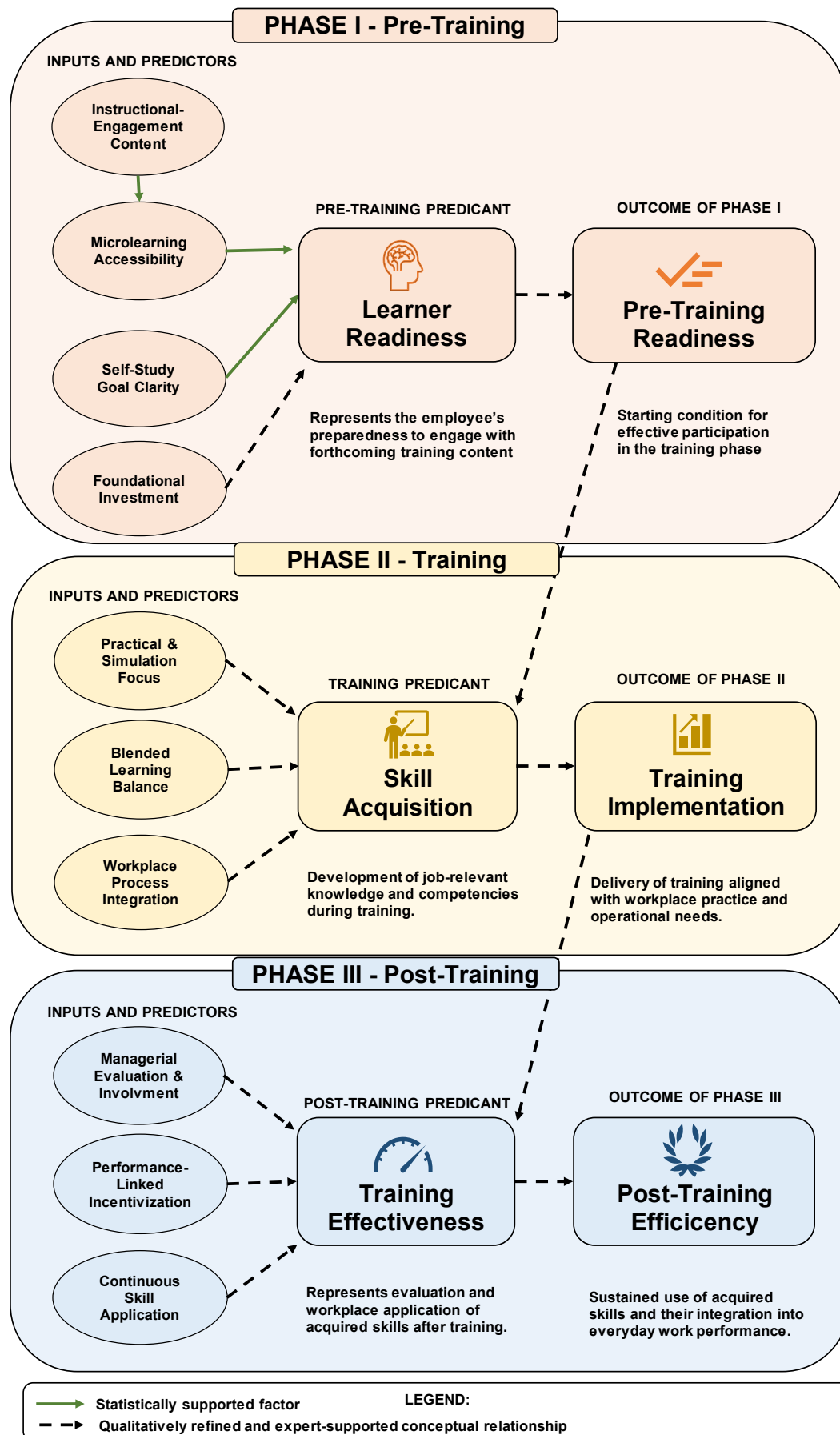


Figure 2: Integrated Conceptual L&D Model

Source: Author's own elaboration based on theoretical and empirical results

The distinctiveness of the model does not lie solely in distinguishing three L&D phases. Its main contribution lies in allocating specific inputs and predictors to each phase and integrating theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, and expert-based evidence within one process-oriented structure. The model therefore offers a broader lifecycle perspective than approaches focused exclusively on training delivery or evaluation.

The theoretical contribution of the dissertation is summarised in **Figure 3**. The contribution develops cumulatively from the synthesis and historical clarification of L&D research to the conceptual unification of training, learning, and development, the structuring of the employee development lifecycle, and the formulation of the final integrated L&D model. The figure therefore demonstrates how the dissertation moves beyond isolated findings and establishes a coherent theoretical architecture for employee development in the automotive environment.

Literature Synthesis	Systematic SLR integration of fragmented L&D research → Introduces industry-contextualized theoretical foundation
Historical Evolution	Mapping transition from instruction → learning → development → Positions modern L&D as part of continuous theoretical evolution
Conceptual Unification	Clear distinction of training (input), learning (process), development (outcome) • → Establishes a conceptual hierarchy (see Figure 7)
Lifecycle Structuring	Definition of three-phase model: pre-training, training, post-training • → Shifts L&D from event-based to process-based logic
Training Design Theory	Training defined as simulation-based, digitally supported and workplace-integrated phase. • → Moves from pedagogy to operational embedding
Integrated L&D Model	Integrated linkage of investment mindset, readiness conditions, training execution, post reinforcement. • → Establishes systemic human capital development framework

Figure 3: Theoretical Contributions of the Dissertation to Employee L&D Research

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the dissertation results

Figure 3 demonstrates that the theoretical contribution is broader than the construction of another training model. First, the dissertation consolidates fragmented L&D research and contextualises it within the Central European automotive industry. Second, it clarifies the relationship between training as a structured organisational intervention, learning as the process of knowledge acquisition and behavioural adjustment, and development as the longer-term expansion of employee capability and human capital. Third, it reframes L&D

from an event-based activity into a continuous lifecycle comprising pre-training, training, and post-training phases. Finally, it embeds simulation, digital support, blended learning, workplace integration, and post-training reinforcement within one systemic human-capital development framework.

This theoretical architecture provided the foundation for the empirical refinement, partial statistical examination, and expert-based validation of the final model presented in the preceding section.

While **Figure 3** summarises the theoretical advancement of the dissertation, the same three-phase logic can be translated into a practical sequence for organisational L&D management. The practical contribution therefore lies in converting the integrated conceptual model into an operational process connecting employee preparation, work-integrated training execution, and post-training reinforcement. This practical logic is presented in **Figure 4**.

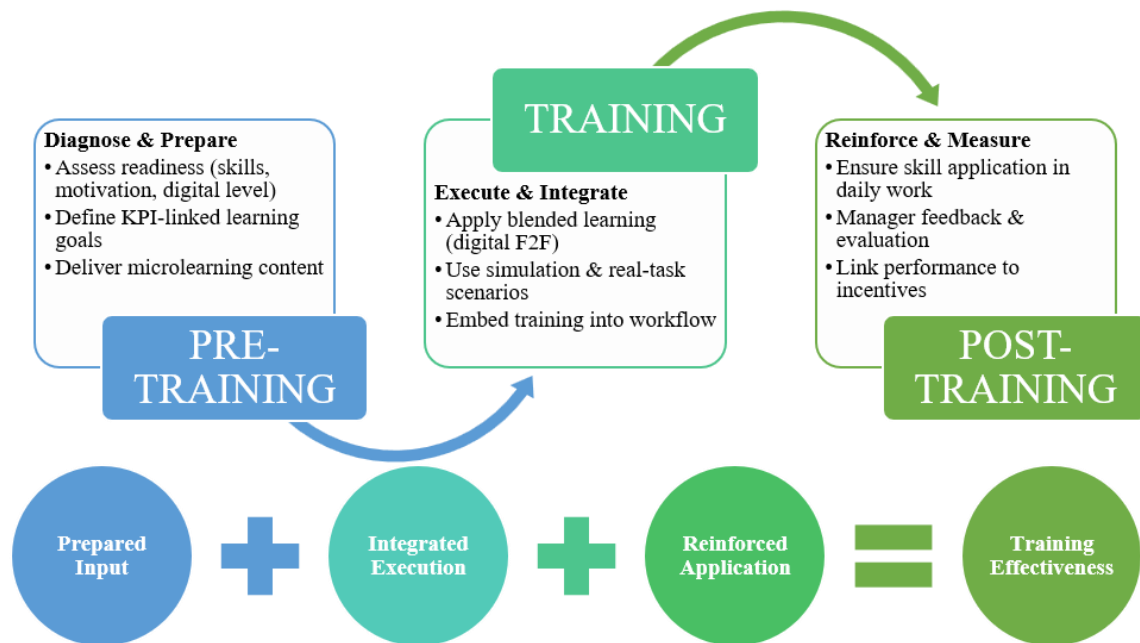


Figure 4: Practical Application of the Three-Phase Employee L&D Model
Source: Author's own elaboration based on the dissertation results

Figure 4 shows that training effectiveness is generated through the cumulative combination of three conditions: **prepared input**, **integrated execution**, and **reinforced application**. Before training, organisations should assess employee readiness, define clear and work-related learning goals, and provide accessible preparatory content. During training, digital and face-to-face learning should be appropriately combined, practical and simulation-based

methods should be applied, and learning activities should be connected with actual workplace processes. After training, acquired skills should be reinforced through repeated application, managerial feedback, evaluation, and suitable performance-related incentives.

The conceptual model can therefore be used within automotive by HR professionals, L&D specialists, and managers as a practical diagnostic tool. It helps organisations determine whether weaknesses in employee development originate in insufficient preparation, unsuitable training design and implementation, or inadequate post-training reinforcement. It also clarifies that managerial responsibility extends across the complete L&D lifecycle rather than beginning and ending with approval of training participation.

The main contribution of the dissertation is the development of an **integrated conceptual L&D model** for employee development in the Central European automotive context. The model is:

theoretically grounded, because it was derived from literature review and SLR;

empirically informed, because it integrates student and employee survey findings;

qualitatively refined, because it incorporates insights from pilot and primary interviews;

partially statistically examined, because the pre-training segment was tested through regression analysis;

expert-validated, because the complete conceptual model was assessed through Accelerated Delphi and CVI.

The dissertation therefore provides both a theoretical and practical contribution. Scientifically, it extends the understanding of employee L&D as a process connecting readiness, learning execution, and workplace application. Practically, it offers HR, L&D, and managers an integrated conceptual L&D model for designing, implementing, and reinforcing employee development activities in automotive environment.

Conclusions

This dissertation addressed employee L&D as a structured component of human capital formation in current organisations. The research was motivated by the growing need for continuous skill renewal, digital adaptability, and effective workplace application of learning in technologically intensive environments. The automotive industry, particularly the Central European automotive was selected as suitable research setting because it combines technological complexity, process orientation, and continuous demand for upskilling.

The primary goal of this dissertation was to **identify, systematise, and empirically examine selected key determinants influencing employee L&D** across the pre-training, training, and post-training phases within the **Central European automotive**. Based on these findings, the dissertation proposes an **integrated conceptual L&D model**. This objective was fulfilled through a cumulative mixed-method research design combining literature review, SLR, questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, selected statistical testing, and expert-based validation. The dissertation does not present the final output as a fully causal model. Instead, it proposes an **integrated conceptual L&D model** that is theoretically grounded, empirically informed, statistically examined in the pre-training segment, and expert validated as a complete process structure. The research showed that employee L&D should not be understood only as a single training event.

The main theoretical contribution of the dissertation lies in the development of a process-oriented conceptual L&D model that integrates readiness, learning design, and workplace application. Its practical contribution lies in providing HR, L&D, and managers with a structured approach to planning, implementing, and reinforcing employee development activities. The conceptual L&D model should help organisations move from fragmented training interventions toward a more systematic development process.

The findings should be interpreted with respect to the methodological boundaries of the research. The data were collected through non-probability samples and have a cross-sectional character. The pre-training segment was statistically examined, while the complete conceptual L&D model was assessed through expert-based content validation. Therefore, future research should test the conceptual L&D model on larger multi-company samples, apply longitudinal designs, and use advanced methods to examine relationships, mediating effects, and long-term transfer across the full L&D lifecycle.

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List of Author's Publications

1.	Managing the Pre-Training Phase: Lecturer-Learner Dynamics in the Digital Age		
(JI) Organizacija Journal		JIF: 1.5 (Q3) AIS: Q4 SJR: 0.339 Q3	2026 50%
OSTIN, Vasilii and Kateřina MARŠÍKOVÁ, 2026. Managing the Pre-Training Phase: Lecturer-Learner Dynamics in the Digital Age. Online. Organizacija Journal. Vol. 59, No.2, pp.113 - 129. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2478/orga-2026-0007			
2.	Bridging The Gap: The Role Of Soft Skills And Digitalisation In Current Employee Training And Development		
(JI) Economic and Market Communication Review		JIF: 0.3 (Q4) AIS: Q4	2026 100%
OSTIN, Vasilii, 2026. Bridging The Gap: The Role Of Soft Skills And Digitalisation In Current Employee Training And Development. online. EMC Review – Časopis za ekonomiju – APEIRON, Vol. 16, No.1, pp. 99–107. Available at: https://doi.org/10.7251/EMC2601099O			
3.	Transforming Automotive Workforce: Contemporary Pillars of The Employee Development		
(JR) Journal of Human Resource Management – HR Advances and Developments		2025	100%
OSTIN, Vasilii, 2025. Transforming Automotive Workforce: Contemporary Pillars of The Employee Development. online. Journal of Human Resource Management – HR Advances and Developments, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 186–197. Available at: https://doi.org/10.46287/YJSD3967			
4.	Empower Employee Development: The Role of Self-Study Materials in Work-Based Learning		
(JI) TEM Journal – Technology, Education, Management, Informatics		JIF: 0.7 (Q4) AIS: Q4 SJR: 0.258 (Q3)	2025 100%
OSTIN, Vasilii, 2025. Empower Employee Development: The Role of Self-Study Materials in Work-Based Learning. online. TEM Journal – Technology, Education, Management, Informatics, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 365–371. Available at: https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM141-32			
5.	Optimising Employee Development Processes: Perceptions Of Microlearning As An Innovative Solution		
(JI) Economic and Market Communication Review		JIF: 0.3 (Q4) AIS: Q4	2024 100%
OSTIN, Vasilii, 2024. Optimising Employee Development Processes: Perceptions Of Microlearning As An Innovative Solution. online. EMC Review – Journal of Economics – APEIRON, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 518-528. Available at: https://doi.org/10.7251/EMC2402518O			

6.	Driving Success: Unveiling Key Trends in Employee Training and Competency Development within the Automotive Industry		
(JI) Central European Business Review		JIF: 0.9 (Q4) AIS: Q4 SJR: 0.306 (Q3)	2024 35%
TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ, Hana, Vasilii OSTIN and Anastasiia MAZURCHENKO, 2024. Driving Success: Unveiling Key Trends in Employee Training and Competency Development within the Automotive Industry. online. Central European Business Review, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 59–82. Available at: https://doi.org/10.18267/j.cebr.366			
7.	The Vital Role of Soft Skills in Enhancing Automotive Employees' Performance		
(DN) Knowledge on Economics and Management. Conference Proceedings		2024	100%
OSTIN, Vasilii, 2024. The Vital Role of Soft Skills in Enhancing Automotive Employees' Performance. online. KNOWCON 2023. Knowledge on Economics and Management. Conference Proceedings. pp. 151-158.			
8.	Navigating the Future of Soft Skills: Integrating AI for Employee Training Success		
(DN) Inproforum 2023		2024	100%
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9.	Maximizing Business Potential: The Symbiotic Relationship Between Employee Training and Business Success		
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10.	Fostering Employee Sustainability: Competencies Formation for a Resilient Business Environment		
(D) Proceedings of the 16th International Conference Liberec Economic Forum 2023		2023	50%
OSTIN, Vasilii and Kateřina MARŠÍKOVÁ, 2023. Fostering Employee Sustainability: Competencies Formation for a Resilient Business Environment. online. In: Proceedings of the 16th International Conference Liberec Economic Forum 2023. Liberec: Technical University of Liberec. ISBN 978-80-7494-672-1, pp. 557–565.			
11.	Innovative Approaches to Continuing Vocational Training: Exploring the Potential of Contemporary Trends		
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TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ, Hana, Vasilii OSTIN and Anastasiia MAZURCHENKO, 2024. Driving Success: Unveiling Key Trends in Employee Training and Competency Development within the Automotive Industry. online. Central European Business Review, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 59–82. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18267/j.cebr.366>

Year	Article
2026	Vazquez-Villegas, Patricia & Borrego, Maura. (2026). The Global Gap Between the Skills of Technical-Vocational School Graduates and the Manufacturing Industry's Needs: A 2020-2025 Scoping Literature Systematic Review. International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training. 24-71. 10.13152/IJRVET.14.1.2.
2026	Andiani, Lidia. (2026). Peran Kompetensi Digital, Komunikasi Interpersonal, dan Iklim Organisasi dalam Peningkatan Kinerja Karyawan di PLN UP3 Malang. Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal. 8. 10.47467/reslaj.v8i5.12042.
2026	Harikumar, Dr & Dr, T Porkodi. (2026). The impact of technology - enabled training and development on employee engagement and work performance: A study of employees in it industry. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development. 13. 86-88. 10.66856/ijmrd.2026.13.2.13201.
2025	Anu, N., Velusamy, & Kumar, S. (2025). Automobile industry: An empirical investigation. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 12(3), 19–30.
2025	Anu, N., & Kumar, V. (2025). HR analytics as a catalyst for enhancing employee well-being and achieving organisational success in the automobile industry: An empirical investigation. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 12(3), 19–30.
2025	Sari, N., Muchlas, M., & Wisnujati, A. (2025). Balancing consumer protection and industrial growth: The policy dilemma of TVET factory product in Indonesia. <i>Journal of Vocational Education Studies</i> , 8(2), 488–506.

2025	Roberts-Lombard, M., & Petzer, D. J. (2025). A good reputation must be earned, but how? Examining the role of relationship communication and employee skills in retail banking. <i>Journal of Relationship Marketing</i> , 1–40.
2025	Alagbe, E., & Yinus, S. (2025). Cloud accounting practice and financial reporting quality: Lessons from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in southwestern Nigeria. <i>International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis</i> , 8(4).
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Year	Article
2026	Sornmani, A. (2026). <i>AI-enhanced soft skills training: A leadership framework for Thailand's workforce transformation</i> [Preprint].
2025	Pawnsawan, P. (2025). Gamified flipped design innovation classroom with AI chatbot to promote soft skills for student innovators. <i>International Journal of Information and Education Technology</i> , 15(7), 1436–1448. https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2025.15.7.2345
2025	Pandey, A., Dhand, S., Dewasiri, N. J., Dadhich, V., & Yadav, M. (2025). <i>Human-centric innovation in banking: The role of soft skills for workforce enhancement</i> [Preprint]. Research Square. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6297570/v1

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2025	Bhakar, S., Shine, S., Arora, N., Dutta, I., Gopala, V., Chowdary, R., & Sharma, S. (2025). Integrating HRM practices with financial planning: A strategic approach to workforce management. <i>Scientific Culture</i> , 11(3.2), 32–41. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11322503
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2025	Bakri, Hasrul. (2025). Efektivitas Pembelajaran Mikro: Sebuah Tinjauan Sistematis dalam Konteks Pelatihan Profesional dan Pembelajaran Sepanjang Hayat. DEIKTIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra. 5. 4820-4829. 10.53769/deiktis.v5i4.2467.

Structured Curriculum Vitae

Education

Technical University of Liberec, Faculty of Economics

Doctoral Studies, Human Resource Management
2022–present

Kochi University of Technology, Japan

Doctoral Research Internship
September 2025 – October 2025

Škoda Auto University

Master's Degree, International Marketing
2020–2022

University Of Applied Sciences Upper Austria

Bachelor of Arts, Sales and Marketing
2018

Škoda Auto University

bachelor's degree, Business Administration and Sales
2016-2020

Professional Experience

Professional Roles in Project Coordination, Network Training, Business Development

Škoda Auto a.s., Czech Republic

2018–present

- Selected areas of responsibility include: designing and coordinating training concepts and learning initiatives; contributing to the preparation and implementation of training strategies; developing educational and training content for professional target groups.

Pedagogical and Academic Experience

Technical University of Liberec, Faculty of Economics

Guest Lecturer and Academic Contributor
2022–2026

- Delivered guest lectures and contributed to seminars in HR and Introduction to Management; Connected academic concepts with examples from international automotive practice; Supervised one bachelor's thesis in 2024.

Škoda Auto University

External Lecturer

2026–present

- Teaching activities include lectures in Marketing Research, combining practical experience from the automotive industry with theoretical foundations.

Research Projects – Co-researcher

Student Grant Competition, Technical University of Liberec

Current Trends in Corporate Learning / Project No.: SGS-2023-1370

- The project supported the identification of current technological and organisational changes influencing corporate learning and helped define the initial research direction of the doctoral study.

Student Grant Competition, Technical University of Liberec

Modern Methods and Tools of Corporate Learning / Project No.: SGS-2024-1434

- The project focused on the growing diversity of digital, blended, flexible, and workplace-oriented learning approaches and strengthened analysing employee development in technologically intensive organisations.

Student Grant Competition, Technical University of Liberec

From Education to Career: Human Capital Development / Project No.: SGS-2025-1542

- The project supported the conceptualisation of employee L&D as a continuous process comprising pre-training readiness, training implementation, and post-training application, and directly contributed to the development of the final model.

International and Educational Programmes

Blended Intensive Programme 2023: Human Resource Management (co-organiser)

- Co-organised an international HR programme involving students and academic partners from the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, and Finland. Contributed to the organisation of **Škoda Day**, connecting university education with corporate practice and enabling knowledge exchange between students.

Blended Intensive Programme 2025: Artificial Intelligence in Business (co-organiser)

- Contributed to the preparation and delivery of an international programme focused on current and emerging applications of AI in business and management. Co-organised AI Business Day for universities in the NISA Euroregion, creating a platform for academia–industry knowledge exchange.

Language Competences

- English – Full professional proficiency
- Czech – Full professional proficiency
- Russian – Native or bilingual proficiency
- German – Elementary proficiency