

**The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Sales Performances of  
Companies – With a Particular Focus on Salespersons’ Interactions  
within a Selling Process**

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the University of Gloucestershire  
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Doctor of Business Administration  
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## **Declaration of Original Content**

I declare that the work in this assessment was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the assessment has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in this assessment are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed: Dipl.-Wirt.-Ing. (FH) Thorsten Mehlhorn, MBA

Date: March, 2020

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## **Conference Applications**

During this research journey, which began in March 2015, the author participated in several conferences. The conferences will be mentioned below. Furthermore, the author took full advantage of the module and training sessions of the DBA programme of the University of Gloucestershire.

## **Modules of the DBA Programme**

- DB8001 Reflective Professional Development
- DB8002 Literature Review
- DB8003 Methodological Fundamentals
- DB8004 Research Methods and Analysis

The corresponding assignments of each module formed the basis for this doctoral thesis and the applied research approach.

## **Conference Participation**

- 5<sup>th</sup> DBA Doctoral Colloquium, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in Cheltenham, UK
- 6<sup>th</sup> DBA Doctoral Colloquium, 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Berlin, Germany  
Paper presented and published in conference proceedings:  
“Emotional Intelligence: Why Does It Matter?”
- 7<sup>th</sup> DBA Doctoral Colloquium, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in Cheltenham, UK  
Poster Presentation and published in conference proceedings: “The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Financial Performances of Companies – With a Particular Focus on Sales”

## Abbreviations

BSC	Business Supporting Criteria
Big Five	Personality Dimensions (Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience)
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
DAX	German share index
EBIT	Earnings before Interest and Taxes
EI	Emotional Intelligence
ECI	Emotional Competence Inventory
EQ	Emotional Intelligence Quotient
EVA	Economic Value Added
FCF	Free Cash Flow
FP	Financial Performance
MI	Multiple Intelligences
MSCEIT	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
NVivo	Software for Qualitative Research Methods (QSR International Pty Ltd)
PCR	Profitable Customer Relationship
RESP	Respondent
ROIC	Return on Invested Capital
RO	Research Objectives
RQ	Research Questions
SI	Sales Interaction
SP	Sales Performance
TBD	To Be Defined
TEIQue	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire
VDMA	German Engineering Association
WACC	Weighted Average Cost of Capital

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## **Abstract**

This research provides insights into the influence of emotional intelligence on the sales performance of companies, with a particular focus on salespersons' interactions with customers within a selling process. This study explored sales employees' perceptions of emotional intelligence in relation to the sales performances of a German group of companies that work in an international context. Outstanding sales performance is considered a financial predictor for projecting cash flow. Thus, salespeople in a complex and modern environment must improve their skills by developing and understanding incorporated solutions and relationship building for high-value goods and services (Lian & Laing 2006; Sharma 2007; Sheth & Sharma 2008, as cited in Le Meunier-FitzHugh, Baumann, Palmer, & Wilson, 2011, p. 423).

The literature review provides a critical evaluation, analysis, and discussion of the academic field of emotional intelligence models (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1996, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1989) based on a narrative approach. However, the partly systematic literature review around sales performance and emotional intelligence led the author to identify five possible selling steps likely influenced by emotional intelligence abilities used during salespersons' interactions with customers.

This research contributes to identifying the link between emotionally intelligent salespeople and the sales performances of their companies, whereas emotional intelligence was better researched through interactive mechanism rather than through individual measurement of a quotient. The data generation and analysis comprised a semi-structured interview methodology followed by a constant comparison of data using the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Consequently, the author was able to rephrase and link abilities of emotional intelligence in terms of salespersons' perceptions and their companies' sales performances. The results are highlighted in a table linked with quotations of practitioners, and might be used as a supporting matrix of emotional intelligence abilities for salespersons' interactions and trainings.

**Keywords:** *Emotional intelligence, sales employees' perceptions, sales performance, salespersons' interactions, semi-structured interviews.*

## 1 Introduction

This introduction describes the personal motivation and perspectives of the author's doctoral studies and explicates the research topic. A great deal has been written about the sales performance of companies, but not in combination with emotional intelligence (EI). Therefore, the author felt compelled to investigate the possible connection or interplay between the two in researching further for his doctoral thesis.

I was excited about the topic of emotional intelligence and the possibility to consciously influence decision-making. It was and still is something mystically to observe people consciously influencing other people through certain emotional intelligence abilities to achieve outstanding results.

But what is it that makes an organisation effective or successful through emotional intelligence abilities and skills? Is it absolutely tangible in terms of performances of companies? Their definitions of success mostly derive from facts and figures (Earning, EBIT, Cash Flows).

This chapter discusses how the author's professional practice within sales, and his existing knowledge about EI, led him to his research topic. Later, the purpose, importance and originality of this research study are discussed (1.3/1.4). The corresponding research objectives are stated in Chapter 1.5. Finally, the structure of the thesis is clarified, and the summary at the end of each chapter rounds off the readers understanding by conveying its significance (1.7).

The research was inspired by the author's master thesis at the end of 2012 titled "The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership Productivity". The author examined whether EI could consciously influence decision-making. Using EI to achieve better results has not been studied extensively. Questions concerning how EI could be used to consciously influence the financial performance of companies arose. Consequently, in this research, the author concentrates on the financial performances of companies, as the definition of successful profit derives from achieved numbers (e.g. earnings, cash flows, and economic added value).

Various texts about EI convey a kind of feeling of an already existing valid conceptual content. However, the author could not find any existing literature that produced or substantiated a clear link between EI and sales performance with a particular focus on salespersons' interactions with customers within a selling process. Quite the contrary, the existing concepts of EI, which have been examined within the literature review, led to considerable confusion and misunderstanding related to specific definitions, measurements and applications of the term emotional intelligence.

Based on the author's experience, underlying EI ability might be necessary, but not sufficient, to manifest competencies in sales interaction. Probably, this may depend on clusters of EI competencies of different kinds of sales interactions, which might influence sales performances of companies. Hence, a high potential to improve the quality of using EI models exists, especially in salespersons' interactions and their possible corresponding outstanding sales performances. Being a successful sales employee does not mean automatically to be an absolute expert in sales interactions or mechanisms. To understand one's and other's emotions, as well as being connected to people to motivate, understand and affect them, is becoming indispensable.

According to Kadić-Maglajlić, Vida, and Obadia (2014) the role of EI in management and organisational psychology has been extensively investigated. However the construct of EI and its role in salespersons' relational behaviour and performances started to evolve merely a decade ago "and yield inconsistent results with respect to the role of emotional intelligence in salesperson relational behaviour and its direct and indirect effects on sales outcomes" (Kadić-Maglajlić et al., 2014, p. 12).

A lot of research in the field of EI exists. However, the author is convinced, that with a specific focus on sales a significant influence of EI on sales performances of companies is present. The combination of EI and salespersons' interactions within a selling process, and the direct link to sales performance has not been researched or empirically validated so far. Furthermore, EI proved to be better researched through an active mechanism rather than individual measurements of a quotient. The understanding of how emotional abilities are

interpreted and applied in salespersons' interactions within a selling process remains remarkably limited. This thesis researches and discusses this specific research gap.

### 1.1 The Initiation of Social Sciences in Management and Business Research

The term research philosophy “relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of knowledge” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011, p. 107). Moreover, it describes precisely the process as it is: Doing research means to develop knowledge in a particular field. Academic management research is a *design science* with a mission to develop valid learning to support capable and designing practitioners (Huff, Tranfield, & van Aken, 2006). Social sciences and advanced management theory have their inconveniences, because researchers might not find clear constructs, which have any law-like generalising relationship to conclude on.

Rousseau (2006) speaks of a *research-practice gap* that needs to be closed. That is so to say, the failures of organisation and management affect practice on best available evidence. However, there should be at least some quality criteria for the best available evidence, as well. Having considered this, conducting valid research in management theory is difficult. Tranfield and Denyer (2004) state that ignoring such a gap would be unthinkable in other professional fields, like medicine or engineering, resulting in scandal if science and practice were not inseparably linked with each other. This might also fit quite well for the field of EI and financial performance, where it is essential to combine theory and practice to secure the financial existence of profit organisations.

Most management research is designed to advance theory; this is seen as a productive and deductive process. Expected conclusions derived from the perception or experience of skilled and well-educated managers (i.e. the elite) are assumed to build a common compendium allowing individuals to make consistently successful decisions (Bock, 1999; Fendt, Kaminska-Labbé, & Sachs, 2007, p. 49). That means that managers experienced in applying theory might think they know that doing *X* under condition *Y* will lead to circumstance *Z*, as a correlation to physics and other natural sciences would be desirable (Fendt et al., 2007). Simon (1996) stated that the applied sciences use the construction of hierarchically classified constructs whose intricacy, particularisation and adaptability increases by moving to lower levels. In other words, for each layer of an abstraction, scientists only have to know the part that is especially relevant for it (Simon, 1996, p. 16).

Further, Simon (1996) said “that the ontology of natural sciences – the nature of reality under study – is such that the highly structured, formalistic epistemology – the manner of acquiring truth about reality – is fruitful” (Simon, 1996, as cited in Fendt et al. 2007, p. 475).

However, research in social sciences and management is different. When Rousseau (2006) speaks of a research-practice gap that needs to be closed to avoid organisations, especially their management to take decisions based on best available evidence, there should be at least some quality criteria for the best available evidence like continuous reflective professional development.

Appropriate academic research does not mean building up a narrative reproduction of the existing literature just because it justifies the research question or because the sources might be empirically validated. Therefore, good critical thinking and writing can make the difference between an outstanding piece of work, which then might contribute to practice.

## **1.2 Emotional Intelligence – Why Does It Matter?**

According to Goleman (1998, p. 1), being emotionally competent is a learned capability built upon the fundamental tenets of EI, resulting in outstanding performance at work. Emotions might influence individuals or groups in positive or negative ways. Salovey and Sluyter (1997) speak of competencies, abilities, or affective spheres of mental functioning, which include the emotions. These theoretical approaches evolved under the aspect of EI. They asked whether they could apply the term “intelligence” (general mental ability) at all. In psychology, intelligence must be definable, measurable, independent from known intelligences, and predictive of some real-world criteria (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997, p. 5).

A new intelligence might be different from those already known. Therefore, any kind of intelligences must be correlated with each other to conclude whether it is a known form of intelligence. If two intelligences correlate highly with each other they are considered to represent the same thing. Ideally, new intelligences should correlate a little with existing forms of intelligence. However, having nearly no correlation indicates that the new intelligence is not an intelligence at all.

One empirically supportable idea in the 19th century was to divide intelligence into two or three subgroups. For example, verbal propositional intelligence mainly includes thinking

logically. Spatial-performance intelligence includes the abilities of assembling objects and recognising and constructing designs and patterns. The third, controversial form of intelligence was called social intelligence (Thorndike, 1921); this was later changed by Goleman (1998), Salovey and Sluyter (1997), Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Bar-On (1997) to EI. Reasoning related to social situations is correlated closely with an individual's verbal propositioning and spatial performance skills.

EI is combinable with a group of skills more distinct from both verbal-propositional and spatial performance intelligence than social intelligence had been. Salovey and Sluyter distinguished a mental skill that could legitimately be called EI; this skill can measure an individual's ability to figure out his or her emotions or the emotions of others. This can determine how sociable or warm a person is (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997).

Understanding how leaders and their subordinates think, feel and act in certain situations could achieve a necessary advantage for creating personal growth. According to Gardner and Stough (2002, p. 69), before the conceptualisation of a workplace model of EI, researchers studied the relationship between emotions and leadership in industrial and organisational psychology. A new paradigm of research has focused on the role of EI in different leadership styles taking the following explanation of EI into account:

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions, the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10)

This implies that the level of EI defines an individual's ability to command, evaluate and use emotions to understand oneself or people within certain situations, which certainly underpins an intellectual stimulation.

Since Mayer and Salovey's (1997) work, alternative models have evolved, ranging from ability to non-cognitive models and competency-based models. These models have been predominantly developed to describe the connection between EI and leadership, or so-called



leadership effectiveness and productivity (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Collins & Porras, 2005; De Geus, 1997b; Goleman, 1998; Hofstede, 1980; Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011). These authors have addressed questions concerning how EI contributes to effective leadership by focusing on cognitive or competency-based abilities. Emotionally intelligent leaders bring energy and inspiration to their work, focus on the development of team members, connect meaning to their work, and place a high level of importance on their work (Goleman, 1998). The complexity or stress of work can be overwhelming. To guide others through such conditions, leaders must inspire them to a high level of performance. Furthermore, people in charge must know how to deliver a message skillfully and enable their understanding of actions and behaviours. This means leaders must get involved in the process of decision-making (Scott, 2012, pp. 26–27). Also Pearmann (2011) stated appropriately as followed:

Leaders who utilise relationship, empathy, and problem-solving behaviours are likely to have both a clear understanding of what is needed in a situation and how to communicate information in such a way that it can really be heard. (Pearmann, 2011, p. 69)

Therefore, the ability to successfully manage emotions empowers the leader to overcome the stress of the job, the disappointments and joy, and the frustrations that arise in the workplace (Gardner & Stough, 2002, p. 70). Leaders must understand and encourage their employees. Therefore, they are encouraged to bringing in a bigger portion of appreciation in their relationships with people led.

### **1.3 Aim/Purpose of the Research**

This research explores the influence of EI on sales performance of a German group of companies. The particular focus of this study was set on salespersons' interactions with customers during a selling process. The concept of effective organisational structures related to performance in general offers a challenging set of problems. The multifarious nature of the concept requires that effectiveness or even performance are defined by stakeholders,

“who may hold differing, incompatible and changing criteria” (Cameron & Whetten, 1983; Lewin & Minton, 1986, as cited in Denison & Mishra, 1995, p. 205).

However, the belief that EI has implications on performance has been prevalent among academics and practitioners for many years. Interest in this area has intensified in terms of its influence on organisational culture and leadership (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Collins & Porras, 2005; De Geus, 1997a; Goleman, 1998; Hofstede, 1980, p. 14); Mayer and Salovey (1997); (Yoo et al., 2011). According to Wisker and Poulis (2015) there exist just a few empirical studies in the sales literature investigating the impact of EI on sales performance. Carmeli and Josman (2006) state that the challenges to empirically examine “the role of EI in individual success in workplace have been limited and still in formative stage” (as cited in Wisker & Poulis, 2015, p. 187). Existing models of EI, such as Mayer and Salovey (1997), Goleman (1998) and Bar-On (1997), have touched on performance in a general way. No clear link between EI and sales performance or successful businesses exists. The present research examines a possible relationship between sales performance by using an explicit performance criterion in terms of a company’s financial situation and salespersons’ interactions with customers during the selling process.

In this research, outstanding sales performances are a financial predictor for projecting cash flows. The complex and modern sales environment demands that salespeople improve their skills by developing and understanding of incorporated solutions and relationship building predominantly for high-value goods and services (Lian and Laing, 2006; Sharma, 2007, Sheth and Sharma, 2008, as cited in Le Meunier-FitzHugh, Baumann, Palmer, & Wilson, 2011, p. 423). The importance of companies’ customer relationships and value creation function is equally accepted and emphasised by academics and practitioners (Anderson, Kumar, & Narus, 2007; Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro 2012; Rackham & DeVincentis, 1999; Sheth & Sharma, 2008; Terho, Haas, Eggert, & Ulaga, as cited in Hohenschwert, 2012, p. 145).

The lack of academic investigation concerning this topic is surprising. The existing studies consider the behaviour of salespeople as isolated from their interactions with customers (Plouffe, Williams, & Wachner, 2008; Williams & Plouffe, 2007, as cited in Hohenschwert, 2012, p. 146). Carmeli and Josman (2006) argue that “it is not clear which emotional intelligence components implicate which type of work performance ... it is important to

establish which specific components of the emotional intelligence model relate to work outcomes” (as cited in Wisker & Poulis, 2015, p. 187). Also Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha, and Sheng (2011, p. 78) state that “a general assessment of EI may adequately address broad domains but do poorly when predicting performance in”.

According to Kennedy (2006), the customer believes skills like empathy, customer focus, and problem-solving which are certainly attributable to EI, are even more important than the ability to listen.

This research significantly contributes to knowledge in this field, because it identifies the links between emotionally intelligent salespeople and their sales performances within their companies. Furthermore, EI proved to be better researched through interactive mechanisms rather than individual measurements of a quotient. This leads to the development of new EI categories, which might enable salespeople to understand and conjecture customer needs, including operations instructions that are likely to stimulate sales performance through peoples’ deliberate interactions within the selling process.

The author’s study analyses EI in the context of differences and similarities within sales employees’ prerequisites, especially regarding aspects of their relational behaviour and their corresponding performance.

## **1.4 Importance and Originality of Research**

### **1.4.1 Emotional Intelligence**

Three major models are found in the literature. First, the original concept “The four branches of EI” of Mayer and Salovey (1997), focuses on an objective assessment of various abilities of EI. The testing method is like standard cognitive tests. Second, the non-cognitive model “Five EQ-I” by Bar-On (1997, p. 14) describes EI as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures”. Mayer and Salovey (1997) later revised their original definition, adding the ability to assess and/or generate feelings to facilitate thought. Finally, the refined “Competency-based Framework” by Goleman (2001). This speaks about EI as competencies rather than intelligence.

In general, it seems that subsequent interpreters of existing EI work were instrumental in making use of key terms from different concepts, which appears to have confused expressions of EI with the ability or competency itself. Furthermore, the existing EI concepts do not embrace the reliability and validity of an operationalised standard test procedure or extend previous concepts. For example, Bar-On (1997) model mixes behavioural disposition with elements of social intelligence, and does not provide a reliable indicator for EI, because it chooses attributes that are most likely to predict success.

According to Bar-On, Boyatzis and Sala, Petrides and Furnham, and Tett, Fox, and Wang, “Other investigators have described EI as an eclectic mix of traits, many dispositional, such as happiness ..., rather than as ability based” (Bar-On, 2004; Boyatzis & Sala, 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Tett, Fox & Wang, 2005, as cited in Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008, p. 503).

Consequently, this has led to considerable confusion and misunderstanding regarding what EI is or should be.

#### **1.4.2 Perceptions of EI and their Influence on Salespersons’ Interactions**

This study explores how sales employees’ perceptions of EI in an organisational context is constructed through ideas and interpretation of social interactions, which are then able to influence strategies and processes or just affect companies’ sales performances.

Most performance research has tried to entirely concentrate on “outcome-based performance” (Ogilvie, Rapp, Agnihotri, & Bachrach, 2017, p. 100). The traditional sales job has changed dramatically. Customer expect more than just a simple exchange of information. These days companies speak about sales in terms of a function, which need to generate new sources of business and at the same time need to maintain relationships with customers (Ogilvie et al., 2017). Therefore, Ogilvie et al. (2017, p. 100) states that “theses service-oriented expectations ... relates to expected future revenues”. In general, traditional performance measures disregard long-term aspects of performance (Chen & Jaramillo, 2014). Return on invested capital (ROIC) plays an essential role as an annual indicator of long-term positive free cash flows (FCF). The economic value added (EVA) determines the profitability of a firm as an indicator of management performance, which is needed as a third measurement to determine shareholders’ wealth (Deo, 2015). Since the author could not find a standardised measurement for long-term aspects of sales performance, especially not for

maintaining and building relationships with customers, this research assumes to measure sales performance in terms of a company's financial stability.

The importance of sales interactions, particularly regarding the value-creating process for building profitable customer relationships, is accepted and highlighted by academics and practitioners (Anderson, Kumar, & Narus, 2007; Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012; Rackham & DeVincentis, 1999; Sheth & Sharma, 2008; Terho, Haas, Eggert, & Ulaga, 2012, as cited in Hohenschwert, 2012, pp. 145–146). However, the understanding of value creation in business interactions is still limited. Furthermore, studies have not covered the complex and interactive nature of sales; sales behaviour consciously influenced by EI is considered as somewhat exceptional from the interaction with a customer.

### **1.5 Research Questions and Objectives**

One of the most important aspects of doing research is discussing and reflecting on philosophical choices and defending these compared to alternatives that could also potentially fit the research problem (Johnson & Clark, 2006). Unfortunately, no answer exists that might fit absolutely and does not allow any room for diverse interpretation. This would certainly simplify the selection but on the other hand would limit the possible combination of methodologies. Even so, the general purpose of this research is to find responses to the research questions in order to justify the corresponding research objectives by investigating the research phenomenon of EI in the organisational context of sales performance.

Organisations are social structures that consist of discursive entities, such as language or organisational culture, that do not exist independently of agents' ideas of their activities within the structures. However, organisations must have some interpretation of social structure to understand the meaning behind their actions (Wynn & Williams, 2012).

Various forms of sales employee's relational behaviour, adaptive selling and customer oriented selling are accepted to have an effect on sales performance. However, there exist an absence of studies which provides valid explanations of the role of EI in regard to salespersons' interactions with customers and their corresponding performance (Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka, 2003; Ingram et al., 2005, as cited in Kadić-Maglajlić et al., 2014, p. 12).

Therefore, the author defined the following research question:

*RQ1: In how far does EI appear to influence sales performances of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process?*

*RQ2: How could sales employees consciously affect companies' sales performances along defined emotional intelligence abilities during their customer interactions?*

This research contributes knowledge to the research elements of emotional intelligence, these being influencing sales performance with particular focus on a selling process (RQ1) and their conscious application (RQ2) along defined emotional intelligence abilities.

The effect of EI on salespersons' interactions within a selling process, and therefore on their performances, may be rather obvious in its influence. The initial interaction, which will be the sales employees' communications with customers, generates additional fields of action. Therefore, EI needs to be interpreted and applied expediently. The following research objectives describe the execution of the corresponding research questions of this thesis.

*RO1: to interpret the influence of EI on sales performance of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process*

*RO2: to develop new categories of EI in order to provide operations instructions for sales employees to consciously affect sales performance of companies*

## **1.6 Proposed Methodology**

Since EI influences the social interactions within an organisation, social constructionism allows a participatory view of the organisation by underpinning the relational process of knowledge production (Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010). In the social constructionist paradigm, the researcher is involved and cannot be independent, which might result in skilled interpretations. Furthermore, social structures, which also apply in the field of EI, consist of discursive entities, such as language or culture, that do not exist independently from agents' ideas of their activities within the structures (Wynn & Williams, 2012). Individuals who do not engage in social becoming in the form of patterns and character in organisational change developments fail to recognise the appearance of a group empowering strategy. This then

indicates that the adoption of the collective interest is central, and therefore inevitable for a *social becoming* (Fiorelli, 2012).

A qualitative semi-structured interview methodology is used to collect in-depth information of a suitable group of respondents. This qualitative approach values the respondents' perspectives and explores the importance of peoples' interactions and experiences (Kvale, 1996). According to Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein and Smith, a personal interview is appropriate when researchers need to explore attitudes, values, beliefs and motives (Richardson, Dohrenwend & Klein, 1965; Smith, 1975, as cited in Louise Barriball and While, 1994, p. 329). Furthermore, interviews are often used to learn about the motivations behind peoples' choices and behaviours. Semi-structured interviews do not follow a strict format of set questions. This technique allows researchers to focus on specific themes in a conversational style, which could provide valuable information that was not projected by the researcher (Raworth, Sweetman, Narayan, Rowlands, & Hopkins, 2012).

The empirical evidence will be established comparing constantly secondary data from the literature review and the data generated by the semi-structured interviews to help clarifying the relationship between EI and sales performance through salespersons' interactions with customers.

It is important to select a suitable group of individuals for the semi-structured interviews. This qualitative research approach focuses more on information-rich individual subjects, rather than a large and representative sample size (Plummer, 2001). Based on the availability and accessibility of the research participants, the researcher recruited employees from their company's salesforce. This study analyses the differences and similarities within the prerequisites of sales employees, especially in their interaction with customers. Therefore, the participants share some common characteristics so that the interaction might happen to a maximum (Dilshad & Latif, 2013).

Within a group of German companies that work in an international context, these designated respondents differ through their opposing positions. Some of these companies have outstanding financial performances, whereas others suffer from below average profits. This qualitative research sought expansion and possible generalisation by identifying the deep processes at work under qualified conditions (Yin, 2014). The term *qualified conditions* refers to the trustworthiness of the applied qualitative methodology.

Eight participants divided into two groups, volunteered for the semi-structured interviews. The author used a decision-making map and an oral exercise with the participants to facilitate data generation during the interviews (Drew, 2014; Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014). The literature review around sales interaction and EI identified five possible selling steps likely influenced by EI abilities used during customer interaction. These five steps of selling are used to further investigate the influence of EI abilities on these sales steps with special focus on relational behaviour used during their sales interactions with customers.

The first section includes questions that attempt to collect data of the participants' perceptions about EI. The second section is created to gain information about the nature of the probable influence of EI on generating increased sales and amplifying companies' sales performances. Finally, the last section of the interview is constructed to determine the appropriateness of the participants' perspectives and assumptions to the specific content.

The data needs to be coded to identify key themes and their relationships. The author used NVivo, software for qualitative research methods (QSR International Pty Ltd), which is used to code quotes, terms or phrases used by the participants. Thus, the author gives the participants a considerable voice in the research.

Step one begins during data generation by producing rich data from the semi-structured interviews. Therefore, it is important to record the discussions with accuracy by taking notes, writing up a summary, and recording audio to get familiar with the data; this familiarity happens in step two. In step three, a memo of phrases, ideas and concepts arising from the text is written to develop possible categories of EI. The categories are indexed, which means highlighting and comparing quotes within and between both cases. The analysis displayed differences in the understanding and usage of EI compared to the existing literature, which needed to be rearranged under the newly-developed, appropriate, thematic content. The final phase involves data reduction, mapping and interpreting quotes. At this stage, the researcher must be imaginative and analytical enough to detect relationships between quotes to create links between the data (Doody, Slevin, & Taggart, 2013, pp. 267-268). The researcher then uses a software tool (Such as NVivo) to process qualitative data and assist with data analysis.



The data is displayed as a table and relevant quotes, highlighting the new categories of EI. The categories contain attributes and descriptions which are likely to influence the sales performance of companies.

## **1.7 Structure of Thesis**

The first chapter “Introduction” starts with the author’s interest in the topic, based on his professional expertise and how it led to the derivation of the research topic and its practical challenges. Additionally, the chapter captures the purpose of the research, the importance of originality and the contribution to knowledge based on the identified research questions and objectives.

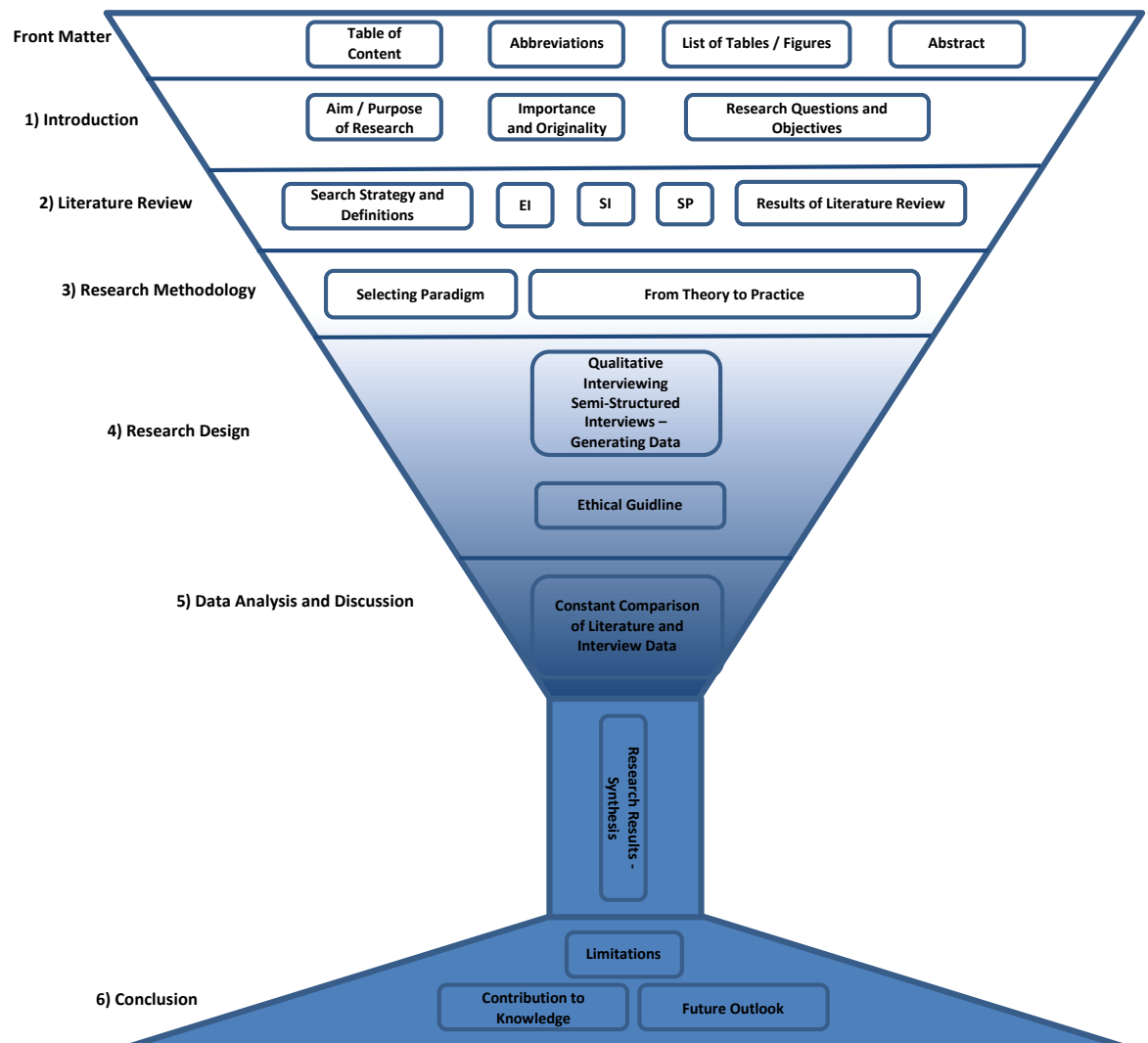
In the second chapter “Literature Review” the search terms and strategy will be defined and critically discussed. In the following the terminology around EI and its corresponding models, sales performance (SP), and sales interaction (SI) will be reviewed to end up with a presentation of the research gap and a conceptual framework, matching EI abilities and sales employees’ interactions resulting in great sales performances. The author discusses the findings from the literature review in a critical and analytical manner, to identify what is known, where the gaps are, and how everything fits into the research.

The third chapter “Research Methodology” illustrates the methodology related to its ontological, epistemological, and methodological position. Furthermore, the selection of the suitable paradigm will be justified.

The fourth chapter “Research Design” contains the practical component of this thesis. Firstly, the detailed research methodology will be specified. This includes the data generation in terms of a semi-structured interview methodology including the selection of participants, and the realisation of the ethical guideline for this research.

The fifth chapter “Data Analysis and Discussion” concentrates on the constant comparison of data generated by the interviews. There the literature results and data from the interviews will be synthesised to detect new categories of EI which likely influence companies sales performance. The chapter will conclude with the contribution to knowledge and practice in management theory and provides an outlook for future research.

Figure 1 illustrates the author's structure for this thesis.



**Figure 1:** Structure of Thesis – “The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Sales Performance of Companies”

In the final chapter “Conclusion” the research study is presented by synthesising the results, by validating, if the research questions have been answered, and by specifying the significant and original contribution to knowledge. Furthermore, the underlying research limitations will be elucidated. Finally, the author will give an outlook and recommendations for future research.

## 1.8 Summary of Chapter

This chapter elucidates the practical challenges of using EI with the intent to consciously influence the sales performances of companies. The importance for the research as well as

for the contribution to practice is evident. Despite the already existing research in the field of EI, using models of EI in the context of sales, offers numerous possibilities. However, “relational performance outcomes are critical to frontline success in today’s sales environment” (Ogilvie et al., 2017, p. 100). According to Chen and Jaramillo (2014) there still exists a limitation of performances measurements typically neglecting the long-term aspect of performance, which seems to be critical in terms of the long-term influence of EI on relationship building during salespersons’ interactions with customers. Therefore, the business success of each of the respondents’ companies will be an indicator for sales performance in the long-time, referring to the influence of EI on relationship selling through their customers’ interactions. Furthermore, the existing EI models do not fully embrace the reliability and validity of an operationalised standard test procedure. Additionally, the models have been extended to eclectic mix of traits, or mixed models, which are dispositional rather than ability-based, leading to considerable confusion.

Social constructionism allows for a participatory view of knowledge production (Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010). This then leads to the fact that social structures which also applies in the field of EI advocates this choice of research approach as illustrated in the following figure.

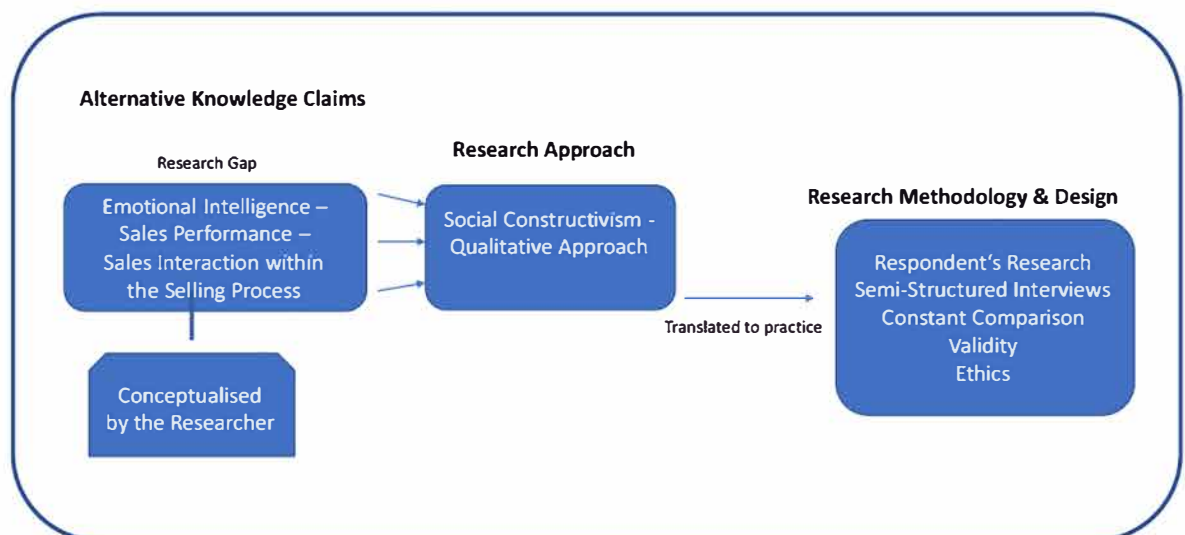


Figure 2: Research Structure Thesis partly adopted by Creswell (2013, p. 5)

Figure 4 exemplifies the knowledge claims, strategies and methods (Creswell, 2013). This displays how three elements of inquiry combine a different range of duties, which in turn are translated into practice.

In accordance with the literature review, a qualitative interviewing methodology will be used to collect the respondents' information. Through a constant comparison of data the findings from the literature review and the interviews will be synthesised. For this comparison the author will select profitability as an important attribute within a group of companies located in Germany. One company has outstanding performance, whereas the others suffer from below average profit. The data generation will be undertaken with a semi-structured interview approach of sales employees within this selected group of companies.

The empirical evidence will be established with the results from the literature review and the respondents' interviews.

Then the results will be highlighted as a template, emphasising the new categories of EI, including attributes possibly influencing the sales performance of companies with particular focus on the salespersons' interactions within a selling process.

## 2 Literature Review

The literature review of this thesis is structured using two different approaches. First, the study necessarily includes a partly systematic review to examine the research gap in a profound and methodical way. In connection with this systematic approach, a critical evaluation and discussion summarizing the existing literature based on a narrative approach follows. “Narrative reviews are generally comprehensive and cover a wide range of issues within a given topic” (Collins & Fauser, 2005, p. 104); for this thesis a narrative approach was advantageous because of the multitude of EI applications in the academic and managerial contexts.

However, this study includes a partly systematic literature review using the following search terms:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Sales Performance
- Sales Interaction

In particular, the search term of emotional intelligence refers to EI models (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1996; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1989), as this research aims to offer a valid and reliable advanced model of EI to consciously use in management practice.

In this thesis, sales interaction refers to the conventional sales activities of technical salespeople. These activities mainly include the extensive interaction with their customers in order to build up relationships and to gain trust and acceptance (Avlonitis & Panagopoulos, 2006).

Furthermore, the author does not focus on outcome-based performance. This research investigates the nature of sales performance in terms of building and maintaining relationships with customers (Ogilvie et al., 2017).

## 2.1 Narrative vs. Systematic Literature Review

We argue that the reader is better served when the choices made in the review, regardless of whether they are strict or open, should be explicit, transparent, clearly stated and reproducible by interested readers. (Collins & Fauser, 2005, p. 103)

A narrative literature review is often contrasted with a developing systematic literature review, which uses specific methods to systematically search, critically discuss and synthesise existing literature on the research topic (Collins & Fauser, 2005). Parris and Peachey (2013, p. 377) state that systematic approaches are objective and replicable, whereas the traditional literature review has implicit subjectivity because the writer might be inherently biased, leading to non-objective results (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2011, p. 74). A narrative literature approach is commonly used to address a cumulative set of primary research studies conducted on a specific research issue. Because each successive primary research study builds upon the one before, the researcher must be thoroughly familiar with the history of research in the given field of knowledge. This could be problematic, as the field may vary, or the existing status in the particular area might change (Rumrill & Fitzgerald, 2001, p. 165). Narrative literature reviews have also been judged for lacking critical assessment (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003, p. 208).

However, the reader might be best served if the choice of review approach, whether systematic or narrative, is transparent, clearly specified and repeatable (Collins & Fauser, 2005). Even a systematic approach contains the risk of a deviating definition of search strategy and terms because the corresponding assumptions of terms and strategy, which need to be done beforehand. This could not be changed, but modified afterwards, if the research leads to inconsistent data, which could be the case in socially constructed knowledge.

Researchers can preselect their literature to justify their research topics. Hence, it might be compelling for researchers to search only for literature that supports their thesis; this would not contribute to make for an extensive and critical review. Additionally, the author is convinced of the probable circumstance that to some extent researchers do not want to cover all areas to get their research done even faster.

Furthermore, this then leads to the fact that even the settings for the inclusion and exclusion criteria could be considered as a potential failure point, as normally the required procedure postulates to have two independent assessors to finally analyse findings of a study (Tranfield et al., 2003, p. 2017).

However, the author avoids these pitfalls, while he extracts his added value from narrative approaches, as it was possible to trace the historical development of EI models, and their interrelations with sales interaction and performance without getting lost in strict rules, and predefined in-or exclusion criteria of a systematic review.

Nevertheless, precedingly the author systematically validates the research gap/phenomenon, since a systematic review consists of a transparent and structured approach which shows the focus of the literature review by the combination of the search terms *emotional intelligence*, *sales interaction*, and *sales performance*, as displayed in Table 1.

Combination	1	2	3
Search Term 1	Emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence
Search Term 2		Sales interaction	Sales interaction
Search Term 3			Sales performance

Table 1: Combination of Search Terms – Partly Systematic Literature Review

In summary, the basic intent of this literature review is to identify the research gap to form the basis for the theoretical foundation, which then leads to a classical narrative approach, using existing literature for its emerging theory.

### 2.1.1 Search Strategy and Definitions

For this thesis, academic books and peer-reviewed academic journal articles were identified using the following electronic databases, accessible via the library system of the University of Gloucestershire. Business Source Complete (EBSCO) and (2) Emerald databases were chosen because of their relationship to business and management literature. The ETHOS database allowed the author to analyse existing doctoral theses to validate the existing work in this field of study. Finally, Google Scholar and professional literature (direct sources, such as management journals) were used to find contemporary work in the field of EI, sales

interaction and sales performance. Additionally, a Google and Giga alert for the keywords was placed to find recently published academic articles in the field of EI (related to sales interaction and sales performance) and their assumed interrelations.

The search terms and corresponding synonyms are primarily the result of a compilation of the steady adjustment, review and documentation of the literature. However, the understanding of keywords, or key terms might vary across the society of researchers as well as among practitioners. Therefore, the key terms emotional intelligence, sales interaction and sales performance are defined on the following pages.

When defining emotional intelligence, researchers face the challenge that there is no universal definition of EI (McPheat, 2010). Three main models exist: the ability-based model of Mayer and Salovey (1990), the competency-based model of Goleman (1996) and the non-cognitive, mixed model of Bar-On (1997). These are frequently mentioned in the academic business and management literature. These models are considered to be the major conceptual models, as suggested by the *Encyclopaedia of Applied Psychology* (Spielberger, 2004).

This research follows the original conceptualisation of Salovey and Mayer (1990). They defined EI as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Salovey and Mayer (1990) description of EI clarifies a typical salesperson’s interaction with a customer. Previous research by Avlonitis and Panagopoulos, Brown and Peterson, and Churchill, Ford, Hartley, and Walker highlighted the importance of steering and controlling sales situations by analysing the interrelationship among the sales employees related to their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours towards the customer (Avlonitis & Panagopoulos, 2006; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Churchill, Ford, Hartley & Walker, 1985, as cited in Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, & Jaramillo, 2015, p. 143). However, some constraints concerning such one-dimensional relationships exist. Selling situations might vary. According to Avlonitis and Panagopoulos (2006), different sales positions must be characterised differently and, therefore, the sales process underlies diverse situational and environmental constraints, and the objectives, roles and activities of salespeople show a large discrepancy across various selling situations. From this, one might deduce that combining diverse sales populations into a consolidated sample might lead to inaccurate conclusions (Bande et al., 2015).



According to Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, and Jaramillo (2015, p. 143), the previous research of Avlonitis and Panagopoulos (2006) and Brown (1998) underlined the magnitude of controlling the type of selling situation when analysing the interrelations between salespeople.

However, this thesis concentrates on the selling situation of a *'technical seller'*, which defines the product as technical capital equipment that is customised to the particular demand of the customer. Technical knowledge and consulting in sales are common practice. Knowledge about the product and its application is a central part of the selling function (Avlonitis & Panagopoulos, 2006).

This study contributes towards the existing literature by exploring the possible influence of EI on technical selling situations. Even if the proposed model does not represent an all-embracing model of sales employees' contract-closing intentions and selling situations, it explicitly focuses on the parts of sales interactions likely to stimulate the companies' sales performances via their employees' EI skills.

This suggests that sales employees who are better able to

... perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions are likely to be proficient sellers, because they can go beyond the spoken or written word, read customers' emotions, know which emotions are appropriate in particular situations, understand how customers feel during and after purchases, and effectively manage emotions to effect positive outcomes for both customers and themselves. (Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 82)

This seems to be a valid answer to the question concerning which parts of sales interactions might be promising for stimulating sales, resulting in improved sales performance. However, this definition of Kidwell, Hardesty, Murhta and Sheng (2011) still is too broad relative to a general sales process or to the multitude phases of a negotiation with a customer.

Dubinsky (1980) defined seven selling steps common to most sales jobs: *prospecting, pre-approach, approach, presentation, overcoming objection, close and follow-up* (Arndt, Evans, Landry, Mady, & Pongpatipat, 2014, p. 20). Even if it seems to be a quite old-fashioned model from 1980, and some colleagues might counter that it is not possible to

apply this model due to changing environment, technology and product, it is still utilised. The author observes and applies these common steps in sales jobs where the correlation with EI abilities might also work with any other sales approach necessary for interacting with customers on an individual level.

According to Sharma, most researchers believe that at the initial contact with the customer, credibility must be established. He states that without credibility, further communication becomes unproductive (Sharma, 1990, as cited in Arndt et al., 2014, p 20).

Kadić-Maglajlić et al. (2014, p. 12) point out that sales literature began to explore this construct of the role of management and organisational psychology just a decade ago, whereas the results seemed to be inconsistent “with respect to the role of emotional intelligence in salesperson relational behaviour and its direct and indirect effects on sales outcomes”. Furthermore, most of the performance research so far, seemed to have the tendency to focusing exclusively on outcome-based performance, whereas this research incorporates sales performance in terms of maintaining and building relationships with customers.

Yet the nature of the sales job is changing, and customer expectations have increased beyond a simple exchange. Organisations are now looking to the sales function not only to generate new sources of business but to build and maintain relationships with customers (Ogilvie et al., 2017, p. 100).

### 2.1.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Parameter / Term	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<i>Language</i>	English	Other Languages
<i>Source</i>	Academic books, academic journals	Other sources
<i>Research Design</i>	Qualitative and Quantitative	Sources, where the research design is not replicable
<i>Population EI</i>	Studies, which examine or build upon EI models (“more restrictive organisations of the field that serve to describe interrelations...” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 187)	Studies, which describe a broad set of abilities and not describe interrelations among abilities
<i>Population SI</i>	Studies, which concentrate on interrelationship among salespersons	Studies, which do not consider the individual level of sales people
<i>Population SP</i>	Studies, which concentrate on building and maintaining relationships with customers	Studies, which just consider on out-come based performance
<i>Combination 1</i>	Emotional intelligence & sales Interaction	Single search of each search term
<i>Combination 2</i>	Emotional intelligence & sales performance	Single search of each search term
<i>Combination 3</i>	Emotional intelligence & sales performance & sales interaction	Single search of each search term

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for the Systematic Literature Review (EI, FP, SI)

The author reviewed academic literature written in English. The sources for the study are academic books and academic journals. Other sources do not fulfil the requirements for an academic research project and are only used to introduce other concepts.

The criteria for the literature search results are clustered in three categories which are *emotional intelligence, sales interaction and sales performance*. The categories mirror the keywords of this research and provide in connection the necessary uniqueness of this thesis. The search criteria for “emotional intelligence” considers studies that examine and build upon EI models.

The “sales interaction” search criteria concentrate on the content of sales interactions that refer to the interrelationships among salespeople. The research excludes studies that do not concentrate on individuals, because past research has considered sales interactions as somewhat exceptional (Hohenschwert, 2012). However, looking at interactions on the individual level seems to be a very promising research intention.

The criteria for “sales performance” are limited to literature focusing on sales performance in terms of maintaining and building relationships with customers. Traditional performance measures classically neglect the long-term aspect of performance, which might cause problems in the view of relationship selling and their corresponding measurement (Chen & Jaramillo, 2014). Furthermore, Wisker and Poulis (2015, p. 187) state that there only exists few empirical studies in sales literature “focusing on the impact of EI on sales performance”. Carmeli and Josman (2006) conclude that the empirical examination of the role of EI in individual success have been limited and nevertheless stand in formative phase (as cited in Wisker & Poulis, 2015, p. 187).

The most important aspect of each search term’s meaning exposes the research gap that can be detected through this systematic literature review. Looking at the combination of search terms 1 and 2 of Table 1, it is no surprise the results led to a considerable number of hits. But if the analysis goes further, as under search terms and the combination 3, and their corresponding definitions, the results fail to appear. Thus, the uniqueness of bringing EI, sales interaction and sales performance together is established through this partly systematic literature review, and will be expanded in the following paragraphs.

## **2.2 Emotional Intelligence**

In 1921, Edward Thorndike was the first psychologist to use the term “social intelligence”, focusing on why certain people do better in life than others (Cassady & Eissa, 2008, p. 4). Cassady and Eissa (2008) explain that several motivation and personality theorists provided evidence that achieving an adequate life status relies partially on having control over one’s emotions. Furthermore, they assume that concepts like attachment, temperament, social play, and theory of mind (i.e. concepts Thorndike developed) all have an important connection to what is now called EI (Cassady & Eissa, 2008, pp. 4–5).

In 1983, Howard Gardner released a model of multiple intelligences called MI. Within this model, Gardner proposed a notion of intelligence related to EI. Gardner’s MI model contains, amongst other categories of intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence (knowledge about oneself and the ability to regulate oneself effectively), as well as interpersonal

intelligence (interaction and manipulation). These intelligences can be linked with Bar-On's (1997) model.

Salovey, Brackett, and Mayer (2004) state that earlier in the century one tolerable idea was to divide the existing intelligences into two or three subgroups. First, verbal-propositional intelligence (measure of vocabulary, think logically); second, spatial-performance intelligence (assemble objects); third, social intelligence (people's relation to one other). "Historically, there were serious difficulties in developing the concept of social intelligence because it seemed to highly correlated with the first two intelligences as to be indistinguishable from them" (Salovey et al., 2004, p. 33). Nevertheless, EI was originally conceptualised by Salovey and Mayer (1989).

At the outset of our work, we thought that it might make sense to exchange emotional for social intelligence in this proposed triumvirate of intelligences. Emotional intelligence would combine a group of skills that were more distinct from both verbal-propositional and spatial-performance intelligence than social intelligence had been and at the same time would still be close enough to the concept of intelligence to belong to the triad. (Salovey et al., 2004, p. 34)

So it was Salovey and Mayer (1989, p. 200) who defined EI according to the abilities involved; that is, "the ability to notice one's own and others' feelings and emotions and to differentiate between them". Their information should be used to guide one's thinking and action. Later, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2008) stated the original idea concerning individuals owning the ability to reason and use emotions to further develop thoughts more effectively than others. Since 1990, the concepts of EI have grown into a small industry of publications, research, testing and education.

Goleman (1996) defined EI as:

Ability such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope. (Goleman, 1996, p. 34)

Bar-On's definition described EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (1997, p. 14).

Later, Mayer and Salovey extended their original definition. They added the ability to access and/or generate feelings in a way that could facilitate thoughts. Furthermore, an individual must be able to understand emotions and emotional knowledge. Regulating one's emotions leads to emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10).

In one of his later publications Goleman (1998, 2001) also defined EI relative to the workplace, saying EI is "the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). In other words, "emotional intelligence taps into the extent to which people's cognitive capabilities are informed by emotions and the extent to which emotions are cognitively managed" (George, 2000, pp. 1033–1034). George explains that EI captures individual differences in the intensity to which a person can effectively manage his or her moods and emotions (George, 2000, p. 1038)

While EI as a formal term was introduced only 20 years ago, many psychological approaches have contributed to the construct now recognized as EI. In addition to that, the author of the present study agrees with Mayer et al. (2008) that, until now, the term EI has been used to cover "too many things, too many different traits, too many different concepts" (2008, p. 503).

### **2.2.1 Examining Existing Models**

There has been much discussion in the field regarding EI-model conceptualisation, including the lack of consensus on a common operational definition of what EI entails. These differing views have resulted in a division of models into different categories. The following paragraphs include a brief description of the three major models of EI. The models have been empirically tested. First, the original ability-based concept of Mayer and Salovey (1997); second, the non-cognitive model of Bar-On (1997) third, the competency-based model of Goleman (2001); will be discussed.

### The Four Branches of Emotional Intelligence by Mayer and Salovey (1997)

Emotional abilities can be thought of as falling along a continuum from those that are relatively lower level, in the sense of carrying out fundamental, discrete psychological functions, to those that are developmentally complex and operate in the service of personal self-management and goals. (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 506)

This quotation implies that higher-level skills include the ability to understand and manage emotions more properly, whereas lower-level EI skills include the capacity to perceive emotions accurately. These skills can be arranged in a rough hierarchy. Mayer and Salovey (1997) categorise their model into four branches which are arranged from basic psychological processes to a level of highly psychologically integrated processes. Table 3 illustrates how Mayer and Salovey structure EI.

<p><b>4. Emotional Management</b></p> <p>the ability to reflectively engage or monitor emotions, and the ability to manage emotions in oneself and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.</li> <li>• Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.</li> <li>• Ability to engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state</li> <li>• Ability to manage emotions in oneself.</li> <li>• Ability to manage emotions in others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Understanding of Emotion</b></p> <p>The ability to label emotions, and to recognise the relationships, interpret meaning and understand complex feelings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to understand relationships among various emotions</li> <li>• Ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions</li> <li>• Ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.</li> <li>• Ability to understand transitions among emotions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Facilitation of Thought – Using of Emotions</b></p> <p>to focus on how emotion affects the cognitive system – problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to redirect and prioritise thinking on the basis of associated feelings</li> <li>• Ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgement and memory</li> <li>• Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view</li> <li>• Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1. Perception and Expression of Emotion</b></p> <p>to perceive and to express feelings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to identify emotion in one’s physical and psychological states.</li> <li>• Ability to identify emotions in other people</li> <li>• Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them.</li> <li>• Ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.</li> </ul>

**Table 3:** The four branches of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)

Each branch of this model describes different skills that form overall EI. Each branch has its own developmental phase, from relatively easy skills to more sophisticated ones. From the bottom up, the first branch of perceiving emotions starts with the ability to perceive basic emotions in faces and tones of voice, which then leads to the perception of emotional blends and the assessment of emotional micro-expressions in the face (Mayer et al., 2008).

The first branch, “Perception, Appraisal, and Expression of Emotions”, includes the ability to identify emotions in one’s physical state through behaviour, language, sound or any other appearance. It also includes the ability to express emotions and to distinguish between them. The second branch is categorised as “Emotional Facilitation of Thinking”, which mainly addresses the prioritisation and the influence of emotions on thoughts. The third branch, “Understanding and Analysing of Emotions”, includes the ability to label emotions and recognise relationships and transitions among them. Furthermore, it includes the ability to interpret the meanings of emotions and understand complex feelings. The fourth and most complex branch is called “Reflective Regulations of Emotions to Promote Emotional and Intellectual Growth”; this branch contains the ability to stay open to feelings, the ability to reflectively engage or monitor emotions, and the ability to manage emotions in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

This model provides a good overview concerning how to consciously regulate emotions to enhance emotional and social intelligence. The four branches are levels on which emotional achievement represents the learning curve of a person who has processed emotions in any form of abovementioned abilities. The ability measure of the four branches of this EI model can be operationalised formally as a set of to-be-solved problems. Therefore, the respondent can be checked against criteria of correctness (Mayer et al., 2008). This indicates that the possibility of consciously working and appraising emotions exists. Their approach focuses on an objective assessment of the various abilities related to perceiving emotions. This testing method is reminiscent of standard cognitive tests, such as intelligence quotient (IQ) tests that use a performance- and/or ability-based test situation (Mayer et al., 2008).

Mayer et al. (2008) believed in providing a conceptually coherent approach. One measure that covers these areas is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). This test consists of eight tasks, two for each of the four branches of the Mayer and Salovey



model. The respondents in this test are scored relative to their degree of correctness, as determined by their correlation with the answers determined by a group of emotions experts (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). The test was proven to have a low correlation with any other more traditional personality scales, which is positive in respect of the self-reliance of this model. Studies indicate that EI, as measured by the MSCEIT, correlates with verbal intelligence, and lower with perceptual/organisational intelligence quotient (.035), justifying the use of the word intelligence (Mayer et al., 2008).

Unfortunately, a lack of conformity with other EI ability measures makes it impossible to compare data. The MSCEIT needs additional psychometric standards, as well as reliability and structural, convergent, and discriminant validity, among them. “One fly in the MSCEIT ointment concerns its convergent validity with other ability measures of specific EI skills. The convergence among ability measures of <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub>emotional perception ... is low” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 12).

Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016) have updated their model since 1997. They have added several areas of problem solving to a revised model (Mayer et al., 2016). The author did not consider the revised model for this thesis because the abilities Mayer and his colleagues added seemed to be unconnected and have not just based on their one work. The so called “emotional appraisal” might be covered by the already existing ability of their earlier model “to understand complex emotions”, whereas the “emotional forecasting” the author would allocate differently under the branch of “Emotional Management” of their former model. It does not seem to be at the right place in order to gain emotional understanding. It all relates to “topic that experienced increased research attention and that have been directly related to emotionally intelligent reasoning (see also Barrett, Mesquita, & Gendron, 2011, Dunn, Brackett, Ashton-james, Schneidermann, & Salovey, 2007, MacCann & Roberts, 2008)” (Mayer et. al., 2016, p. 8). Consequently, the author was not going to look at this, as the old model was still valid and the changes are mainly related to their measures of their emotional intelligence test.

### **The Emotional-Social Intelligence Model by Bar-On (1997)**

Bar-On (1997) divides EI into five broad categories. The first is *intrapersonal emotional quotient (EQ)*, which he further divides into *emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualisation, and independence*. Second, he defines the *interpersonal EQ*,

which is categorised into *empathy*, *interpersonal relationship*, and *social responsibility*. Third, he categorises the group *stress management* into *stress tolerance* and *impulse control*. Fourth, the *adaptability EQ*, is divided into *problem-solving*, *reality testing*, and *flexibility*. Finally, he defines a competency component called *general mood*, which is divided into *optimism* and *happiness* (see Table 2). The intrapersonal component describes an individual's ability to be aware of, understand, and express oneself. The interpersonal component includes an individual's ability to be aware of, understand, and relate to others. Further on, the stress management component is responsible for an individual's ability to deal with strong emotions and control one's impulses. The adaptability component contains the ability to adapt, change, and solve problems for effective human behaviour. Finally, the general mood component illustrates the ability to maintain a positive attitude and to be satisfied with life.

With his quotient EQ-i, Bar-On (1997) measures the emotional quotient inventory as a self-report measure of emotionally and socially competent behaviour. The EQ-i has been validated by Bar-On related to more than fifteen different measures. The development of the Bar-On model and its measurements occurred in six major stages over a period of 17 years. It was important to identify and logically cluster various emotional and social competencies designed to impact effectiveness and psychological well-being based on Bar-On's experience as a clinical psychologist and on a review of the existing literature. Furthermore, it was necessary to clearly identify the individual key clusters of competencies and skills. Bar-On generated approximately 1,000 items based on his experience and the experiences of practitioners who were asked to generate questions guided by his definitions. He determined 15 primary scales and 133 items for the published version, which is based upon his considerations and statistical findings. Initially, Bar-On normed his findings on 3,831 adults in North America in 1996. The EI quotient contains 133 items, phrased as short sentences and a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very seldom" to "not true of me". A list of the inventory items can be found in the technical manual of this model (Bar-On, 1997). The EQ-i has included a correlation factor that makes it possible to automatically adjust the scale's scores based on scores preserved from two of the instrument's validity indices (positive or negative impression). Hence, a response bias of potentially distorting effects is reduced (Bar-On, 2006). According to Parker (2000, p. 148), Bar-On spent a lot of effort to develop and validate his measure of EI. Bar-On argues that it is virtually impossible to separate the various forms of so-called non-cognitive intelligence. He developed a measure

that contains nearly all of them. Bar-On's (1997) model is the most widely used measure of emotional-social intelligence. Furthermore, it is based on more than 20 years of supported research, involving over 6,300 respondents since 1997; this has assessed the reliability and validity of the EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997, 2004, 2006). However, Goleman's (2004) model addresses a broader, more general social field.

Composite Scales	Content Subscales
<p><b>Intrapersonal EQ</b></p> <p>The ability to be aware of oneself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Self-Regard</b> <i>the ability to respect and accept oneself</i></li> <li>- <b>Emotional Self-Awareness</b> <i>the ability to recognise one's feelings</i></li> <li>- <b>Assertiveness</b> <i>the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts</i></li> <li>- <b>Independence</b> <i>the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one's thinking and actions</i></li> <li>- <b>Self-Actualisation</b> <i>the ability to realise one's potential capabilities</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Interpersonal EQ</b></p> <p>the ability to relate to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empathy</b> <i>the ability to be aware of emotions of others</i></li> <li>- <b>Social Responsibility</b> <i>the ability to cooperate and contribute</i></li> <li>- <b>Interpersonal Relationship</b> <i>the ability to establish and maintain mutually well-functioning relationships</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Stress Management EQ</b></p> <p>the ability to control impulses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Stress Tolerance</b> <i>the ability to endure stressful situations</i></li> <li>- <b>Impulse Control</b> <i>the ability to resist an impulse (e.g. anger)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Adaptability EQ</b></p> <p>The ability to test one's reality and ability in problem-solving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Reality Testing</b> <i>the ability to validate one's emotions</i></li> <li>- <b>Flexibility</b> <i>the ability to adjust one's emotions</i></li> <li>- <b>Problem-Solving</b> <i>the ability to define and solve problems</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>General Mood</b></p> <p>the ability to be happy and optimistic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Optimism</b> <i>the ability to be positive and to look at the brighter sight of life</i></li> <li>- <b>Happiness</b> <i>the ability to feel content with oneself and others</i></li> </ul>

Table 4: Five EQ-i Components (Bar-On, 1997)

### The Emotional Competencies by Goleman (2001) – The Rise of Mixed Models

According to Goleman, large companies have employed psychologists to develop models to identify, train and promote likely star performers. Goleman himself analysed 188 competency models of different companies to determine which criteria drove people to outstanding performance in their companies. These models primarily concentrate on cognitive abilities. Goleman found that EI proved to be twice as important as any other required ability or skill which has been defined over time (Goleman, 2004, p. 84). Table 2 highlights Goleman's emotional competence framework which characteristics representing EI. Goleman states that "...emotional intelligence can be learned. The process is not easy. It takes time and, most of all, commitment" (Goleman, 2004, p. 91). This model displayed in Table 5 is a refinement of the model Goleman used in 1998. Goleman's earlier work comprised five domains, or dimensions of emotional intelligence including twenty-five competencies. This current model is based upon a statistical analysis of his colleague Richard Boyatzis which resulted in collapsing the twenty-five competencies into twenty, and the five domains into four dimensions as described in Table 5 (Goleman, 2001).

Goleman developed an instrument for measuring EI according to his model. The ECI (Emotional Competence Inventory) is designed to assess the emotional competencies of individuals and organisations. However, the instrument is difficult to obtain for educational research because it was not operationalised as a standard test procedure. Only a few studies have used this model and the ECI. The ECI is primarily used by Goleman and his colleagues. Furthermore, he was criticised because only his work peers reviewed his work. His measurement was not reviewed by other colleagues in this field (Cassady & Eissa, 2008, pp. 102–103).

Consequently, little research supports the reliability and validity of the ECI (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2004). Many educational psychologists prefer to speak about EI related to competencies rather than considering EI as a form of intelligence. Bar-On and Parker (2000, p. 148) state that a limitation of Goleman's description of the term EI contains nearly everything apart from an intelligence quotient, which stretches the definition of intelligence far beyond acceptable limits.

<b>Self</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Personal Competence</b>	<b>Social Competence</b>
<p><b><i>Self-Awareness (knowing what one feels)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional self-awareness the ability to read and understand our emotions-recognise their impact on work performance</li> <li>- Accurate self-assessment a realistic evaluation of strength and limitations</li> <li>- Self-confidence A strong sense of self-worth</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Social Awareness (the ability to read nonverbal cues for negative emotions)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empathy the ability to understand other people's emotions</li> <li>- Service Orientation the ability to recognise customer's need</li> <li>- Organisational awareness the ability to read currents of organisational life</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Self-Management (the ability to regulate distressing effects)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-control the ability to control emotions</li> <li>- Trustworthiness the ability to be honest and to be of integrity</li> <li>- Conscientiousness the ability to manage yourself</li> <li>- Conflict management the ability to solve conflicts</li> <li>- Adaptability The ability to adjust and to change due to situations</li> <li>- Achievement drive the ability to meet excellence</li> <li>- Initiative a readiness to capture opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Relationship Management (the ability to attune ourselves to or influence emotions of persons)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing others the ability to foster people through feedback and guidance</li> <li>- Influence the ability to apply a range of persuasive tactics</li> <li>- Communication the ability to listen</li> <li>- Conflict management the ability to de-escalate</li> <li>- Leadership the ability to take charge and inspire</li> <li>- Change catalyst the ability to initiate new ideas</li> <li>- Building bonds the ability to maintain relationships</li> <li>- Teamwork &amp; collaboration the ability to promote cooperation</li> </ul>

Table 5: According to Goleman's Framework of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 2000, p.6, 2001)

Through ongoing definition developments in the public sphere regarding EI, including a variety of positive attributes, subsequent approaches continued to extend former concepts, so called mixed models like the one used by Goleman. These models were criticised by looking into traits, behavioural disposition, and elements of social intelligence and personal intelligence, by choosing attributes because they were most likely to predict success (e.g. Goleman, 2004).

### 2.2.2 Developing a Simplification of the Models of Emotional Intelligence

As the current models still lead to considerable confusion and misunderstandings regarding what EI is or should be, the author of this study aimed to simplify the existing models. The coincidence of all of three models of this research is based upon the equality, or better said the same understanding, of factors and abilities of EI. The author considers his process of simplification of the models as a valid starting point in order to further investigate which EI abilities have a positive effect on the sales interaction during the selling process. Within this study the results of the semi-structured interviews will be correlated with the simplification of these three models, and if necessary supplemented by the findings of this qualitative approach. Even, if according to Salovey et al. (2004) mixed models are substantially different than models of mental abilities, both kind of models were offered in the first academic articles of EI. “Although these articles set out a mental ability conception of emotional intelligence, they also freely described personality characteristics that might accompany such intelligence” (Salovey et al., 2004, p. 89). In principal, the mental ability models set their focus on emotions themselves and the emotions’ interactions with thought, whereas the mixed models try to treat both, mental abilities and a set of characteristics such as consciousness or motivation (Salovey et al., 2004).

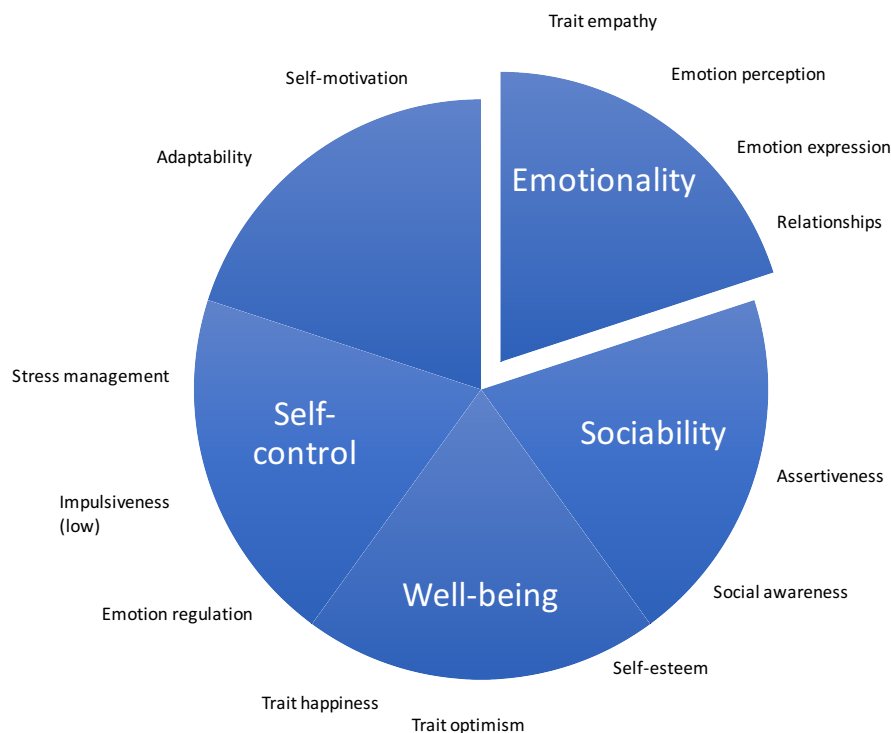
In the beginning of this chapter, the author would like to introduce a comparatively young model, the “Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire” (TEIQue) developed by Petrides (2009). This model was derived through a content analysis of existing EI models and helps to understand why the author decided to use a simplification of the three most important models.

Petrides argues that EI might be correctly conceptualised as a personality trait rather than as a cognitive ability. The “Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire” originates from trait EI theory, which theorises EI as a personality trait, positioned at lower levels of personality ladders (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007, as cited in Petrides, 2009, p. 88). The development of Petrides’s trait model began towards the end of 1998 as the part of his doctoral dissertation, in which he wrote about *faux intelligences*, the characteristics of which are not consistent for IQ-type measurement.

In other words, while the various theorists try hard to convince us that they have discovered new and interesting intelligences that had previously been overlooked by

differential psychologists, none of them has managed to develop items that can be scored according to truly objective criteria and that can cover the sampling domains of these intelligences in their entirety. (Petrides, 2009, p. 86)

From the perspective of Petrides and colleagues, self-report EI questionnaires were at most seen as partial measures of trait-based EI, sharing significant variance with the TEIQue. This indicates why trait EI theory might supply a context for the interpretation, potentially linking with the results of mainstream differential psychology (Petrides, 2009). Petrides model also includes alexithymia, affective communications, emotional expression and empathy (Petrides, 2009).



**Figure 3:** The 15 facets of the TEIQue (Petrides, 2009, p. 94)

According to Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008), within the model of Petrides a large number of personality traits are mixed with some socio-emotional abilities, which are then called *trait EI*. They claim that this model includes nearly no justification for why certain emotional abilities were included while others were not (Mayer et al., 2008). It might be

possible to argue that these abilities were chosen to predict success. Therefore, the model was not considered to be used for the simplification of this study.

However, the sampling domain of trait EI is interesting for this thesis regarding the facets that were derived through a content analysis of early EI models in order to see if there still might exist some coincidence with the simplification of the three main models of this thesis. The concept of EI induced researchers to conceive of new forms of models by revisiting several social and emotional traits (Mayer et al., 2008). The expression “forms of models” was consciously used in this elucidation because most of the present models or theories are based on the models of Mayer and Salovey, Goleman, and Bar-On. It could be argued that most of the new models of EI might have been supplemented to have greater success in terms of their validations (factor loadings, correlations). Therefore, this latest elaboration on Trait EI is based on a combination of the construct-oriented and inductive approach scale construction. This was especially used to analyse the factors regarding its facets and item-level factors (Petrides, 2009). This implies that this approach was developed to determine the connections between single items, rather than to look for contextual similarities, which is the main reason for choosing the simplification approach for this study.

Looking at Table 6, a modest comparability to the three well-known models of EI exists. For this research the author does not use a content analysis, because it might involve several problems. “This implies fixed and observer-independent categories and procedures that must be codified without reference to the analyst and the material being analysed” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 407). In terms of a content analysis where researchers try to determine how frequently a specific word occurs, counting might be appropriate. The problem is that counting could not be validated by independent confirmation, and it might be possible to employ different persons as counters. Hence, this special method, in terms of categorisation, measuring, and analysis, is dependent on the researcher’s abilities and the possibilities of independent experiment repetition (Krippendorff, 2004).

According to the author, the Salovey and Mayer (1989) model provides a very good overview of how to consciously regulate emotions to enhance emotional and social intelligence. The four branches are levels on which emotional achievement represents the learning curve of a person who has processed emotions in any form of the abovementioned abilities. The model of Mayer and Salovey (1997) follows a cascading system which might be also evident in sales interactions. According to Chen and Jaramillo (2014) a customer might have immoderate requests and wreaks his anger on the salesperson. First the



salesperson will perceive the customer emotion, then think about the influence of emotions on thoughts, and finally “then understand the customer reaction and eventually regulate her or his own emotional response to achieve a desired objective like enhancing her or his relationship with this customer” (Chen & Jaramillo, 2014, p. 36).

Contrary to that, the author considers a selling situation not predictable anymore. Salespersons need to start from different initial points within a selling process. As a consequence, the author did not follow any clear cascading structure of these models of EI, nor it was of interest to have a strict differentiation of inter- and intrapersonal competencies of a branch. Within the selling process, both of these kind of competencies are of equal importance in order to control the selling situation which will be categorised within the simplification model. The Table 6 displays the major areas of skills and specific examples of the three competing models which are all labeled “Emotional Intelligence”. The similarities of these introduced EI models are already salient and support to understand the gradually elaboration of the simplification of all these three models. The categories and abilities of the respective models in Table 6 were placed according to the number of matches within the abilities in order to detect the similarities immediately. The equal abilities have been marked in the same color and are linked by arrows within this Table 6. The categories have been compared and discussed, which led to a new aggregation of abilities, based on the model of Mayer and Salovey (1997).

The superior cluster of each model seems to play a tangential role, as the former authors just try to describe the content of each branch, competence or sub-subscale to cluster their abilities appropriately. In the model of Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001) the differentiation of e.g. inter- or intra- personal abilities seemed to determine the level of relationship, which might be important for matching with the corresponding level of communication during the sales interaction, whereas Mayer and Salovey (1997) do not differentiate inter- or intra-personal abilities within their model. However, the author was possible to agree on the *EI Perception and Social Awareness* cluster, as the terminologies of each of the categories (Branch, Composite Scale and Competence) are contextually comparable.

The branch/category of *Perception and Expression of Emotion* describes conditions in terms of the ability to perceive and to express feelings. That implies that, focused on oneself, this dimension leads to greater emotional awareness. Additionally, considering this branch in terms of focusing on other people might affect sensitivity (Brackett & Salovey, 2006).

Mayer & Salovey (1997)	Bar-On (1997)	Goleman (2001)
<p><b>Perception and Expression of Emotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to identify emotion in one's physical and psychological states.</li> <li>- Ability to identify emotions in other people (Empathy)</li> <li>- Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them.</li> <li>- Ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding of Emotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to understand relationships among various emotions</li> <li>- Ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions</li> <li>- Ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.</li> <li>- Ability to understand transitions among emotions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intrapersonal EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Self-Regard</b> the ability to respect and accept oneself</li> <li>- <b>Emotional Self-Awareness</b> the ability to recognise one's feelings</li> <li>- <b>Assertiveness</b> the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts</li> <li>- <b>Independence</b> the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one's thinking and actions</li> <li>- <b>Self-Actualisation</b> the ability to realise one's potential capabilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Interpersonal IQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empathy</b> the ability to be aware of emotions of others</li> <li>- <b>Social Responsibility</b> the ability to cooperate and contribute</li> <li>- <b>Interpersonal Relationship</b> the ability to establish and maintain mutually well-functioning relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Awareness (knowing what one feels)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Emotional self-awareness</b> the ability to read and understand our emotions - recognise their impact on work performance</li> <li>- <b>Accurate self-assessment</b> a realistic evaluation of strength and limitations</li> <li>- <b>Self-confidence</b> A strong sense of self-worth</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Awareness (the ability to read nonverbal cues for negative emotions)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empathy</b> the ability to understand other people's emotions</li> <li>- <b>Service Orientation</b> the ability to recognise customer's need</li> <li>- <b>Organisational awareness</b> the ability to read currents of organisational life</li> </ul>
<p><b>Using of Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to redirect and prioritise thinking on the basis of associated feelings</li> <li>- Ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgement and memory</li> <li>- Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view</li> <li>- Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adaptability EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Reality Testing</b> the ability to validate one's emotions</li> <li>- <b>Flexibility</b> the ability to adjust one's emotions</li> <li>- <b>Problem-Solving</b> the ability to define and solve problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Relationship Management (the ability to attune ourselves to or influence emotions of persons)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Developing others</b> the ability to foster people through feedback and guidance</li> <li>- <b>Influence</b> the ability to apply a range of persuasive tactics</li> <li>- <b>Communication</b> the ability to listen</li> <li>- <b>Leadership</b> the ability to take charge and inspire</li> <li>- <b>Change catalyst</b> the ability to initiate new ideas</li> <li>- <b>Building bonds</b> the ability to maintain relationships</li> <li>- <b>Teamwork &amp; collaboration</b> the ability to promote cooperation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.</li> <li>- Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.</li> <li>- Ability to engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state</li> <li>- Ability to manage emotions in oneself</li> <li>- Ability to manage emotions in others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stress Management EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Stress Tolerance</b> the ability to endure stressful situations</li> <li>- <b>Impulse Control</b> the ability to resist an impulse (e.g. anger)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Management (the ability to regulate distressing effects)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Self-control</b> the ability to control emotion</li> <li>- <b>Trustworthiness</b> the ability to be honest and to be of integrity</li> <li>- <b>Conscientiousness</b> the ability to manage yourself</li> <li>- <b>Conflict management</b> the ability to solve conflicts</li> <li>- <b>Adaptability</b> The ability to adjust and to change due to situations</li> <li>- <b>Achievement drive</b> the ability to meet excellence</li> <li>- <b>Initiative</b> a readiness to capture opportunities</li> </ul>

Table 6: Three Models of EI – Contextual Comparison – Mayer and Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997), Goleman (2001)

There is a *Competence* of Goleman (1998) which is similar to the *Branch* of Mayer and Salovey (1997) called *Personal Competence* including *Emotional Self-Awareness*. According to Goleman (2001), *Emotional Self-Awareness* replicates the significance of recognising one's feelings and how they might affect one's performance. The author examined the similarity in the recognition of emotions in oneself. Contrary to Goleman's model, the author supports Salovey and Mayer's idea, not to mention strengths or weaknesses at this relatively early stage, due to the fact that for the beginning it might be appropriate to be aware of self-emotions, and to accept and consciously deal with it. Similarly, Bar-On (1997) describes a content subscale of *Emotional Self-Awareness*. Bar-On defines this special subscale as the ability to recognise one's feelings, which is congruent with Salovey & Mayer and Goleman. Bar-On divides his model into *Composite Scales* (*Branch* at Salovey and Mayer, *Personal Competence* at Goleman) and *Content Subscales*, which corresponds to the ability and competence of Salovey and Mayer, Goleman. The similarities within these abilities or competencies are marked in yellow in Table 6. However, only the model of Mayer and Salovey (1997) also admits to consider the emotions of others within its ability of *Self-Awareness*. The second ability that was detected is called *Empathy*. This is beyond dispute, due to the fact, that even the wording is similar in each of the existing EI models. This competence or ability enables people to conceive of the emotions, concerns, and needs of other people.

In the same way, the next superior factor *Use of Emotion/Resilience* evolved. This factor, which includes the ability of *Managing Emotions*, targets an individual's ability to moderate emotions that might assist with certain cognitive or rational decision-making processes, like *Problem-Solving*. Correspondingly, the model of Goleman defines this competence, *Conflict Management*, as the competence necessary for handling difficult people and situations with "diplomacy, encouraging debate and open discussion, and orchestrating win-win situation" (Goleman, 2001, p. 9). This indicates an equal statement within their explanations, as Goleman proposes to consciously (cognitively) steer emotions to solve conflicts or problems sensitively.

Bar-On (1997) directly identifies an important content subscale called *Problem-Solving*. This is equivalent, and nearly identical, to the categories by of Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Goleman (1998).

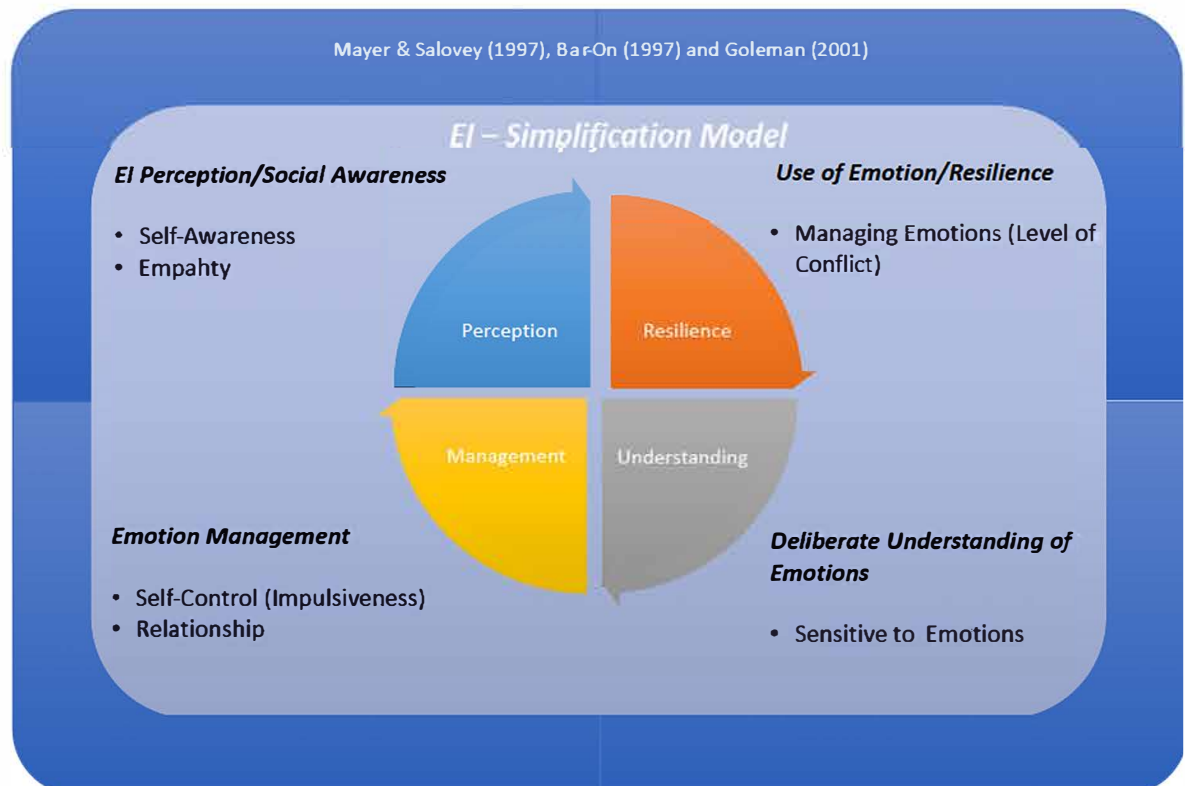


Figure 4: EI – Simplification Model, based on Mayer & Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001)

The next level, *Deliberate Understanding of Emotions*, is more complex. However, the author was able to identify consistency in some of the models abilities or competencies. According to Brackett and Salovey (2006), Salovey and Mayer’s model describes their ability in terms of a legitimate proportion of language and propositional thought necessary for indicating the capacity to analyse emotions. From this, it can be deduced that this ability comprises the aptitude to understand, combine and process emotions. Within the corresponding competence, *Accurate Self-Assessment*, Goleman describes people who are aware of their abilities and limitations and are able and willing to draw conclusions from them and learn from their mistakes (Goleman, 2001). Bar-On (1997) defines the subscale *Self-Actualisation*, which includes the potential to realise one’s capabilities.

Finally, *Emotion Management*, contains the ability to control emotions, and, as appropriate, modify them in oneself and others. Mayer and Salovey (1997, p. 14) describe this ability as “the conscious regulation of emotions to enhance emotional and intellectual growth”, which constitutes the fourth branch, and certainly the most distinctive ingredient of EI. The abilities *Self-Control* of each of the models, overlapping in Goleman’s *Self-Management* and Bar-

On's *Stress Management EQ*. All these superior categories deal with the individual ability to overcome stressful situations by regulating his or her emotions and being less likely to give vent to one's feelings (e.g. anger). Furthermore, the ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships is situated, and besides fully accepted in all models. Therefore, the attribute *Relationship* was added to the simplification model, which contains the corresponding abilities and competencies within the model of Mayer and Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001).

Additionally as previously mentioned, the author would like to have a short look at the consistencies of the model of Petrides (2009) and the *EI – Simplification Model* of this thesis. Due to the fact, that Petrides developed his model through a content analysis out of the models discussed by this thesis, there should be still some congruities. Similarly, Petrides (2009) describes Emotional Self-Awareness as the ability to recognise ones' feelings which is congruent to Mayer and Salovey and Goleman. Furthermore, Petrides (2009) defines an equivalent to *Managing Emotions* called *Emotion Regulation*, which is linked to the other explanations. Even with his facet level of *Emotion Perception* exists a conformity with the ability to be *Sensitive to Emotions*. Here, Petrides (2008) describes the ability to be clear about one's feelings and those of other people. Hence, even with the *EI Simplification Model* of this thesis, the author was still able to find coherences with the model of Petrides, but not mixing up with personality traits. This might also lead to obtain larger acceptance by other researcher for this model of simplification in terms of the definition and abilities of emotional intelligence.

Figure 4 , as illustrated above by the author, displays the new consistency model, or better said simplification model, in combination with the original and remaining attributes that define EI for this research. Considering this magnitude of abilities where the author could not find coherences, it is not surprising that researchers and authors of previous models could not find a common evaluation related to a standardised test procedures to determine the individual manifestation of EI. The competences, factors, or whatever the original authors would like to call their categories and attributes of EI that were not consistent among themselves, is remarkable. It is disconcerting that many application processes or employee evaluations have been conducted without any academic legitimation in the sense of implementing attributes not directly attributable to EI (e.g. that might have been better attributed to personality traits), which might have led to considerable misinterpretation. The

next section of the literature review analyses and discusses the link between EI and individual behaviours during sales interactions within a selling situation and their impact on sales performance.

### **2.3 Sales Performance (SP) – The Influence of EI**

Salespeople play a key role not only in customer relationship management but also in understanding, creating, communicating and delivering values to customers, which in turn increases the sales performance of the firm. (Paparoidamis & Guenzi, 2009; Weitz & Bradford, 1999, as cited in Wisker and Poulis, 2015, p. 185)

Successful sales practices are influenced by employees' skills through the acquisition and development of a company's human capital (Huselid, 1995). According to Huselid (1995, p. 637), there exist *basic requirements* which need to be met. First, the level of individual performance matters. Second, the necessary skills which need to be detected are rare as they might be for EI factors. Third, the human capital investment cannot be easily imitated, which means no substitution through new technologies (Huselid, 1995).

As a possible example, sales interactions for technical capital equipment, which are mainly customised to the specific needs of customers, require salespeople to have technical knowledge and sales consulting abilities upfront. This implies that the selling situation is determined. Because of the complex and innovative environment in such buying situations, the sales outcomes are mostly achieved through a long-term selling process, as could be the case when the product must first be developed, and high monetary investments lead customers to hesitate. From this, it can be deduced that technical salespeople perform almost all of the conventional sales activities, including extensive interaction with their customers by building up relationships to gain trust and acceptance, which could be the dominant advantage. There, problems can be solved, and the buying situations might be modified or even changed to enhance the likelihood of closing a deal (Avlonitis & Panagopoulos, 2006). Consequently, EI has the potential to enhance sales performance by stabilising and developing long-term customer relationships. "Prior research has demonstrated the importance of enhancing sales performance by using customer orientation to influence decision making" (Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 79). According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso

(2000) EI can distinguish effectively those people who are able to understand emotions from those you get lost in their emotions (as cited in Kidwell et. al., 2011, p. 82).

Yet the nature of the sales job is changing, and customer expectations have increased beyond simple exchange. Organisations are now looking to the sales function not only to generate new sources of business but to build and maintain relationships with customers. (Ogilvie et al., 2017, p. 100)

According to Weitz (1981), several studies have examined the relationship between sales staff performance and the specific abilities they display. Conceptually, these studies have related to “interpersonal persuasion” (Cialdini, 1987; Perloff, 2010). As a result, the studies have provided evidence indicating the effectiveness of sales interactions is related to the ability of salespeople in terms of developing a precise impression about customers’ beliefs regarding product performance. Furthermore, these studies indicate that even the ability to select the right strategy to create this impression is related to their success or failure (Weitz, 1981, p. 87).

EI has the potential to increase sales performance by creating long-term customer relationships (Kidwell et al., 2011). Furthermore, Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha and Sheng argue that salespeople with a high level of EI are more likely to “exhibit behaviours consistent with customer orientation because they are effectively perceive, use and manage emotions” (Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 81). Furthermore, Homburg, Wieseke, and Bornemann propose that empathy from salespeople related to understanding the problems of their counterparts (customers) increases the accuracy in meeting customers’ requirements (Homburg, Wieseke & Bornemann, 2009, as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 80).

With this shift of the sales excellence toward high-level of customer engagement, these so called “relational performance outcomes” are critical to evaluate in comparison to frontline success in the sales environment (Sheth and Sharma, 2008, as cited in Ogilvie et al., 2017, p 100). They further argue that EI might offset negative aspects of the intensity of sales employees’ efforts, because they are able to recognise and regulate emotions within the customer interaction (Ogilvie et al., 2017). Also Wisker and Poulis (2015) state that it might be fair to argue that there exist EI skills required for building relationships between salespeople and their customers, which could influence sales performance. Kidwell and his

colleagues (2011) “found that EI increases sales revenue and customer retention and strengthens the influence of customer orientation on sales revenue and customer retention “ (Chen & Jaramillo, 2014, p. 33). However, there still exist the problem, that the traditional literature neglect the necessary long-term aspects of performance (Homburg, Muller and Klarmann, 2011, as cited in Chen & Jaramilo, 2014, p. 33). Furthermore, it is still not clear which specific ingredient/component of EI relates to this outcomes (Wisker & Poulis, 2015).

Even if prior research has determined that sales performance from an information processing standpoint might predict sales profit, because of sales employees’ domain-specific knowledge of the customer, product and competitors (Weitz, 1978; Szymanski, 1988, as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 82), the author does not consider the knowledge of product or competitor, and essentially concentrates on the conscious influence and mastery of the sales interaction and its corresponding sales performance through the ingredients of EI, because EI does not have any direct influence on products or competitors.

### **2.3.1 Sales Interaction (SI) – The Evolved Selling Process**

Personal contact and relationships help build a brand and draw the last picture of what the customer is going to see and buy. Even if, at first appearance, the sales process looks like a price battle where all the possible manufacturers might have the chance to win the order, the deal might have already been closed by the main characters (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Head of Purchasing Department) and responsible sales authorities. Nowadays, a sales organisation has a variety of selling methods to choose from. These various channels still include traditional field sales forces, but have extended to other methods, such as tele-selling, internet selling, and part-time sales forces, amongst others. New technologies, a changing customer base, new selling tools and globalisation have had a major influence on the salespeople of today (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). At the same time, changes have been tracked in the day-to-day job, and researchers have discovered that the majority of sales activities collected in 1981 are still performed today (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). However, according to Moncrief and Marshall (2005, p. 14), researchers have found 49 new sales activities that have been evolved around new sales philosophies, such as relationship selling. Therefore, credibility must be developed. According to Arndt et al. (2014, p. 19), when salespeople meet customers for the first time, they issue statements about their credibility, such as, *I have been in the business for more than 30 years*. They



argue that these credibility-statements might emphasise benevolence and, therefore, increase the likelihood of new sales being made (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).

This implies that the field of sales has evolved over the past century, with a considerable number of high impact changes reported within the last decade. In the same way, sales organisations have changed and started to evolve. Correspondingly, the salespeople have also changed because of increased diversity and globalisation (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). Hence, new philosophies of selling have taken over, frequently focusing on relationships. Sales textbooks still teach a strongly anchored model of Dubinsky (1980) called the *Seven Steps of Selling*; it is often used as the basis for sales trainings, even if the selling environment has changed dramatically. However, Dubinsky's model has changed, too.

The origin model of Dubinsky's model (1980) starts by defining seven steps of selling common to most sales jobs: (1) *prospecting*, (2) *pre-approach*, (3) *approach*, (4) *presentation*, (5) *overcoming objections*, (6) *close* and (7) *follow up*. In this model, the first customer contact occurs in the approach step (Arndt et al., 2014). Beginning with the first step *prospecting*, salespeople search for new customers to expand their customer base. Traditionally, salespeople were expected to find their own potential buyers. Further on, the *pre-approach* step includes all the post-prospecting activities. This means that the seller is doing his research on the potential buyer or customer by familiarising him or herself with the customers' needs and compiling all relevant news of the customer that might be appropriate to bring to the first meeting. Also, preparing for the approach and presentation and trying to interpret the customer's office might be necessary. The true *approach* usually just takes a few minutes of the sale and consists of sales strategies or tactics employed by the salesperson to gain an audience and to set up a connection with the customer.

Going further in the sales process, Dubinsky (1980) describes the *Presentation* step, which normally occurs when the salesperson has identified the customer's needs. The goals in this step might vary; either the customer must get sufficient information to understand the product, or the selling points and attributes get visualised. *Overcoming Objections* is determined to be the next step of this model which takes care of any customer questions and hesitations. Salespeople should be aware that in every sales presentation, there might be objections to overcome. These should be perceived as a positive signal related to customer interest. The next and very preferable step is called *Close*. This step involves the successful completion of the sales encounter. By overcoming objections and asking for business, the

process of closing might begin. It is important that salespeople ask for the order (especially new salespeople), because many people do not ask for it. That may be the fact, that many salespeople are afraid of getting a negative reply. Finally the *Follow-up* step occurs; this step is very important in so far that salespeople need to be sure that the customer is happy and that everything promised is delivered (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).

As already mentioned, business has changed, which has also caused transformations in the evolution of the selling process due to technology, the strategic role of sales in organisations, the increased knowledge of buyers and other issues. Just like the sales process itself, the model is non-sequential and transformative, displayed in Figure 5 (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).



Figure 5: Evolved Selling Process based on Moncrief and Marshall (2005)

All of these transformations in environment, technology, and even of customers have caused changes to Dubinsky's (1980) traditional *Seven Steps of Selling* to an evolved selling process. A sales process can no longer be considered a sequential model of predefined steps that need to be passed like a standard protocol. Nowadays, salespeople step into the selling process from different starting points.

According to Moncrief and Marshall (2005), most Fortune 500 companies have moved beyond the traditional model of Dubinsky's *Seven Steps of Selling* and consider it yesterday's

paradigm. However, this model is a pervasive and convenient archetype for representing the sales function, and therefore, is still often used as the base for further movements and transformations regarding the selling process and its corresponding environment.

### 2.3.2 Developing a Conceptual Framework – EI & SI

Integrating the evolved selling model of Moncrief and Marshall (2005) into the simplification model of EI of Chapter 2.2.2, Figure 5 displays the possible logic of the complex selling environment and abilities of EI. As a result, the behaviours of salespeople are no longer considered isolated from customer interaction.

The first superior factor *Perception*, which contains *Self-Awareness* and *Empathy* corresponds with the selling *Step Customer Retention and Deletion*. This is attributable to the circumstance, that in this step, organisations try to retain existing, profitable customers. Therefore, the ability to conceive of the emotions, concerns, and needs of other people might be relevant. Furthermore, the ability to recognise one's feelings and how they might affect one's performance is necessary for neutrally handling critical situations with customers. According to Moncrief and Marshall (2005), 80% of business comes from 20% of the existing customers. Therefore, many organisations have shifted towards customer retention to secure their future business.

Secondly, *Use of Emotion* concerns the *Problem-Solving* process of each customer. Even equal wordings in the category of EI and the model of the evolved steps of selling could be found. Within this area, salespeople try to overcome objections. Within the simplification model, EI addresses dealing with difficult persons and situations. Salespeople might learn to use their emotional abilities to steer emotions and solve problems or conflicts sensitively.

The steps of *Adding Value* and *Satisfying Needs* might coincide with the ability to understand emotions by being sensitive to emotions. Salespeople might use their abilities to understand, combine and process emotions. Within this context, salespeople try to find mutual goals. Win-win situations build on customer satisfaction (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).

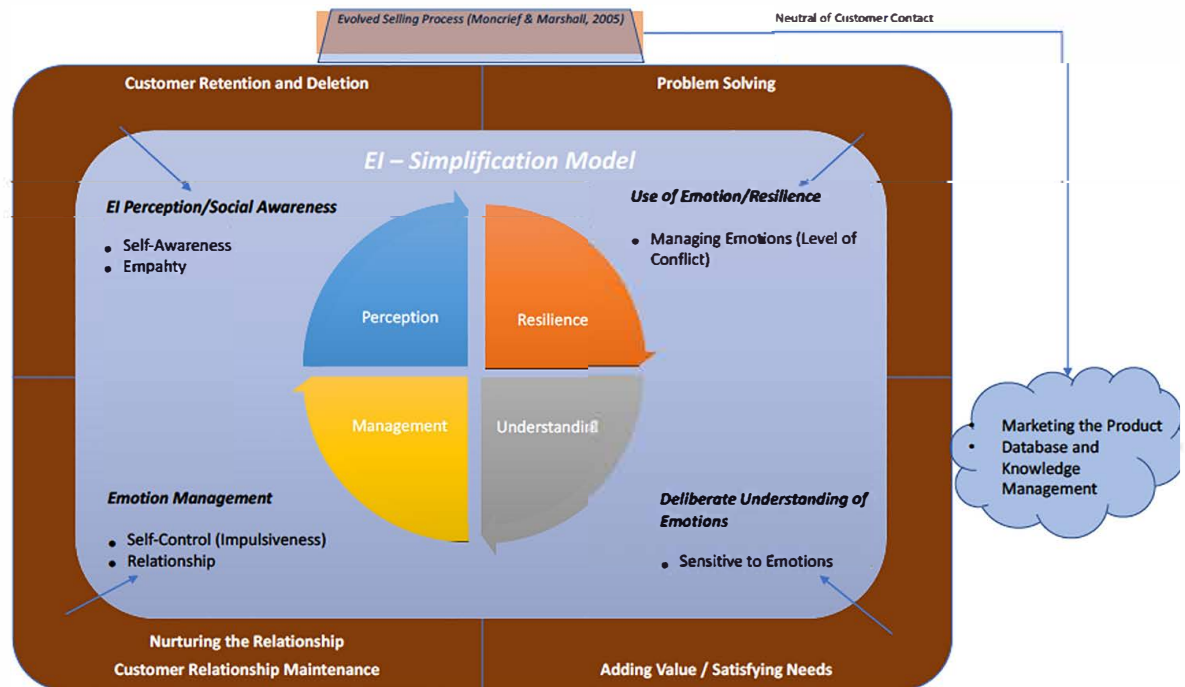


Figure 6: Conceptual Framework SI/EI based on Moncrief & Marshall, 2005 and EI – Simplification Model (Figure 4)

The last superior factor includes more than one step of the evolved selling process. With *Management of Emotion*, salespeople might nurture customer relationships and learn how to maintain them consciously using their EI abilities. The selling activities are directed toward building partnerships. The EI ability is geared towards the control of emotions, and, if necessary, modifying those emotions in oneself and others. Here, salespeople might use their abilities to regulate moods and emotions and treasure their partnerships.

### 2.3.3 Financial Stability as a Measurement of Sales Performance (SP)

Expected future revenues are related to service-oriented expectations driven by relational value of the customer exchange (Ogilvie et al., 2017). However, there is little known about employee's EI influencing better outcomes related to their sales behaviours (Bande & Fernández-Ferrín, 2015). Furthermore, McFarland, Rode, and Shervani (2016, p. 108) argue that for the influence of EI the "empirical support for its incremental direct effects on outcomes relevant to professional selling has been disappointing". Contrary to traditional performance outcomes, which normally could be immediately evaluated according their outcomes, long-term sales performance in accordance with building relationships emerges during various interpersonal occasions (Eastman 1994, as cited in Ogilvie et al., 2017 p. 102).

Consequently, the author needed to define the criteria for sale performance for this research. Therefore, Deo (2015) states that the fundamental value of a corporation is the sum of its present value of future cash flows. It follows that the ROIC plays an essential role as an annual indicator of long-term positive FCF, classified as the firm's operating cash flow less capital reinvestment. The EVA determines the profitability of a firm as an indicator of management performance, which is needed as a third measurement to determine shareholders' wealth (Deo, 2015). Unfortunately, there is no standardised measurement for long-term aspects of sales performance available. Especially, in the area of maintaining and building relationships with customers, "a general assessment of EI may adequately address broad domains of but poorly when predicting performance in specific contexts" (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose, 2001, as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 78).

Hence the selected companies' financial performance of this research is measured using their ROIC, FCF and EVA, as these financial statements are commonly used as representative figures for machinery and plant engineering in Germany (VDMA, 2017).

The financial figures are developed under the following parameters and economic assumptions (Heinze & Radinger, 2011):

- Due to confidentially reasons a factor with two decimal places was used to modify the financial numbers of the selected companies (Encoder).
- Total capital is the sum of equity and debt capital which forms the liabilities of a balance sheet.
- Cash flow from operating activities includes the regular business activities without long-term capital.
- Capital expenditures include investments that improve the use of the existing capital.
- Cost of capital is derived from weighted average cost of capital method (WACC) ( $WACC = \text{Interest Rate of Short-Term Investments} \times \text{Debt Ratio} \times (1 - \text{Business Tax in \%}) + \text{Interest Rate for equity capital} \times (\text{equity capital})$ ).
- Based on the comparison portal *Check24*, the highest interest rate for a short-time investment without risk is 0.6% ([www.check24.de](http://www.check24.de) - 01.06.18).
- Business tax of Germany is calculated at 30% (29.83).
- Equity capital is assumed on average to be 40% within the group of companies.
- Debt ratio is assumed on average to be 20% within the group of companies.

- Quote of debt rate is assumed to be 15%, which corresponds to the expected margin within the group of companies.

## 2.4 Research Gap and Corresponding Consequences

Table 7 addresses the research gap in the academic field and management literature concerning the explicit performance criterion of a company's sales performance consciously influenced through EI.

The lack of existing academic literature in the field of sales behaviour and sales interaction seemed surprising, but has been confirmed by the relatively low results of this systematic review.

#	Database	Search Term 1	Results	Search Term 2	Results	Search Term 3	Results
1	EBSCO	Emotional intelligence	3,568				
2	EBSCO	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction	33		
3	EBSCO	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction		Sales performance	27
4	Emerald	Emotional intelligence	2,023				
5	Emerald	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction	18		
6	Emerald	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction		Sales performance	17
7	EThOS	Emotional intelligence	245				
8	EThOS	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction	0		
9	EThOS	Emotional intelligence		Sales interaction		Sales performance	0

Table 7: Results Systematic Literature Review Search Term 1-3

Within this literature, little research was found identifying specific emotional abilities that might help researchers understand and determine upcoming emotions in terms of sales interaction to enhance performance. The studies so far do not cover the complex nature of sales interactions, and still consider sales behaviour as somewhat exceptional from the interaction with the customer (Hohenschwert, 2012). Bande and Fernández-Ferrín (2015, p. 261) also state, that “little is known about the influence of EI on adaptive or proactive sales behaviours or about how the EI of employees (salespeople in particular) can lead to better outcomes”. Also Bearden, Hardesty and Rose (2001) criticise that a general evaluation of EI might result in very broad applications, but do inadequately “when predicting performance

in specific contexts” (as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 78). Kidwell et al. (2011, p. 80) argue that salespeople need to think about more specialised abilities when interacting with a customer compared to the mostly very unsubstantial abilities like e.g. “managing emotions”. Salespeople need to have a specific guidance focusing on their selling situations in order to recognise, steer, validate and apply their own emotions, or the emotions of others appropriately.

While it has been widely accepted in the sales literature that various forms of salesperson relational behaviour such as relationship selling, adaptive selling and customer-oriented selling affect sales performance (e.g. Borg and Johnston 2013), there is a dearth of studies providing consistent explanations of the EI role in both salesperson relational behaviour and sales performance (e.g., Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka 2003; Ingram et al. 2005). (Kadić-Maglajlić et al., 2014, p. 12)

According to Carmeli and Josman (2006) the empirical examinations of the role of EI in terms of individual success have been limited (as cited in Wisker & Poulis, 2015). Also Kim (2007, p. 1132) underpins that future research “should show what direct and indirect paths exist between relational behaviour and performance and provide a fine-grained and realistic understanding of the way relational exchange works” (as cited in Kadić-Maglajlić et al., 2014, p.12). Even if it might be “intuitively obvious that EI should have a direct effect on sales performance and other sales outcomes, in fact research suggests that these direct effects do not exist or are best quite small (Cron et. al. 2005, as cited in McFarland et al., 2016, p 118).

Finally, through the exploration of employees’ perceptions of EI during the semi-structured interviews, the author was able to understand that EI might be better researched through interactive mechanisms rather than individual measurements of a quotient. Paulhaus, Lysy and Yik (1998) argue that the so called *self-report measures* are often insufficient because of the likelihood of the respondents to evaluate their abilities inaccurately (as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p. 80). “Moreover, they tend to filter self-reports through their self-concepts and impression management motives” (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2000, as cited in Kidwell et al., 2011, p.80). Day and Carroll (2008) further state that EI commonly is

measured by using self-reports, which are regularly criticized to be faked or biased (as cited in McFarland et al., 2016, p. 108). These measures, especially in case of the mixed models, are problematic, because of the strong association of their personality factor with sales outcomes (Kim et al., 2011, as cited in McFarland et al., 2016, p.109).

## 2.5 Summary of Chapter

The summary of this chapter is exemplified through the presentation of Figure 7. This figure displays the possible logic of a well-known and experienced sales approach and matching abilities of EI.

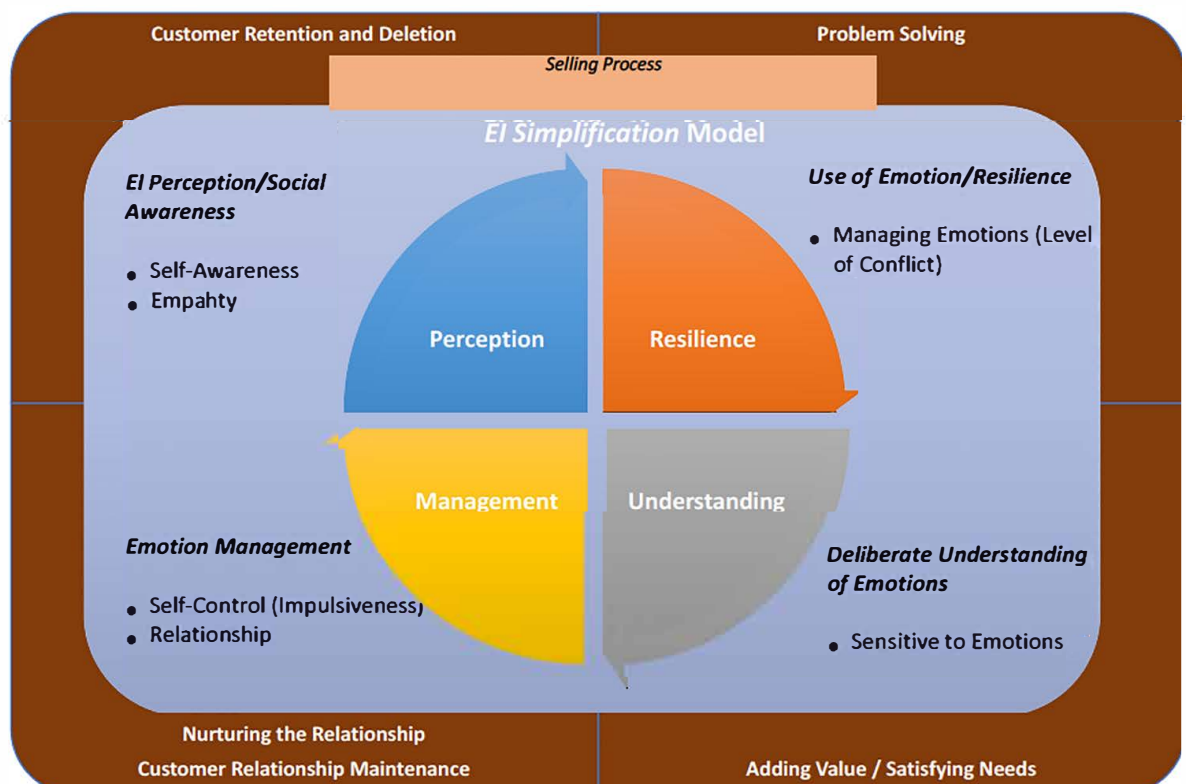


Figure 7: Conceptual Framework EI/SI

Within the literature review the author found the superior factors of EI might be applied in some of the areas of the selling steps of the *Evolved Selling Process* of Moncrief and Marshall (2005). The area where salespeople tend to gain and retain customers (*Customer Retention and Deletion*) could be supported through how feelings might affect performance. This could help employees handle customers on a more rational level. In the part of the sales interaction called *Problem-Solving*, where sales employees need to overcome objections, it might be necessary to manage their emotions. They should consciously steer their emotions.



Within the process of *Adding Value* to customers, the sales force might need to understand, combine and process emotions to find a mutual goal.

Finally, in the area of *Nurturing the Relationship* with a customer, a salesperson's *Emotion Management* comes into play. The selling activities need to be directed towards the partnership he or she might try to build up to achieve better results.

The next chapter concentrates on the research paradigm, methods and analysis. The methodology is certainly a fundamental pillar for this thesis, as it describes the stance of the author and the methodological approach the thesis builds upon.

### 3 Research Methodology

Doing research means developing knowledge in a particular field. More promisingly, academic management research can be seen as a *design science* which mission is to develop valid learning to support capable and designing practitioners (Huff et al., 2006). Furthermore, as stated by Simon (1996) applied science uses the construction of hierarchically classified constructs whose intricacy, particularisation and adaptability increases by moving to lower levels. In other words, for each layer of an abstraction researchers need to know the part which is especially relevant for it (Simon, 1996, p. 16). Simon (1996) argued, “that the ontology of natural sciences – the nature of reality under study—is such that the highly structured, formalistic epistemology—the manner of acquiring truth about reality—is fruitful” (Simon, 1969, as cited in Fendt et al. 2007, p. 475). However, this is not applicable to social sciences and management theory, as described in the following paragraphs. For example Rousseau (2006) speaks of a research-practice gap which need to be closed beforehand. At least, there should be a kind of quality criteria for the best available evidence. It is difficult to systematically conduct research concerning management issues. Also, Tranfield and Denyer (2004) state that ignoring such a gap would be unthinkable in other professional fields, like medicine or engineering, which could imply a national scandal if science and practice were not inseparably linked with each other. Hence, due to the boundaries of addressing knowledge by solving managerial problems, the research problem might differ significantly. For some research projects, the purpose might be to explain and understand the impact of something. Then there might be a differentiation factor while looking at the individuals or just purely on the result.

However, all business and management research could be realised according to its purpose and content, even if content and purpose might change due to different philosophies.

In the following paragraphs the author explains the selected philosophical approaches to solving the managerial problem by arguing through the lenses of a *Social Constructionist*.

#### 3.1 Selecting the Research Paradigm

A research philosophy is related to the creation of knowledge and the nature of knowledge in general. Moreover, practical considerations influence the philosophy of a research project. The researcher’s view of the relationship between different theoretical and practical

approaches is likely to influence the research crucially. A fact-oriented researcher, such as a researcher of manufacturing processes investigating process times and processes, might have a different view of conducting research compared with the researcher interested in the feelings and motivations of the people who might influence the manufacturing process (Saunders et al., 2011). There are three major ways of thinking about research philosophy called *ontology*, *epistemology*, and *methodology*.

When researchers think about *ontology*, they are concerned with the nature of reality; a domain assumption has to be made regarding the nature of the social (Burrows, 1989). It raises questions about the assumptions researchers have regarding the way the world functions and the individual's commitment to distinct views (Saunders et al., 2011). Ontology is the most abstract of the three terms. It means the study of being, especially "the study of the basic building blocks of existence" (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p.4). There are two major aspects of ontology. First, objectivity, which portrays social entities without social actors being involved. Second, subjectivity, which takes the view that social phenomena are created from the cognition and ensuing actions of social actors related to their existence (Saunders et al., 2011). Epistemology is when the scholar needs to consider conceptual procedures to gain knowledge of the social (Burrows, 1989). Saunders et al. (2011) stated that epistemology is concerned with what establishes appropriate knowledge in the field of research to justify belief. The final part of the methodology deals with the process and procedures by which researchers establish the claims of knowledge (Wynn & Williams, 2012). It refers to the techniques through which knowledge is acquired

The following section covers a critical evaluation of conducting research through the lenses of a social constructionist. Social constructivism as a very specific philosophical stance which might support the reflection of EI and its influence on salespeople performances through their interactions with customers within a selling situation appropriately.

### **3.1.1 Critical Discussion of being a Social Constructionist**

The debate about subjectivity or objectivity is somehow similar to the ongoing discussions of the different ways the theoretical and practical approaches to organisational culture have evolved (Saunders et al., 2011). Smircich (1983) stated that objectivists tend to consider the

culture of an organisation as something the organisation has, rather than something the organisation is.

Scientific realists accept that there is a real world independent of the researcher's experience. Furthermore, scientific realists also realise that there can be many layers to the reality of the subject. Even more, the access to the real world is difficult. The more complicated the subject, the closer scientific realists come to the constructivist's standpoint (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). In theory, this seems to be a clear and practical statement. In practice, coming up with a philosophy choice is difficult. The diversity of methodological approaches can be puzzling. The easiest way to break down how to answer a research question is to make use of the philosophical components: ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Inside a constructionist paradigm, knowledge is created and exchanged by people interacting within organisations (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012). Therefore, the role of language and discourse in studying organisational phenomena has been recognised well by social constructionists.

Social constructionism emphasises negotiation and social enactment between the actors under study. Constructionists claim that research related to the interpretation and experience of a realist approach cannot be independent from the perspective of the researcher. The distance of the researcher within the different paradigms is fundamental and might reflect the main difference along the existing paradigms. Social constructionists appreciate the researcher's knowledge in order to interpret and experience their knowledge within the research (Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010).

According to Karataş-Özkan and Murphy (2010), social constructionism allows a participatory view of organisations by underpinning the relational process of knowledge productions caused by social interaction in organisations. In the social constructionist stance, individual knowledge is then transformed into collective knowledge, as well as the effect of identity formation of the individuals and alliances in organisations (Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010).

In managerial issues, the researcher needs to consider decision-making as a major pitfall in the organisational context which certainly will not be researched in a way to seek for causal mechanisms. They also must consider intuitive powers. Experience has taught them that specific actions have adequate, good, or even bad outcomes (Easton, 2010). A qualitative

data collection might be the prevalent research method in this context. This suggests that qualitative data is fundamentally versatile with respect to data that might be collected. All too frequently, semi-structured interviews, telephone conversations, experiments and observations are common formats of data collection in social science (Alsaawi, 2014).

Given that social constructionists concentrate on the thoughtful and idiosyncratic nature of knowledge, the overall objective is quite different to its counterparts. Constructionists try to understand:

Not in a causal and positivist terms as a precipitate of its context, but rather in circular and hermeneutic terms as a meaningful item within a wider context of conventions and assumptions, a context which serves to endow its constituent parts with meaning while attaining its own meaning from the combination of its constituent parts.  
(Skinner, 1975, as cited in Moses & Knutsen, 2012, pp. 10–11)

A social constructionist's truth is in the eyes of the observer. Their descriptions of the subject might not be free from bias, but they still hope to secure unconditional truth. Researchers suggest that social scientists should force the strength which comes from intuitive powers of social facts (J. Moses & T. Knutsen, 2012). There, the question, "Why does this all work together?" might find an answer.

Apparently, a disadvantage of a qualitative research approach might be the lack of generalisability. Researchers using qualitative research must be aware of the question, if there exists a valid representative status (Easton, 2010). A short answer might be that researchers do not try to generalise populations or universes, rather than theoretical propositions that are generalisable (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, Yin (1989) states that experiments or semi-structured interviews, seek expansion and generalisation by identifying the deep processes at work under qualified conditions through particular mechanisms.

### 3.2 From Theory to Practice

In some cases, no causal explanation exists and things do not always convey impressions. Mental processing induces the author to see the world through the eyes of a social constructionist (Fiorelli, 2012). It requires working with intent, which Fiorelli (2012, p. 274) describes as, “the wholeness must never be ignored in considering the role of parts, and an ultimate aim is the emancipation of individuals and groups within the organisation”. Individuals who do not engage in social becoming in developments of organisational change fail to recognise the appearance of a group empowering strategy. In effective strategic development, adaptation of the collective interest is quite central to social becoming (Fiorelli, 2012). This implies that research must examine the social becoming of individuals within a group as well as the experience of individual’s feedback within the system. Their “values are considered as the origin of action and may be cultivated as instruments to enhance desired performance, i.e. productivity and efficiency” (Aadland, 2010, p. 461).

Values in research are treated as mental programs for action, which correspondingly are studied through interpretive research. Values are still expressions of worth, likes and dislikes, peoples’ ideologies, attitudes, stances, beliefs, and theories, as well as practices. The question is what kind of reality values express in comparison to other words, as they are expressions of worth within language. *Intentionality* represents a conceptual class in which the idea of value inherently belongs. It is often considered to be the mark of the mental which expresses the ability of human being of having ideas, thoughts, desires, hopes, perceptions, dreams and many more, which might be attributable to a mental level (Aadland, 2010, pp. 462-463).

Values are concepts of worth supported by language as goals, ideals and preferences, or they are obtained by extraction from actions through a process of interpretive sensemaking (Aadland, 2010, p. 463). Consequently, value research might be researched best from a constructionist stance, as it focuses on the creation of meaning.

#### 3.2.1 Reflecting the Principles of a Social Constructionist

Social constructionists try to find and understand the meaning of social actions for those involved in doing them (Moses & Knutsen, 2013). Therefore, social constructionism increasingly recognises the need to undertake qualitative research (Skinner, Tagg, &

Holloway, 2000). Marshall and Rossman (1995) explain qualitative research as being especially respected for research that aims to study the real organisational goals, relations and procedures within organisations to capture policies and practices. Qualitative data are then useful to improve, confirm and reinterpret quantitative data, such as from the literature review (Skinner et al., 2000).

According to Anderson (2010), qualitative research includes the collection, analysis and interpretation of data which are easily collected and not attributable to numbers. These data are the link to the social world and “the concepts of behaviours of people within it” (Anderson, 2010, p. 1). Qualitative research concentrates on the experience of the relation and interaction of social actors, and the meanings they place on the occasion, procedures and structures of their social life (Skinner et al., 2000). Constructionists accept experience and reasoning as useful epistemological tools that they utilise in a much broader sense—containing, for example, empathy, authority, and myths. Constructionists prefer the specific and use their knowledge to extend moral considerations and political understanding (J. Moses & T. Knutsen, 2012). Consequently, within the literature, similarities between the roles of managers and researchers can be observed, and it is generally accepted that qualitative approaches have much to offer in the organisational context (Skinner et al., 2000). The author chose a qualitative approach for this research because it will address the goal to explore both potential outcomes for managers and the obstacles that need to be overcome in real organisational situations. The qualitative approach may also justify the important influence of the author’s belief system, which is linked essentially to his ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Skinner et al., 2000).

Constructionists state that knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by the mind, and emphasise the diverse character of reality expressible in a variety of symbols and language systems (Brunner, 1986; Gergen, 1991, as cited in Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010). There are different sub-paradigms, such as radical constructionism (Foerster, 1993), operative constructionism (Luhmann, 1997) and social constructionism (Gergen, 1985). This research uses the social option of constructionism, since within this paradigm knowledge is constructed through human socialisation; it was presumed EI would be similar.

From the perspective of a social constructionist, organisations are exceptional sites where members collectively engage in the construction of a social reality (Berger & Luckmann,

1966). Social constructionism mainly focuses on its constructive nature to share and negotiate meanings. The key ontological and epistemological assumption of constructionism can be noted in Gergen:

... as a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, historical and cultural specificity, a focus on processes, specifically on interaction and social practices and, finally, language as a form of social action. (Gergen 1985, as cited in Karataş-Özkan & Murphy, 2010, p. 458)

The ontological view of a social constructionist is that people construct meaning between them through daily interactions in social life. Hosking and Bouwen (2000) state that constructionism assumes a relational ontology. Constructionists recognise that people may look at the same thing and observe it differently. To recognise this willfulness of human agency makes every attempt at trying to capture it in a simple way and in law-like terms more complicated. Hence, constructionism recognises ontological diversity and complexity and tends to refer to more diverse resources and different kinds of evidence. Constructionists try to understand interactions in a meaningful and wider context, rather than as a method for uncovering causality.

Based on the evidence currently available, it seemed reasonable to expect that this research approach focused on a purely qualitative research method, as the relational character of sales interaction with customers, using the EI toolkit was covered best.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative Research – Semi-Structured Interviews for Data Collection**

Within a qualitative research “methods such as interviews, observations, and document reviews are predominant in this paradigm” (Mertens, 2014, p. 19). Lincoln and Guba state that qualitative methods agree with the social construction of reality, and that research can be conducted through interaction between the researcher and the study’s participants (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, as cited in Mertens, 2014, p. 19).

In general, it is important to choose the most appropriate methods relative to what is being investigated. Certainly, qualitative research is not suitable for every research approach and



a researcher needs to consider objectives cautiously (Anderson, 2010). Even if qualitative research often is criticised as prejudiced, small in terms of sample size and lacking thoroughness, it is credible in case it was carried out properly due to the fact that complex human interactions cannot be explained in numbers. It needs to provide a better understanding and accurate representation of the phenomena the researchers are going to represent (Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, Anderson (2010, p. 2) states various techniques “including triangulation use of contradictory evidence, respondent validation, and constant comparison” exist to secure research credibility, transferability and confirmability. Qualitative methods describe tools, techniques or processes used in research. The different types of data can include audio recordings, structured interviews, field notes, images, diaries, observations surveys and more (Anderson, 2010).

### ***Qualitative Interviewing – Using Semi-Structured Interviews***

Qualitative data is used to obtain further data, or to gain new perspectives on things which are quite unknown (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, as cited in Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, “the researcher enters the respondent’s world and through ongoing interaction, seeks insights, perspectives, and meaning of their world whilst maintaining ‘emphatic neutrality’” (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 2).

This implies that two important positions exist. Empathy is the position towards the people the researcher encounters, whereas the component of neutrality is the attitude in regard to the researchers’ findings (Patton, 1990, as cited in Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 2). According to Rabionet (2011), there is no doubt that qualitative interviewing is an adaptable and prevailing tool for recording peoples’ voices and capturing the sensemaking of the participants’ experiences.

In this context, semi-structured interviews are a commonly used method in qualitative research. The author found an adequate approach for developing a systematic semi-structured interview approach. This approach referred to the execution of semi-structured interviews experienced by Rabionet (2011). Additionally, the author notes that other trend-setting approaches for developing semi-structured interviews, such as Denzin (1970); Gilgun (2005); Kvale (2008); Wolcott (2001), show just a few differences.

According to Rabionet (2011), conducting semi-structured interviews successfully involves six stages. First, the researcher needs to make a decision about which type of interview will be selected. Contrary to traditional approaches as e.g. a strict set of questions, semi-structured interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to address the research questions conversationally (Raworth et al., 2012). According to Krueger and Casey (2014), this conversational interview style provides a much more comfortable environment for the participants. Furthermore, there is less emphasis on the moderator adopting a neutral role (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Second, the author needs to establish the ethical guidelines of the study. Considering the research design from a moral and ethical standpoint facilitates the researcher's interaction with the interviewees (Rabionet, 2011). Third, the researcher must create the interview protocol. Rabionet (2011) established two important components: introducing oneself to create an appropriate environment and understanding, and including statements like "confidentiality, consent, options to withdraw, and use and scope of the results" (Rabionet, 2011, p. 567). The second component involves developing the research questions. The subject matter must always be considered. According to Rabionet (2011), the existing literature or previous work in this area might help.

Fourth, Rabionet (2011) presents the importance of recordings. The most common records in this area of research are written notes at the time and afterwards and audio or video recordings. The notes and recordings need to be summarised and analysed. Managing and organising the data were very important points; these will be discussed in more detail later. There, mostly possible software for analysis is planned to use (Rabionet, 2011).

Finally, the researcher must report the findings in an appropriate manner. In this case, appropriate means that the research questions were answered completely. Therefore, the researcher was aware of *disclosure*, *consequences* and *trustworthiness* (Rabionet, 2011, p. 565). However, there was a certain difficulty in this constructivist research that the view of the participants within the interviews might had been interpretations of the researcher, and the original meaning of participants got lost (Mojtahed et al., 2014). Denzin and Lincoln describe this phenomenon as "constructivism's subjectivist epistemology, in a sense that that knower and respondent are co-creators of understanding" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, as cited in Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 88). Consequently, the author used a decision-making map for this research, combined with a semi-structured interview approach, to co-create understanding between the researcher and the interview participants (Mojtahed et al., 2014).

A detailed explanation and rationale for using a decision-making map as a data generation possibility in combination with the selected semi-structured interview methodology. This special decision-making map for data generation is based upon *perceptual mapping* in marketing research. There it is used to design and advertise new products. Examples for such perceptual mapping includes the work of Kim, who used a perceptual map for hotel food and beverages to detect attributes and preferences; Wen and Yeh and their investigations in customers' perceptions and expectation of international air carriers; and, finally, Maltz and the investigation in sourcing perceptions (Kim, 1996, Wen & Yeh, 2010; Maltz, 2011, as cited in Mojtaheed et al., 2014, p. 88). In general, the perceptual mapping technique is used to create organisational understanding about product perceptions in relation to different products in the market. It is a diagrammatic representation of that perceptual area dominated by organisations (Kholi and Leutheuser, 1993, as cited in Mojtaheed et al., 2014, p. 88). According to Mojtaheed et al. (2014, p. 88), a typical conceptual map includes characteristics like:

Pair-wise distances between product alternatives that indicate how closely related products are according to customers' understanding, a vector on the map that "geometrically donate[s] attributes of the perceptual map"; and axes that suggest "the underlying dimensions that best characterise how customers differentiate between alternatives". (Lien & Rangaswamy, 2004, p. 119, as cited in Mojtaheed, 2014, p.88)

McNeill and Chapman (2005, p. 22) found that quoting the research participant and interviewer verbatim allowed researchers to answer questions of "how" and "why"; these questions are even more important when the relevant knowledge was socially constructed.

New possibilities have been developed to help researchers refine and enrich qualitative data analysis. Qualitative researchers spend a great deal of time and effort shifting through large volumes of transcripts, records, field notes, articles and pictures. Nowadays, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is often used to analyse and develop qualitative data (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007). One of these tools is called NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd). NVivo is a software that supports qualitative research methods. The researcher might be able to organise, analyse and find insights in qualitative data, like the semi-structured interviews the author used for this research.

Furthermore, with this software the author was able to compare and analyse multiple data sources, because the application of various techniques, such as interviews and literature reviews, strengthens the research's credibility (Mathison, 1988, as cited in Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 7).

Using NVivo, there exist six strategies that are geared to each other, as displayed in Figure 8 (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007).

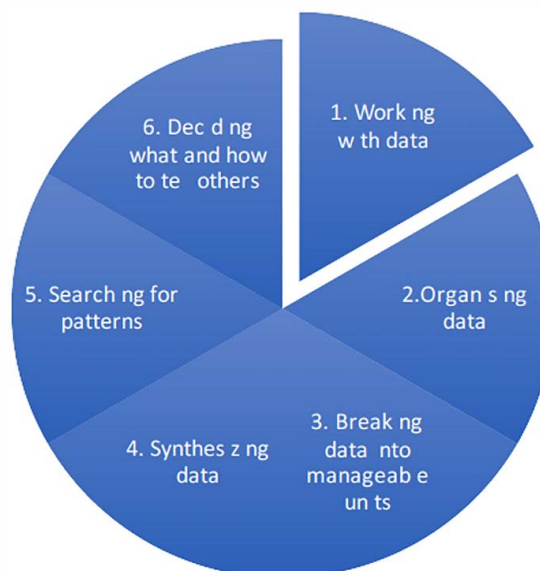


Figure 8: NVivo: Analyse Case Study Data (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007)

The first stage, called “Working with data“, concentrated on the data production method. The researcher had to be as accurate as possible right from the beginning. As soon as data was generated, the researcher needed to work with it. Second, the process of “Organising data” came into place. There, the researcher needed to transcribe the generated data from interviews and conversations. The researcher needed to be as precise as possible in order not to lose the original context. Sometimes it was helpful to get the protocol confirmed by participants later. Breaking data into manageable units, called nodes, was inevitable. This was a matter of coding. This involved building categories to assist the researcher in developing theoretical insights, resulting in hierarchically organised tree nodes. Afterwards, the researcher had to synthesise the data of the semi-structured interviews and the corresponding literature review of this thesis. Within the software, this step of qualitative

strategy involved defining tree nodes from free nodes, meaning the list of free nodes was refined to tree nodes. Consequently, the research searched for patterns, which was mostly concerned with exploring common patterns that supported the corresponding idea/theme. Finally, illustrating the results was important. The researcher decided “what and how to tell others” (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, pp. 6-17).

### 3.3 Summary of Chapter

The methodological decisions for the author’s research as outlined in the chapter describe the approach of this thesis in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The author conducted this research as a social constructionist, which implies the understanding of a social action for those who are doing it (Moses & Knutsen, 2012).

#	Research Question	Source	Methodology
1	Q1: In how far does EI appear to influence sales performance of companies during salespersons’ interactions within a selling process?	Literature and Respondent’s Research	Literature Review and Semi-Structured Interviews
2	Q2: How could sales employees consciously affect companies’ sales performance along defined emotional intelligence abilities during their customer interaction?	Literature Review and Interviews	Synthesise / Compare Data - NVivo

Table 8: Matrix of Progression: End of Chapter 3

The narrative literature approach identified certain EI abilities that might influence the sales process related to employees’ interactions with customers that result in outstanding sales performance (see Figure 7).

The author decided to conduct the research as a social constructionist because he needed to absorb the experience of the relations and interactions of social actors. The topic of EI in terms of one relational factor of social interaction within the sales interactions pertains to the category of social constructed meaning, and therefore fits to the ontological position of this research.

Choosing to conduct a respondent’s research was related to wanting to understand the deep processes at work under qualified conditions (Yin, 2014), allowing the researcher to generate

answers to the questions, “why” does this all work together, justifying the small but reasonable sample size. For data generation, the author used a semi-structured interview approach, a commonly used method in qualitative research.

The following Chapter 4 includes the practical component of this thesis, containing the description of the research sample and the research ethics, and the development of the questionnaire. The validity of the semi-structured interview data are also discussed.

## 4 Research Design

This chapter describes the research design based on the methodological decisions of Chapter 3. The author chose to employ a qualitative interviewing methodology on a constructivist paradigm. Constructivism is built upon the principles of social construction of reality (Searle, 1995, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). According to Crabtree and Miller, this close collaboration of the researcher and the participants could be considered as one of the advantages of this research approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). The participants were encouraged to describe their views of reality, which helped the researcher to better understand their actions (Lather, 1992). Therefore, this qualitative interviewing is a method “that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources.” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). This implied that the questions were not solely explored through just one lens, but rather a multiplicity of lenses which ensured that the various facets of the phenomenon could be exposed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

### 4.1 Research Population

The population of this research consisted of a group of companies. The specific characteristic of the single companies could be identified through their opposing positions. Some of these companies had outstanding financial performances, whereas others of these companies suffered from below-average profits. The limited number of companies under study within this research postulated the selection of the extremity of these opposing financial positions of the selected companies. (Pettigrew, 1990). The companies’ financial figures have been used to determine a measurement for sales performance as it was problematic to find an adequate evaluation/determination for this specific kind of relational performance in terms of building and maintaining long-term customer relationships.

The group of companies under study works worldwide on the development and production of innovative machine tools. Customer-specific products also belong to the product portfolio of this organisation. All five companies in the group are separately managed, independent companies. Furthermore, the group of companies has a mutual worldwide sales and service network, because the products are comparable, and equally in need of technical explanation. Therefore, the sales-approach, similar customer-base, company size, margins and

organisational structure was comparable. Furthermore, as it was mentioned in the introduction, the relative performance in terms of sales within the area of a technical capital equipment, was determined by consulting in sales. The application of knowledge was considered a central part of the selling function (Avlonitis & Panagopoulos, 2006). Whipp, Rosenfeld and Pettigrew state that to measure relative performance within the capabilities of companies requires treating competitiveness as a multilevel and dynamic phenomenon, where the selected sites must illustrate a high or low performance (Whipp, Rosenfeld & Pettigrew (1998), as cited in Pettigrew, 1990, pp. 275–276).

#### 4.1.1 Research Framework of EI, SP and SI

The existing literature review built up a foundation in the field of EI, which allowed the researcher to familiarise the subject group with abilities of EI within the semi-structured interviews.

Second, there was the influence of EI on generating increased sales. This referred to the evolved selling process based on Moncrief and Marshall (2005) of Chapter 2.3.1 which was merged together with the “Simplification Model” based on Mayer and Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001) of chapter 2.2.2. This “Conceptual Framework EI/SI” of chapter 2.3.2 displays how specific emotional intelligence abilities influence the specific steps of the evolved selling process, specifically focused on sales interactions with customers. Based on the “Conceptual Framework SI/EI”, the author identified four perspectives that were transferred into a decision-making map to simplify data collection during the semi-structured interviews. The decision-making map contains four perspectives: *Customer Retention and Deletion*, *Problem-Solving*, *Nurturing the Relationship* and *Adding Value*. The participants had to allocate the existing attributes of EI or add new ones to these categories. In terms of the data saturation of the semi-structured interviews, the development was stopped after the discussion, negotiation and construction of meaning, when either the participants or researcher did not have anything to add (Mojtahed et al., 2014).

The influence of EI on companies’ sales performances was based on the demographic and profiling evaluation and combination of the already evolved data. The allocation of the financial performances of each company to EI abilities and their real relationships with the evolved selling process was executed.

Finally, the competencies of EI consciously affecting companies’ sales performances were elaborated through the semi-structured interviews, which consisted of a section describing



participants’ experiences of EI in terms of their interaction with customers. This section was linked with the abilities of EI, creating a manual which might help to apply EI in similar situations to the ones described.

In Figure 9, the author identifies who was included in the study and what coherences were present based on the literature review. Furthermore, it was helpful for the author to see and follow the general construct behind the research design (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 553).

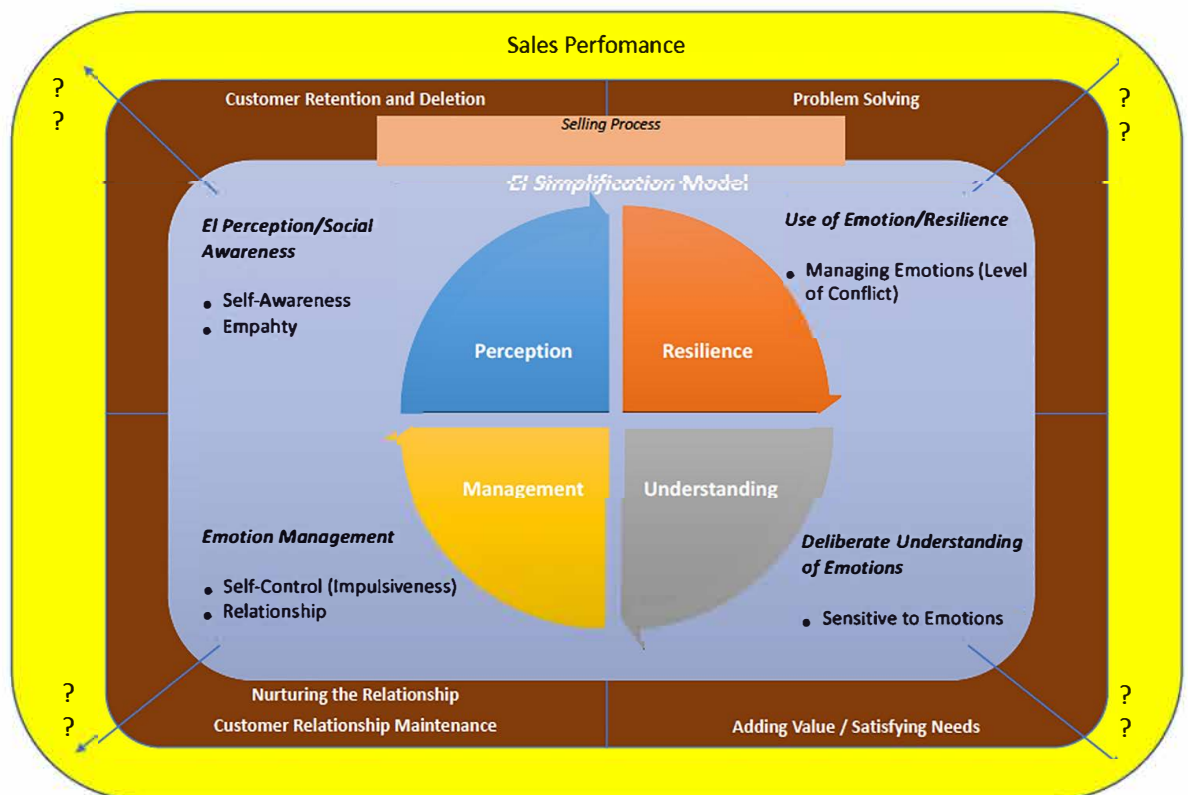


Figure 9: Research Framework – EI, SP & SI

#### 4.1.2 Selecting the Sample

For this research “the sample must be appropriate, consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic” (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002, p. 18). Furthermore, Morse et al. (2002) state that adequate data to address all aspects of the research phenomenon should be obtained.

Consequently, the author made a conscious decision about the selection of the research participants and the corresponding sample size by purposefully selecting the samples. The sample had to match with the general aim of the research (Erben, 1998). Creswell (1998) states that research participants should be chosen regarding their ability to contribute to an evolving theory (as cited in Merrill & West, 2009, p. 108) or because of their relevance to the research question. This means that the participants help the researcher to develop, test and clarify the research problem (Mason 1996, as cited in Merrill & West, 2009, p. 108).

Consequently, the author used a sampling strategy called *non-probability sampling*. Wahyuni (2012) argues that non-probability samples might be used when the cases are selected because there are pre-determined reasons to collect information-rich cases. Considering the differentiating character of non-probability sampling, the *subjective judgments* in the selection of samples come into play. The researcher decides which population units to include in the sample. Consequently, the researcher has greater control during the selection process. In the first run, this seemed to be an absolute advantage, but considering the negative aspects, such as bias in the selection of respondents or limitations of the generalisations from the findings to a greater population, it should only be used under limited circumstances, such as when necessary access is limited. The strength of this approach depends on the particular research aim (Tansey, 2007, p. 14).

Therefore, an important task for this research was selecting a suitable group of individuals for the semi-structured interviews, as this research focused just on the information-rich individual subjects, rather than on a large sample size (Plummer, 2001). In this research, generalisations were not the aim. The author tried to obtain information about specific procedures and practices (Tansey, 2007). Based on the availability, accessibility and information-richness of the participants, the author decided to recruit employees from each company's sales force.

It is not possible to draw generalisations of a statistical basis from non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2011); consequently, the author needed to be precise in the traceability of participant selection. The author created the following Table 9 to reproduce the research framework in terms of population and sample size. Furthermore, at this place the author would like to mention *Chapter 6.3* called *Research/Thesis Limitation*, where several

important influencing factors were mentioned and thematised. For example, Drew (2014) mentions that cultural differences might impact international business and refers to the model of Hofstede (1980, 2001). Furthermore, Sanchez-Nunez, Fernandez-Berrocal, Montanes, & Latorre (2008) state that gender differences in EI could be identified based on assessment tools for evaluation as self-report or performance measures. This might give a further insight in the possible future outlook of research in the field of EI, especially in performance related sales issues, impacting the sales performances of companies.

Availability	Language	Gender	Expertise
Sales Employees of the selected Group of Companies	German/English	Male/Female/Diverse	Extensive Experience

Table 9: Criteria for the Research Sample

McEnrue examined the different dimensions of performance and found out that *job experience*, which means ‘*the length of time within the profession*’ predicts performance (McEnrue, 1988, as cited in Ko & Dennis, 2004, p. 313). According to Ko and Dennis (2004), another performance-influencing criteria called *expertise* exists. “In sales, experience alone may not ensure expertise” (Shepherd & Rentz, 1990, as cited in Ko & Dennis, 2004, p. 313). In addition, Marchant (1989) characterises expertise as the ability to influence task-specific-knowledge and achieve outstanding performance (as cited in Ko & Dennis, 2004, p.313).

Therefore, the author selected the sales employees of this group of companies for their experience and expertise. All the participants have over five years’ experience in their profession. According to the knowledge and experience of the author the length of five years seemed to be quite reasonable. Within this company, the training period for salespeople lasts at least one year and remains ongoing with each conversation/negotiation. After the first year, an employee might have some commercial success, but this says nothing about their sales continuity. The strategic planning of these companies considers periods of three up to five years. Sales employees with five years’ experience and expertise might bring the greatest explanatory power because of other limitations or areas of development, such as how a lack of knowledge regarding the product or strategy in negotiations might not have diminished the results of using specific EI abilities. The factor *expertise* of this research

certainly might have correlated with the age of the participants. In general, expertise correlated with age.

All interview participants of this semi-structured interviews were male, German, and possessed more than five years of experience within the abovementioned group of companies under study. The interviews were conducted in English. The researcher needed to be aware of the linguistic competence of each participant because it was not possible to compensate for the lack of familiarity with the terminologies within the context of EI. However, all research participants are employed in Europe, America, or Asia; are familiar with English colloquialisms; and possess excellent English skills (Drew, 2014).

It was necessary to run the semi-structured interviews with employees in positions where human relationships play a crucial role. Parallel to these semi-structured interviews a *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI of EI abilities and important selling steps* was created because of the existing literature, to compare and synthesise with the results of the semi-structured interviews. One study, with a total of eight volunteers ( $n = 8$ ), was conducted using the semi-structured interview method in combination with the analytical strategy in terms of a constant comparative method using the software NVivo.

#### **4.2 Semi-Structured Interview – Generating Data**

According to Rabionet (2011), qualitative interviews are a flexible and powerful tool for capturing the voices and methods people create meaning out of their experiences. The semi-structured interview technique helps researchers to find the way into different kind of communications with people in everyday lives, possibly revealing new levels of interpersonal understanding, which would have been remained unknown if any other method would have been chosen (Doody et al., 2013).

Semi-structured interviews address specific themes in a conversational style, often revealing the motivations behind people's behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. Consequently, the researcher draws conclusions concerning participants' lives' impacts, specific policies and routines (Raworth et al., 2012). In this study, the researcher identified the complex relations of EI abilities and customer interactions.

Furthermore, especially the next subchapter discussed the moral and ethical issues by entering the lives of the sales people within this group of companies (Rabionet, 2011). “Issues of purpose, consequences, consent, identity, relationships, confidentiality and protection became central early in the process” (Rabionet, 2011, p. 564). Therefore, the ethical guideline, as well as the interviewer’s training is explained in the following.

According to Denzin (1989), developing a research tool with an incoherent design will falsify the results (as cited in Louise Barriball & While, 1994). The literature review in the essential area of EI influencing customer interaction led the author to identify four *superior factors of EI*, including certain EI abilities, influencing five steps of the evolved selling model of Moncrief and Marshall (2005). This then led to the formation of interest and relevance which needed to be covered by the semi-structured interviews (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). The areas of EI and the corresponding abilities were subsequently broken down into more manageable developmental strategies with detailed information of purpose for the inclusion preliminary to question formation (Louise Barriball & While, 1994).

The semi-structured interview was subjected to the rigours of the field under the following conditions. Firstly, the interview protocol needed to be constructed. There the author introduced himself, and further explained which questions he was going to ask. Secondly, the development of the questions was essential. The existing literature and the examination of different models of EI within the literature review frame the resources. To further refine the quality of the interview protocol, the author consulted his supervisory team which possesses profound knowledge in qualitative research, to get feedback and guidance (Rabionet, 2011). This then led to the step where the author needed to think about the way he was going to conduct and record the interview. For this research, the interviews have been audio recorded, and have been transcribed afterwards. Chapter 5 discusses analysing and summarising the interviews, which was done using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

#### **4.2.1 Ethical Guidelines**

Ethical conflicts are part of the everyday routine of doing research. According to Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p. 263), two major dimensions in qualitative research must be considered.

The first is procedural ethics, which usually entails seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee. The second dimension, ethics in practice, involves dealing with any ethical issues that arise during the research. Using semi-structured interviews always involves monitoring ethical issues. These interviews are usually carried out on a one-to-one basis and are designed to uncover details of the interviewees' experiences that might remain unrevealed when using an anonymous questionnaire. Hence, the researcher must address ethical issues and concerns (Allmark et al., 2009, p. 48).

For this research, the author did not have to seek approval from a relevant ethics committee because the research participants are not considered vulnerable (WHO, 2015). Additionally, the companies under study do not follow any specific ethical guidelines. This research concentrated on more immediate ethical concerns, rather than the interpretation of ethical questions. Usually, the research of this study was not addressed in a research ethics committee, nor were there issues that should be applied for approval (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Furthermore, according to Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p. 264), "Some researchers may not even regard them as ethical in the sense that they may not be 'dilemmas' or appear to be of great consequences"; the author feels this might be the case for this qualitative study.

Certainly, some issues needed to be addressed and considered. Essential components for this semi-structured interview methodology were *privacy*, *confidentiality*, and *data protection*; privacy was not considered as an element of confidentiality. However, the author was aware of the contradiction that regarding the interviewee's privacy, there were issues which the participants would have preferred to keep as personal, whereas in confidentiality issues the interview would have revealed details which have been previously classified as a secret between a distinct social circle (Allmark et al., 2009).

The author also considered the issue of *harm*. Because of the subject, the interviews might become emotionally intense, which could harm some participants depending of their state of mind. Allmark et al. (2009, p. 49) speak about a *dual role* and *over-involvement* which, in a general sense, relate to danger that the researcher might abandon the role of the scientist because of the relationship and involvement with the participant; this was remedied by clearly structuring the semi-structured interview and using the decision-making map to guide the interviewee and interviewer.

Finally, prior to the interview, the participants were informed that the interview was voluntary, and that they could refuse to take part or change their mind and leave the interview at any stage if they felt uncomfortable (Allmark et al., 2009).

The issues of researcher bias and the corresponding concern that the participants might give *socially desirable answers* instead of true answers were also challenges for the author. Participants choosing desirable answers to create a positive impression or agreeing to statements without knowing the content are concerns (Braun, Jackson, & Wiley, 2001). The author used a decision-making map as a data protection instrument. This tool was designed to support interpretive, interview-based research. Additionally, it was mainly used to design new products (Mojtahed et al., 2014). Therefore, the participants were encouraged to develop and generate new ideas instead of answering to give positive impressions or agree on already existent statements.

The researcher needed to be aware of the correct technique and approach related to data generation and analysis. This involved verifying the semi-structured interviews in terms of *credibility, transferability, and confirmability*. For this research the ethical principles of the University of Gloucestershire applied. The author used a consent form for the semi-structured interviews, which informed the participants about the title, aim, application, data protection and their role; this needed to be agreed to, first. The interviews took place in safe environment, and the participants were able to withdraw at any time. According to the principles of the University of Gloucestershire the content was kept anonymous and confidential (Gloucestershire, 2008).

#### **4.2.2 Verifying Data from the Semi-Structured Interviews (Criteria of Evaluation)**

Anderson (2010) states that qualitative research is often criticised as biased and lacking rigor because researchers often rely on small sample sizes. However, if qualitative research is carried out correctly, “it is unbiased, in-depth, valid, reliable, credible and rigorous” (Anderson, 2010, p. 141). Marshall and Rossman (1995) indicate a qualitative research approach is valuable when researchers try to uncover the deep processes of a real organisation (as cited in Tagg, Skinner, & Holloway, 2004, p. 388). Within the qualitative field, the researcher’s belief system is an important component within the research,

“intrinsically linked to ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions” (Tagg, Skinner, & Holloway, 2004).

Quantitative traditions believe that qualitative research should rely heavily on reliability and validity to ensure generalisability and reproducibility; it refers on the one hand to the extent to which the research reflects the social phenomena, and to the other hand to the consistency of measures. These concepts do not necessarily fit with qualitative research (Wahyuni, 2012). Contrary to quantitative research, which has accepted and fundamentally uncontested rules for validation, qualitative research does not have universally accepted or broadly used validation criteria (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Lee & Hubona, 2009, as cited in Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). According to Venkatesh et al. (2013), researchers, especially from a positivist stance, suggest using the same criteria for validation as used in quantitative studies. From the constructivist’s standpoint, it might be reasonable to develop a different set of criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the validation criteria should be called something other than reliability and validity in quantitative approaches.

A qualitative approach is different than a quantitative approach. Therefore, the evaluation criteria should be distinctive, even though validation is necessary for conducting proper research. Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggested three criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research: *credibility*, *transferability*, and *confirmability*. A more modern translation of such key criteria related to the evaluation of qualitative research would involve ensuring rigor in application of the research (credibility), providing rich descriptions of the researcher’s engagement with high quality data generation efforts (transferability), and rigorously reporting of findings (confirmability). Credibility refers to the accuracy of the data, which should reflect the social phenomena under study. This implies that the study **must** answer the research questions (Wahyuni, 2012).

The transferability in qualitative research concentrates on the characteristics of the research methodology and their “applicability into other settings and situations” (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 77). Therefore, the author developed a corresponding search strategy for the literature review, which consisted of the key terms of EI, SP and SI. The inclusion and exclusion criteria defined how to find existing important literature in the context of this research. Consequently, other researchers should be able to reconstruct the literature review and its characteristics. Finally, the research framework of Chapter 4.1.1 developed for this study



ensured the traceability within this research. Through it, other researchers could identify what the study included and what coherences were present based on the literature. The same rules were also applied to the analytical strategy. In this stage, NVivo supported the visualisation and auditability of the research approach.

The last criteria of research trustworthiness developed by Lincoln and Guba (2000) was called confirmability; this refers to the extent to which other researchers might be able to confirm the findings. This then led to the fact, that other researchers might then ensure that the research results reflect the experience and understanding of the research participants, rather than the opinion of the researcher (Wahyuni, 2012). To ensure research quality, the author used NVivo as a document and coding management system. The author created analytical memos to accurately summarise the content of each encountered coherence or pattern. Furthermore, the author was then able to test and revise his analytical memos to self-audit the proposed findings by using textual quotes, words or matrixes to identify the meanings entrenched in the data as described by Shenton in the following:

Once more, detailed methodological description enables to determine how far the data and constructs emerging from it may be accepted. Critical to this process is the ‘audit trail’, which allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step via the decisions made and procedures described. (Shenton, 2004, p. 72)

#### **4.2.3 Interview Questions – Using a Decision-Making Map**

The challenge of “the researchers’ exclusive reliance on the interpretation of interview evidence to construct their studies” (Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 18) constrains many researchers. For this research, the author used a decision-making map that helped “both the researcher and the informant to negotiate meaning, define data and advance interpretations in a collaborative fashion” (Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 18). For this qualitative approach, including the semi-structured interview methodology aligned with a constructivist conceptualisation of knowledge, the author relied upon the participants’ views of the study (Creswell, 2003, as cited in Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 88). The difficulty of using constructivist research methods was ensuring the views of the participants did not mirror or interpret the researcher’s notions or indicate that a negotiation of meaning had occurred (Mojtahed et al., 2014).

Even if the decision-making map helped the author to generate and understand the real impressions of the participants, this study also used questions. The development of the questions followed Rubin and Rubin's (2005) guidance. They created a model of an in-depth qualitative interview technique called *responsive interviewing* (as cited in Wahyuni, 2012, p. 74). The author kept the research design and questioning as flexible and adaptive as possible to facilitate the growth of new information. In *responsive interviewing*, the author concentrates on how to gain deep knowledge, rather than broad knowledge (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, as cited in Wahyuni, 2012, p. 74).

The interview typically began rather formally, with introductions and consent. As recommend by Drew (2014) the author started the interview with initial small talk fundamental to building up a connection.

However, since the location of terms on diagram is important to the interpretation of data, the researchers must avoid providing subjective suggestions to the informant.

This can be achieved with the use of laddering interview techniques (Reynolds & Gutman, 2001), more specifically the use of "why" questions that address the reason for their term choice and location preferences. (Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 93)

Following a responsive interviewing structure implies that questions can build upon each other to create a *laddering* effect that prevents the author from getting captured by separate interpretations, experiencing forthright descriptions and narratives. The main questions were carefully developed based on the research questions. Furthermore, Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommend separating the interview questions pertaining to each research question clarifying the structure of analysis. The next step of the responsive interview technique was creating follow-up questions that were used to explore ideas, concepts, themes or unexpected themes. Finally, the responsive interview ended by probing the interview questions; the researcher needed to clarify the discussion points of the interview. At this point, the author asked for more examples or tried to have peers with more experience review the interview (Wahyuni, 2012).

The author designed the research questions and, therefore, the interview questions as a correlating system, where one question built upon another. The following table describes the correlation between each question and the predefined interview sections, wherein the detailed questions correlate to the results already found in the literature review, and displayed the kind of questions which had been asked during the interviews.

Research Question	Correlation	Interview Part/Technique
Q1: In how far does EI appear to influence sales performances of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process?	Builds upon the literature review – Employees' perceptions of EI need to be captured first.	1/Open Questions
Q1: In how far does EI appear to influence sales performances of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process?	Builds upon the Conceptual Framework of EI/SI – salespeople were asked to use/allocate their knowledge of EI according to specific steps of selling.	2/Decision-Making Map
Q2: How could sales employees consciously affect companies' sales performances along defined emotional intelligence abilities during their customer interactions?	The participants need to discuss the decision-making map in terms of the correct application of EI abilities within the certain steps of selling. The participants are asked to complete the decision-making map with real-cases, true stories and useful examples out of their practice.	3/Open Questions

Table 10: Semi-structured Interviews: Interview Sections

Table 10 shows the structure of the semi-structured interviews. The author first used an open question to capture the employees' perceptions of EI. Second, the author developed a decision-making map that built upon the findings of the literature review; this was used to find the knowledge and experience with and about EI influencing the interactions with customers within a selling process. The third part of the semi-structured interviews involved

open question, which was required for analysing the correct application of EI with demonstrative examples.

As already mentioned, the first part of the interview section also included the profiling or demographic information of each participant. The researcher asked for information such as the participant's company, position, experience, gender and age. This profiling information was helpful in detecting trends for future research, or, as used mainly for this research, to validate and analyse the data in terms of the influence of EI on companies' sales performances which the author was going to evaluate with the companies' financial performance as a measure for relational performance.

The questions in Table 11 concentrated on the EI abilities found in the literature review as those most influential regarding customer interaction. The following table displays the correlation of the semi-structured interview questions with the EI categories and corresponding abilities.

Interview Section – Part 1 – Emotional Intelligence – Employees' Perceptions – based on the Literature Review		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Category / Cluster</b>	<b>EI Ability</b>
1.0 What impact do emotions have on your decision-making?	<i>EI Perception/Social Awareness</i>	<i>Self-Awareness</i>
1.1 If negative emotions are decreasing your ability to make effective decisions, what are you going to do?	<i>EI Perception/Social Awareness</i>	<i>Self-Awareness</i>
1.2 How would you proceed to better understand the feelings of others?	<i>EI Perception/Social Awareness</i>	<i>Empathy</i>
1.3 How do you avoid rash decisions?	<i>Use of Emotions</i>	<i>Managing Emotions</i>
1.4 How do you get projects/tasks started?	<i>Use of Emotions</i>	<i>Managing Emotions</i>
1.5 What are your strengths?	<i>Deliberate Understanding of Emotions</i>	<i>Sensitive to Emotions</i>
1.6 How could your strengths contribute to your organisation's performance and success?	<i>Deliberate Understanding of Emotions</i>	<i>Sensitive to Emotions</i>

1.7 How do you decrease your levels of stress?	<i>Emotion Management</i>	<i>Self-Control (Impulsiveness)</i>
1.8 How do you solve situations where you are in the position to act impulsively?	<i>Emotion Management</i>	<i>Self-Control (Impulsiveness)</i>
1.9 How do you augment a working relationship?	<i>Emotion Management</i>	<i>Relationship</i>

**Table 11:** Interview Section – Part 1 – Emotional Intelligence – Employees’ Perceptions

The participants were able to explain their understanding of EI terminologies which helped the researcher to validate the findings from the systematic literature review. Furthermore, the author could detect different explanations and wordings within the context of EI abilities. Moreover, the author was able to elaborate a new set of abilities of EI which will be elucidated within the next chapter.

The next section of the semi-structured interviews concentrated on the participants’ knowledge about EI related to generating increased sales. The employees’ perceptions of default EI abilities and the clusters of EI were examined. The data of the first and second sections could then be compared to see if the employees’ perceptions of EI fit to the achievements of the current literature of EI and their application resulting in the *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI*.

This section included using a decision-making map as a data production instrument. A decision-making map is part of perceptual mapping, mainly used in marketing research. The decision-making map was designed to support interpretive and interview-based research. Within in marketing research, decision-making maps are considered powerful tools, mainly used to design new products, advertise and determine retail locations and develop any other marketing request or clarification (Mojtahed et al., 2014).

In general, decision-making maps are developed to help organisations understand how their products are perceived by their customers in relation to other existing competitive products. They aim to present a diagrammatic representation of the apprehending market space occupied by the company. Such a map typically displays pair-wise distances between product substitutes to indicate how closely products are related according their customers’ understanding (Kholi & Leuthesser, 1993; Lilien & Rangaswamy, 2004, as cited in Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 88–89).

Based on the principles of mapping, the author designed a decision-making map that was used during the semi-structured interviews. The decision-making map required the participants' and the researcher's engagement to further develop and generate ideas. Figure 10 displays the decision-making map. There the author resorted to the *Conceptual Framework EI/SI* on page sixty-four, which displays the possible coherences of the complex selling environment and abilities of EI, based on the literature review of this doctoral thesis. The map consisted mostly of blank spaces where the participants were expected to write down and allocate concepts and ideas related to EI. Figure 10 provides the quadrants organised according to the evolved selling model of Moncrief and Marshall (2005) that was used as a basis for the discussion and conversation within the semi-structured interviews. The literature review identified that this model is a pervasive and convenient archetype for representing the sales function. This then led to the fact, that the data production during the interviews was facilitated.

According to Mojtabeh et al. (2014, p. 92), the "Discussion, negotiation and co-construction of meaning developed until both the researcher and the informant felt that there were no further concepts or ideas to discuss".

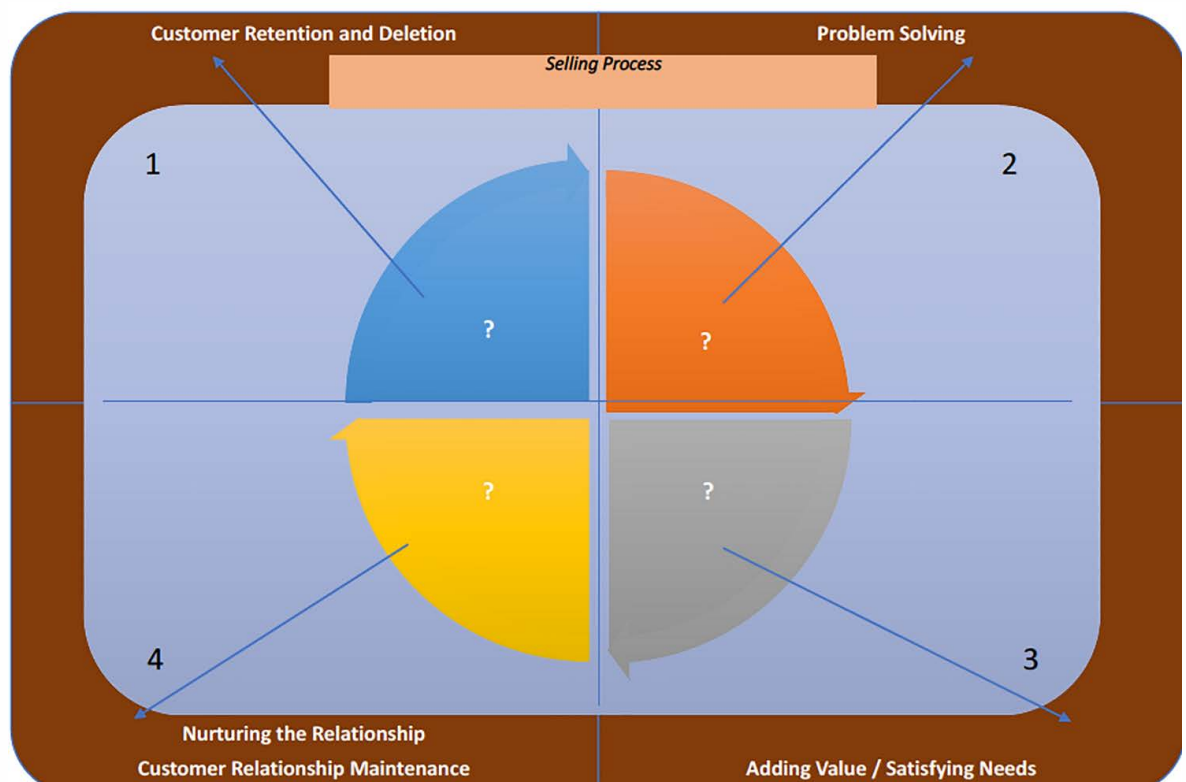


Figure 10: Semi-structured Interviews – Decision-Making Map (based on the Conceptual Framework EI/SI)

Additionally, the author adopted the use of the clusters of EI like *topic cards* by Drew (2014). Drew described her experience as an EFL (English as a foreign language) instructor, where she set up oral exercises with her students, “engaging them through words or phrases printed on cue cards” (Drew, 2014, p. 81). In this research, the author did not use cue cards in the proper sense, but on the decision-making map, the author used superordinates for the selling steps and superior factors/clusters of EI, which helped the participants to engage with it. The conceptual framework includes the four *superior factors* which are mainly related to EI abilities. The superior factors collect the EI abilities considered the most influential in sales according to the literature review of this research in clusters. The participants were asked to place the four superior factors relative to each selling steps area displayed on the decision-making map (see Figure 10). The participants were asked to comment and explain their selections because the author was trying to determine how the participants would characterise and understand each superior factor inspired by the provided words and phrases.

During the semi-structured interview, the participants were asked to think about possible EI abilities that might fit to each of their already allocated superior factors and specific selling steps, as displayed in Figure 10. The interviewees were reminded that they should think about the questions from part one of the semi-structured interview. Therefore, the blank spaces within the decision-making map needed to be filled using their understanding of the superior factors and possible EI abilities. Specifically, they were asked to describe the feelings and empathy that might positively influence the selected selling step. The respondents were asked to complete the decision-making map using real cases, true stories and useful practical examples. Consequently, the author analysed how the participants used EI abilities to influence their customers’ interactions resulting in outstanding sales performances. This approach was helpful in illustrating the meaning of each superior factor and the corresponding EI abilities. Finally, the author and the respondents worked through all the topics of the decision-making map they had developed, until the interviewees believed there were no further ideas to add and discuss.

### **4.3 Summary of Chapter**

The following Table 12 provides a short overview about the current status of the research. Within this chapter the author discussed how he selected his sample and his data generation

strategy in terms of a semi-structured interview methodology. For the semi-structured interviews, the author used a questionnaire that included a decision-making map to foster discussion, negotiation and co-construction of meaning with its participants. Finally the ethical guidelines as well as the validity of data were elucidated.

The next chapter presents the data analysis and discussion about the research findings. The researcher describes the analytical strategy which was based on a constant comparison of data. The author decided to use the qualitative research software called NVivo (Software for Qualitative Research Methods [QSR International Pty Ltd]). Therefore, the researcher needed to compare the data by their meanings, a technique called open coding. From this, the researcher refined the categories, which then enabled the researcher to explore their relationships within the interviews and literature. Finally, the data have been reduced, and analytical memos have been created and used to validate and synthesise the findings.

#	Step # of Research Design	Description
1	Defining the Research Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- German group of companies</li> <li>- Financial figures of the single companies are used to determine the measurement for sales performance</li> <li>- The limited number of companies postulates to have the selection of extremity in regard to the companies' financial performances</li> </ul>
2	Identification of the Research Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing Literature of EI builds up the foundation for familiarising the subject group with abilities of EI</li> <li>- There exists an influence of EI on generating increased sales according to the Conceptual Framework EI/SI</li> <li>- The influence of EI on companies' sales performances was based on demographic and profiling evaluation and combination of the evolved data (literature and interviews)</li> </ul>
3	Selecting the Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants who best represent or have the knowledge of the research topic</li> <li>- Sampling Strategy: non-probability sampling</li> <li>- Selecting a suitable group of individuals for the semi-structured interviews</li> <li>- Criteria of Sample: Sales Employees of the selected Group of Companies/German, English/Male, Female, Diverse/Extensive Experience</li> </ul>



4	Generating Data – Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semi-structured interviews try to cover specific themes in a conversational style</li> <li>- Revealing the motivation behind people’s behaviour, attitude, and beliefs</li> <li>- Researcher might be able conclude in terms of lifes’ impacts, specific policies and routines</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews cover the information of interest and relevance</li> </ul>
5	Creating the Ethical Guideline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Procedural ethics; getting approval by research ethics</li> <li>- Ethics in practice; arise by doing research</li> <li>- Privacy and confidentiality need to be considered carefully</li> <li>- Researchers need to consider harm (emotional intense) and power (superior)</li> <li>- The research was conducted in conformity with the ethical principles of the University of Gloucestershire</li> <li>- The interview took place in a safe environment; the participants could withdraw any time, the content will kept anonymous</li> </ul>
6	Criteria of Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Credibility</li> <li>- Transferability</li> <li>- Confirmability</li> </ul>
7	Creating Interview Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researcher decided to apply a decision-making map</li> <li>- Questions are based on responsive interviewing according to Rubin and Rubin (2005)</li> </ul>

**Table 12:** Research Design Overview

## 5 Data Analysis and Discussion

Many researchers describe at a considerable length how their studies were carried out, but remain indefinite when it comes to analysis (Boeije, 2002). According to Rabiee (2004), qualitative research generates large amounts of data. Consequently, a major challenge and aim of qualitative research is reducing the amount of data (Robson, 1993, as cited in Rabiee, 2004, p. 657) and extracting meaning related to the research questions. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) state that going into detail regarding selecting various possible methods of analysis, the usage of different research questions, and different types of data could also be confusing. Leech and Onwuegbuzie further argue that, especially novice researcher unfamiliar with all the possible qualitative methods, lack knowledge about different techniques in qualitative analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p. 70).

Yin (1989) describes the analytical strategy as diverse; it consists of multiple steps, such as examining, categorising and thematizing the data, and reorganising and combining the data to address the research questions.

Hence, new methods and paths are constantly being developed to assist researchers in further improving and enhancing qualitative data analysis. Today, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software has been developed for analysing qualitative data. One such of “state of the art” tool that has made inroads in various fields of qualitative research is NVivo. (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 1)

Even though, it is eminent to keep in mind that in qualitative research, the researcher is the main tool for analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Therefore, the author decided that an electronic database was required to manage the search strategy. For the analytical part of this qualitative research NVivo (Software for Qualitative Research Methods [QSR International Pty Ltd]) was used as a document and coding management system for the analytical and coding processes, and for visualising the discovered coherences. The programme already has run through several iterations as it has developed into this available programme. NVivo’s is a frontline qualitative data analysis innovator; it is used to organise and analyse complex qualitative data, such as in the field of social behaviour studies (Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007).

NVivo is used for a wide range of analytical methods, such as organisational analysis, action or evidence based research, discourse analysis, grounded theory, conversation analysis, ethnography, literature reviews, phenomenology, case studies, biographies and mixed methods research. (Gibbs, 2002; Dey, 1993, as cited in Gurdial Singh & Jones, 2007, p. 3)

According to Houghton et al. (2017), NVivo is a good choice for managing qualitative data. With NVivo, it is possible to maintain an accurate audit trail “of all decisions made and the option to question and query the findings in a rigorous manner enhanced the trustworthiness of the review” (Houghton et al., 2017, p. 879). Furthermore, they state that using NVivo provides a strong and reasonable way to handle the diverse and unclear realities of trying to find evidence in qualitative synthesis (Houghton et al., 2017). NVivo makes each process traceable and transparent, creating a comprehensive test log.

The author is aware that there are many research tools available. Quantitative computer programs like SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) exist. These tools are extremely beneficial for analysing a large amount of data in quantitative research. Unfortunately, the tools available for qualitative analysis are less commonly known. These tools, such as QDA Miner, Ethnograph, NVivo and Atlas.ti can increase consistency in qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Furthermore, Fielding and Lee, Tesch, Weitzman and Miles argue that these programs, “in many respects, are very similar to one another and facilitate many of the same analyses to be conducted; yet, each tends to have its own unique features” (Fielding & Lee, 1998; Tesch, 1990; Weitzman & Miles, 1995, as cited in Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008, p. 71).

These programs can potentially take qualitative data analysis much further than can be done manually. For the researcher, the potential criticism about bias and qualitative data verification resulted in seeking replicable and transparent software to analyse his qualitative data. By using NVivo, it is possible to ensure rigor in the application of data (credibility) and provide a detailed description about the data generation (transferability). Finally, the data needed to be reported rigorously (confirmability). “However, it must be remembered that the software is incapable of understanding text and cannot replace the analytical skills

of the research team” (Bringer et al. 2004; Lathlean 2010, as cited in Houghton et al., 2017, pp. 875–876).

An electronic database was required for managing the search strategy, rearranging, reproducing and storing the references (Brunton & Thomas 2012, as cited in Houghton et al., 2017, p. 875). For the author, the challenge was knowing what analysis should be used for the different steps and data within this research. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011, p. 70) stated, “Knowing which analysis to use with different types of research questions and various types of data can be confusing, especially for a novice researcher”. For qualitative data analysis, *Coding* is one of the most important steps; however, that does not mean that data analysis and coding are the same. Coding is a crucial aspect within the qualitative data analysis process. The process of coding includes subdividing an enormous amount of raw information that must be categorised step by step (Wong, 2008). Conventionally, coding was done manually “with the use of coloured pens to categorise data, and subsequently cutting and sorting the data” (Wong, 2008, p. 2).

Nevertheless, the computer does not do the analysis for the researchers. Users still have to create categories, code, decide what to allocate, identify the patterns and draw meaning from the data. The use of computer software in qualitative data analysis is limited due to the nature of qualitative research itself in terms of the complexity of its unstructured data, the richness of the data and the way in which findings and theories emerge from data. (Wong, 2008, p. 2)

In this study, coding, identifying patterns, and drawing meaning from the data were also one of the major challenges. NVivo is popular software developed by QSR International, the world’s largest research software developer. This program facilitated the author’s efforts to find necessary support during data analysis. According to Wong (2008), this software allows researchers to inquire beyond coding, sorting and retrieving data, as “It was also designed to integrate coding with qualitative linking, shaping and modelling” (Wong, 2008, p. 3).

Consequently, NVivo appeared to be the correct tool for the analysis of this qualitative study, because of the possibility “to manage data analysis and synthesis” (Thomas & Harden 2008;

Howell Major & Savin-Boden, 2010, as cited in Houghton et al., 2017, p. 875). The author participated in a NVivo training course at the University of Gloucestershire. A professional trainer explained the key functions in NVivo that could facilitate qualitative analysis and its corresponding synthesis. NVivo incorporates multiple types of analysis, so core theories and relationships in the data can emerge (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). NVivo has a clear advantage by enhancing research quality to a maximum. It could easily support the laborious tasks of data analysis which conventionally needed to be performed manually (Wong, 2008).

### 5.1 Analytical Strategy – Constant Comparison of Data (NVIVO)

Researchers “often use the terms *concept*, *category* and *theme* interchangeably in literature” (Bazeley, 2009, p. 6). Bazeley (2007) explains that researchers “tend to use *category* for the descriptive level of coding and *concepts* for a more abstract level, and hence will often refer to categories and concepts when discussing concepts” (as cited in Bazeley, 2009, p. 6). According to Richards (2014), a theme is an integrating, coherent idea gathered from the data.

Identifying themes is important in qualitative research. In a report of the findings, the themes define the starting point of the study. According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) and Boyatzis (1998), “Themes are extended phrases or sentences that summarise the manifest (apparent) and latent (underlying) meaning of data” (as cited in Leavy & Saldaña, 2014, p. 28). The research requires that the utilised data and the corresponding ideas support the arguments the researcher is going to build. Problems related to ensuring the quality of the analysis begin early in the process, such as during design selection or when developing the data generation strategy.

Once the data have been generated from the semi-structured interviews, the first step for a meaningful analysis is understanding and interpreting the data. (Bazeley, 2009). According to Houghton et al. (2017), nodes, a term used in the qualitative data analysis software NVivo, describes codes representing themes. They further argue that nodes “are repository for textual segments which, in this case, represent units of meaning drawn from the synthesised literature” (Houghton et al., 2017, p. 878).

According to Saldaña (2015, p. 3), codes that are used for qualitative analysis mostly consist of words or short phrases that:

Symbolically assigns and summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents drawings, artefacts, photographs, video, Internet sites, e-mail correspondence, literature, and so on.

Within the first cycle, coding the process can range in extent from a single word to a complete paragraph or even the entire text up to a stream of moving images. “In Second Cycle processes, the portions coded can be the exact same units, longer passages of text, analytic memos about the data, and even a reconfiguration of the codes themselves developed thus far.” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 3)

Codes are like a title of a book or film; they attempt to represent the content and essence of the subject (Saldaña, 2015). Therefore, after the literature review of EI was imported into NVivo, the four main *Superior Factors*, *EI Perception/Resilience*, *Use of Emotion*, *Emotion Management* and *Deliberate Understanding of Emotions*, became the parent nodes for this synthesis. The author decided to do so to concentrate the coding process in a scientific, qualitative and reproducible manner. The literature review of this thesis has verified that these selected factors might have the most influence in terms of sales interaction and the corresponding EI abilities that might be needed to positively and significantly influence sales.

During the semi-structured interviews, using a decision-making map, the participants were asked to allocate these four superior factors to the level of the selling steps which are likely to match. Nodes could display the text from multiple sources and researchers often organise nodes into a hierarchical structure, which then leads to the creation of subthemes. Here, the author considered the evolved selling steps of the *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI* to be categorised. The author used the information to cluster analogous or equivalent codes into “groups for pattern construction and further analysis” (Leavy & Saldaña, 2014, p. 11).

Leavy and Saldaña (2014, p. 12) further state that each category contains the appearance of the relevant patterns of human action. Consequently, category construction might be the best attempt to cluster or allocate things according to their most seemingly appropriate groups.

Categorising is reorganising and reordering the vast array of data from a study because it is from these smaller, larger, and meaning-rich units that we can better grasp the particular features of each one and the categories' possible interrelationships with one another. (Leavy & Saldaña, 2014, p. 12)

The categorisation generated from the literature review includes *Customer Retention and Deletion*, *Problem-Solving*, *Nurturing the Relationship*, *Customer Relationship Management* and *Adding Values and Satisfying Needs* (see Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).

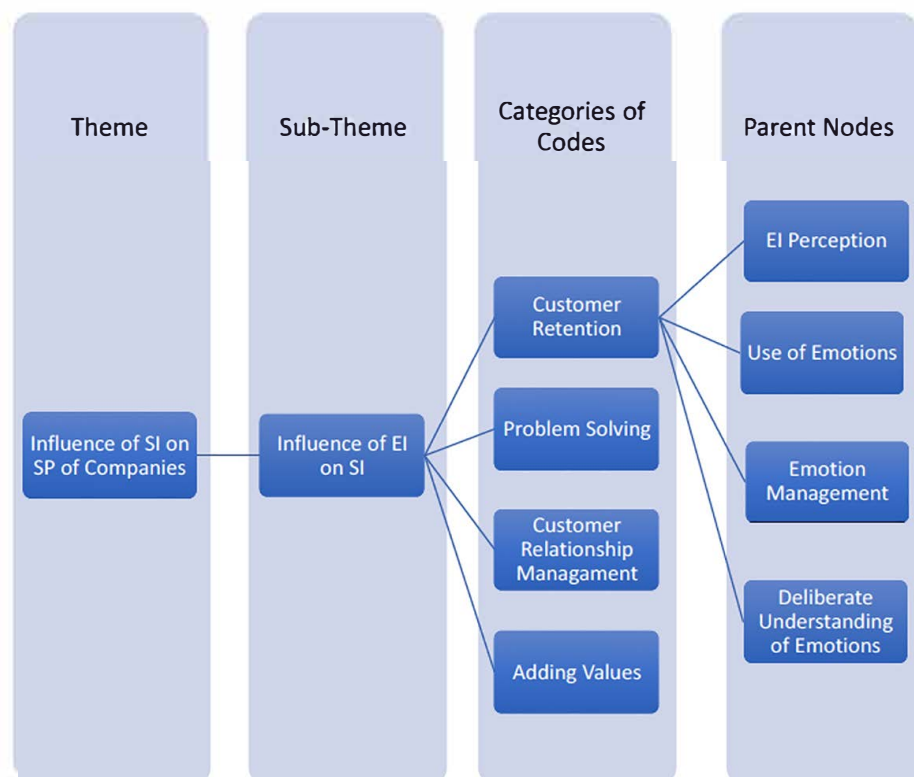


Figure 11: Example of Workflow from Codes to Categories of Codes to Sub-Themes and Themes

The number of categories depends on how the researcher determines which codes seem to belong together (Leavy & Saldaña, 2014). Leavy and Saldaña (2014) state that the labels of categories might be ways to answer the questions about which codes belong together. For

the first starting point, concentrating on the relationship between EI and SI was inevitable, as EI could touch several other influencing components of social behaviour besides SI.

The next step of this analytical strategy involves reflecting on the categories and the corresponding codes. The list of codes needed to be classified to allocate them to their corresponding parent nodes and categories. Even if the codes shared a category, it was possible to create an independent group if the author considered the code exclusive and independent enough. At this step, the author needed to ensure the research problem and questions were answered properly. Furthermore, the outcome needed to contribute to knowledge and practice within the field.

Sometimes, codes double as a category name. The researcher needed to be aware that this categorising phase is an interpretive approach where there might be different ways to separate and collect codes that might have belonged together (Leavy & Saldaña, 2014). The author collected and split up codes around the parent nodes and categories he analysed during the literature review, to provide evidence that he had not coded arbitrarily. The literature review was built in a clear and replicable manner. Consequently, the author defined the findings of this literature review as valid related to the content, at least insofar as determining a starting point for NVivo analysis. Further constructions of categories, themes were not completely excluded, as the interviewees could come up with information which could not have been found by the author within the literature review but seemed to worth to allocate to a new category.

Once the reflection was done and the categories were set, the author proposed connections among and between the data that were gathered (Saldaña, 2015). According to Saldaña (2015), researchers might need to go further than comparing data to determine some simple relationships. Researchers must deeply investigate in the categories that might influence and affect others. Consequently, the author searched for some interplays among those categories to find ones he recognised as promising and special.

Finally, memos were used to create conclusions out of the analysis; these formed the final findings of this study (Houghton et al., 2017). According to Richards (2014), the analytical memos summarise the content of each category and its codes, and suggest findings related to these categories. Besides the content of the code clusters, the code patterns, the



background information, the relatedness, as well as to support and facilitate the discussion of the study findings are important goals behind these analytical memos (Richards, 2014).

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) state that for that kind of analysis one of the most commonly used techniques in qualitative research is the constant comparison methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparison analysis in NVivo uses stripes visualised within the program that correspond with the coded text. The word *nodes* in NVivo is unique and must be explained. These nodes are similar to the codes that are used in constant comparison analysis to place the meanings of different words or phrases within the text. In NVivo, there are tree nodes and free nodes. Tree nodes group the nodes, which can be organised afterwards. The free nodes cannot be added to any tree node, meaning they will not be considered further. Table 13 sets out the analytical steps and application of this qualitative analysis based on Maykut and Morehouse (1994); Richards (2014); Saldaña (2015).

#	Analytical Step	Application according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994)	Practical Application	Process (interrelated)
1	The identification of themes/to understand and interpret data	Open Coding	Parent codes consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EI perception</li> <li>- Use of emotion</li> <li>- Emotion management</li> <li>- Deliberate understanding of emotions</li> </ul>	Organise data
2	Creation of subthemes/building of hierarchical structures	Categorisation of Codes	Categorisation consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer retention and deletion</li> <li>- Problem solving</li> <li>- Nurturing the relationship</li> <li>- Customer relationship management</li> <li>- Adding values</li> <li>- Satisfying needs</li> </ul>	Allocate data according to their most seemingly appropriate group/focusing on the relationship of emotional intelligence and sales interaction
3	Reflection upon the categories and corresponding codes	Coding on	Classification and allocation of codes to their corresponding parent nodes and categories	Share common characteristics, create independent groups (subthemes)
4	Interrelate construct of codes and categories	Analysis	e.g. Matrix queries, keyword-in-context, content analysis, word count etc.	Propose connections, compare and look for interrelations among those categories (themes)
5	Drawing conclusions/Report findings	Data reduction/Analytical memos/Synthesis	Writing memos to summarise, validate and synthesise the set of findings	Meaning creation/Validation/Synthesis

Table 13: Analytical Steps and Application of Qualitative Analysis based on Maykut & Morehouse (1994)

### 5.1.1 Clustering the Group of Companies and Respondents

Within this section, the author determines the financial performance figures of the four companies under investigation. Furthermore, the author groups the respondents of the semi-structured interviews according to financial figures to these companies.

The selected companies were measured in terms of their ROIC, FCF and EVA. Commonly, these figures can be measured against an industry standard which was proved by the

association of German machine builder VDMA in their Business Advisory issued in 2017/2018 and previous versions.

The author calculated the ROIC of each company, which was calculated by the *divisor of net income and capital invested*. The FCF, which is the *cash flow from operations minus capital expenditures*, also plays an important role in estimating a company's wealth. Then, the EVA indicated the company's profitability related to long-term management decisions, which was calculated by *income deducted by cost of capital*. The EVA could be a performance indicator used to compare the capital efficiencies of several companies (e.g. concerning evaluations for possible investments). For instance, all companies of the German share index (DAX) use the EVA as a central control parameter and to determine the value of their companies.

The author selected a colour-coded system with the colours green, yellow and red. The colour green means "very good" in relation to ROIC, FCF and EVA. The second evaluation stage is called "borderline", wherein no potential financial crisis was likely for at least the next two years, based on the author's experience. Regarding the equity capital as well as under the consideration of a normal capacity utilisation the author trusted to say that there might not be any serious financial problem expected within the next two years, because their cash flows were still positive and sufficient to cover the costs of the normal business activities. The last category is called "critical" and is marked in red. Financial stability and future perspectives were predicted to be uncertain. If the companies did not fulfill any productive labour soon, their cash flow would not sufficiently cover all the costs of normal business activities (especially labour costs), nor was it possible to reinvest in necessary equipment to fulfil any qualitative or contractual obligations with their customers.

Table 14 indicates the profiling evaluation of this qualitative analysis, focusing on the influence of EI on companies' sales performances. The researcher assumed to measure the long-term sales performances according to the financial stability of the companies under study. Considering the evaluation of the financial performances of each of the companies the author was able to group the participants into two categories; *Successful and Unsuccessful Company*. This means, that the author could identify a good performing group of companies which have been marked with the indicator "very good" and "borderline", whereas the other group contains the critical numbers in terms of their financial stability.

Consequently, this also increased the number of participants in relation to the companies examined, which in turn significantly improved the quality of the analysis.

#	Net Income	Cash Flow from Operating Activities	Capital Expenditures	Cost of Capital (WACC)	ROIC	FCF	EVA	Indicator
1	5.376	18.011	1.129	3	5	16.882	1.644	very good
2	-2.688	484	140	3	-19	344	-822	critical
3	-70	376	177	3	0	199	-21	borderline
4	-8.602	5.376	175	3	-49	5.202	-2.630	critical
All numbers in T€, based on year 2017								
Factor: XXXX (Encoder)								

Table 14: Financial Statements of Company 1– 5: ROIC, FCF, EVA

Following Table 15 provides an overview about the participants and their profiling information for the corresponding research analysis

#	Respondent	Company	Age	Education	Experience	Gender	Position	Date of Interview
1	RESP1	2	>40	University Degree - Engineering	>15 years	Male	Sales Manager	Nov. 2018
2	RESP2	1	30-40	University Degree – Business Engineering	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Nov. 2018
3	RESP3	3	30-40	University Degree - Business Administration	>10years	Male	Sales Manger	Dec. 2018
4	RESP4	1	30-40	University Degree – Engineering	>10years	Male	Sales Manager	Jan. 2019
5	RESP5	2	30-40	University Degree – Engineering	>10years	Male	Sales Manager	Jan. 2019
6	RESP6	1	>50	University Degree – Economics	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Dec. 2018
7	RESP7	4	>40	Technician	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Dec. 2018
8	RESP8	4	>40	University Degree – Business Engineering	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Jan. 2019

Table 15: Profiling Information of Participants (Semi-Structured Interviews)

Within Table 15 the aggregation of companies and therefore participants have been marked in green and red colour. The 8 interviews took place between November 2018 and January

2019. The semi-structured interviews endured from thirty minutes up to one hour. Considering the Table 15 into more detail, all other prerequisites for matching the sample criteria could be fulfilled. Primarily, all of the participants possessed an experience more than ten years, which in terms of the analysis was promising, because the author did not expect any falsification of the result of the analysis regarding a possible strong influence of product knowledge instead of their emotional competencies. For the further analysis four participants for the successful company (Company 1 and 3) and another four participants for the unsuccessful company (Company 2 and 4) have been considered in terms of the analysis using the profiling information.

### **5.1.2 Prerequisites in NVivo – Create Cases – Set Folders – AutoCode**

The semi-structured interviews the author recorded were transcribed by a German transcription service. The author chose a simple transcription method, where an experienced person transcribed the material in the beginning of the transcription. In the second run of the transcription service, the person listened to the whole interview again to correct any possible mistakes. This kind of transcription tends to have a high level of quality even if it was not proofread afterwards. The content was reproduced verbatim; however, the content was corrected grammatically. Elements like dialect and stutters have also been neutralised. Furthermore, the author chose to further edit the transcripts performed by this transcription service. The transcripts have been corrected for grammar and sentence endings. Within the transcripts, the interviewer and interviewee sections were separated clearly. This method is often used in market research (e.g. focus groups), journalism (e.g. interviews) and film productions (e.g. dialogue books) (abtipper.de, 2018). The transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were imported into NVivo for further analysis. Figure 12 displays the integration within the software.

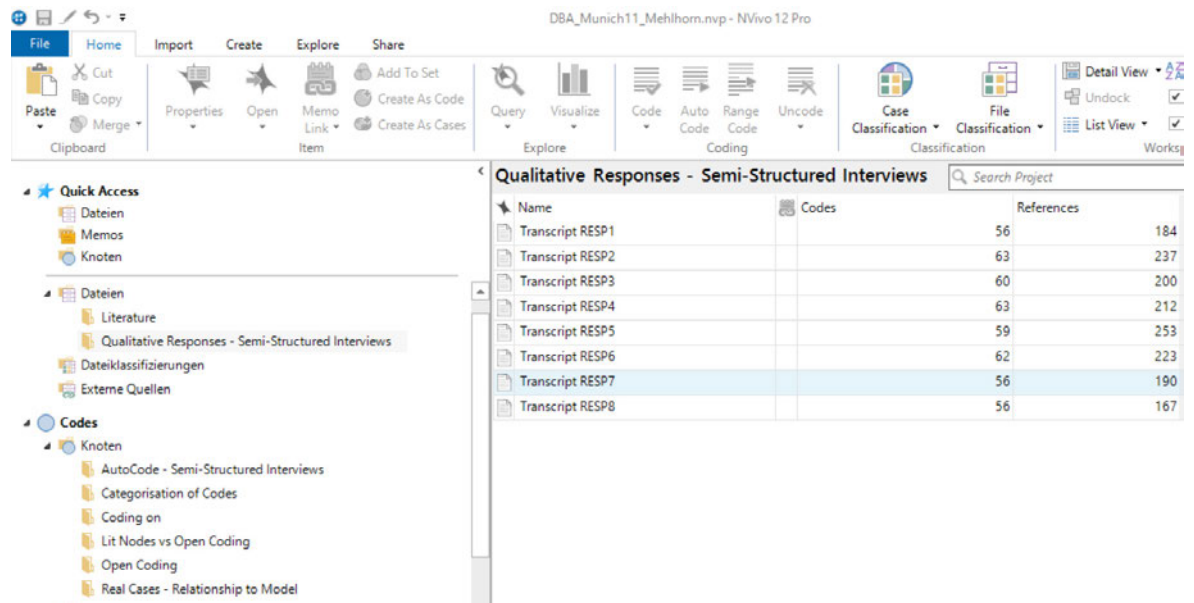


Figure 12: Integration of Qualitative Responses (Transcripts)– Semi-Structured Interviews (NVivo)

The author created a folder called *Qualitative Responses – Semi-Structured Interviews* where the transcripts were imported. Figure 12 shows the frequency of the codes and references that were created to analyse the interview data. The author also created case nodes, which were used for the analysis and observation. In this thesis, the participants of the semi-structured interviews were defined as cases in NVivo, that needed to be matched with their corresponding case attributes (Figure 13).

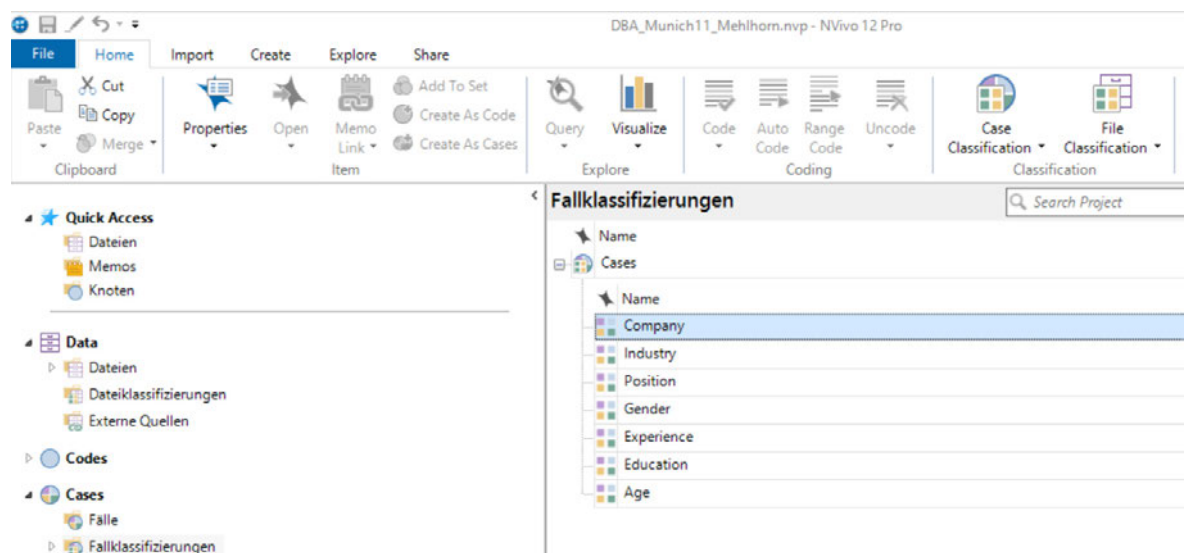


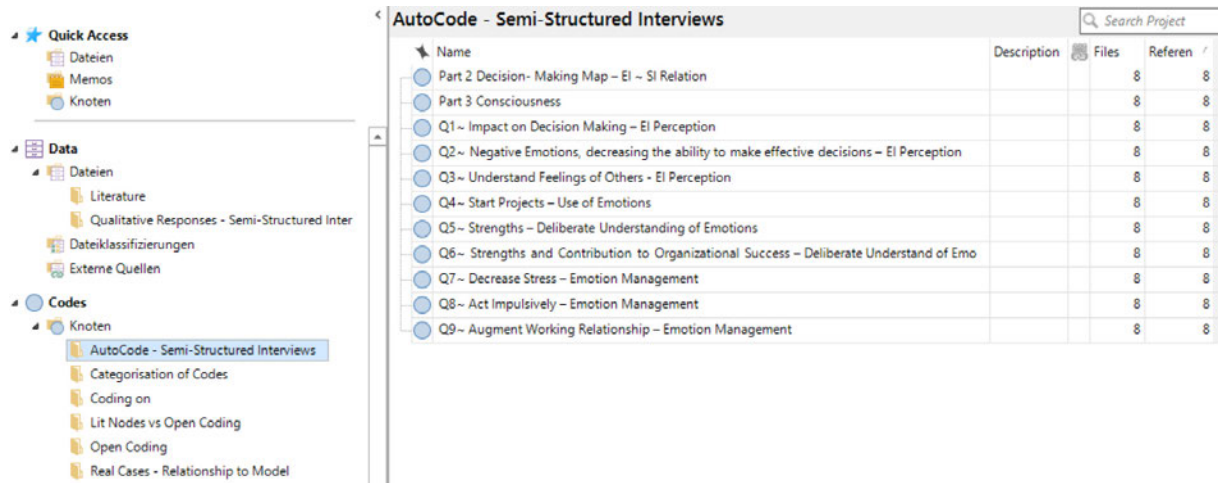
Figure 13: Attributes of Cases – Semi-Structured Interviews (NVivo)

Moreover, as the author has already described to conduct a respondent's research where the small sample size of eight interviews might be critical in terms of its credibility, this research was going to look into extreme cases, where the differences are "transparently observable" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537). Human interactions cannot be explained in numbers. Consequently, the attributes values of the so called *case classification* "Company" in NVivo was most important for this analysis. All the other attributes were ignored by the author because there was no relevant variation of the recognisable values (see Table 16).

Cases (NVivo)	Company	Age	Education	Experience	Gender	Position	Industry
Transcript RESP1	Unsuccessful Company	>40	University Degree - Engineering	>15 years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP2	Successful Company	30-40	University Degree - Business Engineering	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP3	Successful Company	30-40	University Degree - Business Administration	>10years	Male	Sales Manger	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP4	Successful Company	30-40	University Degree - Engineering	>10years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP5	Unsuccessful Company	30-40	University Degree - Engineering	>10years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP6	Successful Company	>50	University Degree - Economics	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP7	Unsuccessful Company	>40	Technician	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry
Transcript RESP8	Unsuccessful Company	>40	University Degree - Business Engineering	>15years	Male	Sales Manager	Machine Tool Industry

Table 16: Creating Cases with corresponding Attributes (NVivo)

After the interview data was imported and the cases with corresponding attributes were created, the author set up the corresponding folder structure for the nodes according to the analytical strategy of this thesis. This can be seen in Figures 14, 15, and 16. The first step within this analysis was to organise the data so the author could easily start to find themes and categories for the further development of the EI/SI model. This NVivo analysis started with the auto-coding of the semi-structured interviews. This means that under question Number 1, Number 2 and the following, every participants' responses were summarised (see Figure 14).



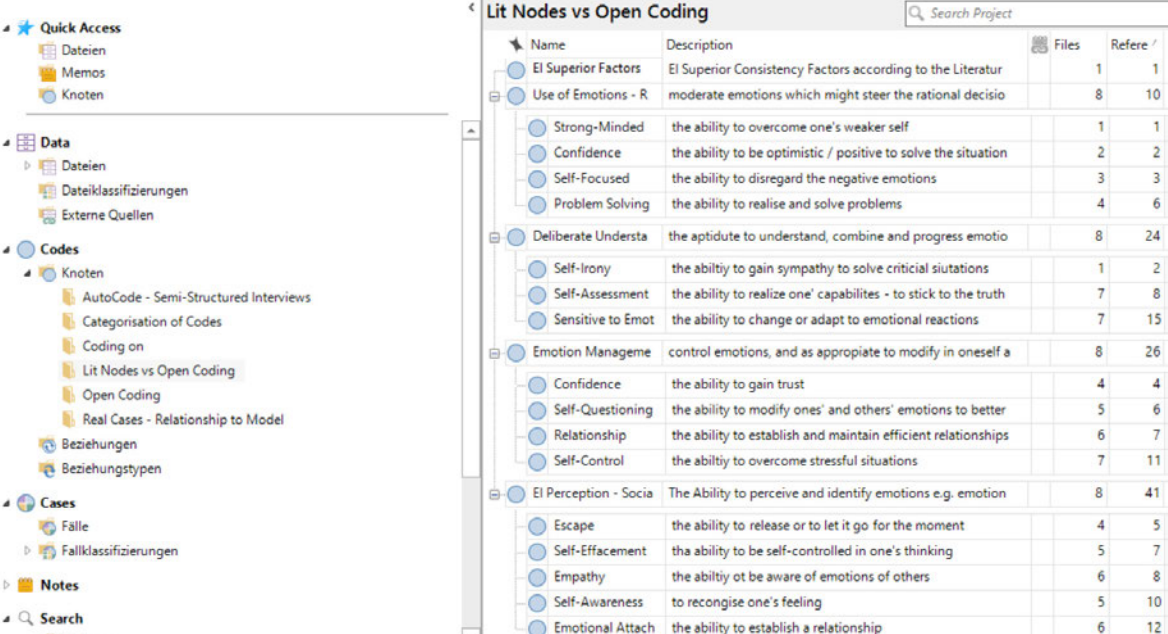
Name	Description	Files	Referen
Part 2 Decision- Making Map – EI – SI Relation		8	8
Part 3 Consciousness		8	8
Q1~ Impact on Decision Making – EI Perception		8	8
Q2~ Negative Emotions, decreasing the ability to make effective decisions – EI Perception		8	8
Q3~ Understand Feelings of Others - EI Perception		8	8
Q4~ Start Projects – Use of Emotions		8	8
Q5~ Strengths – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions		8	8
Q6~ Strengths and Contribution to Organizational Success – Deliberate Understand of Emo		8	8
Q7~ Decrease Stress – Emotion Management		8	8
Q8~ Act Impulsively – Emotion Management		8	8
Q9~ Augment Working Relationship – Emotion Management		8	8

Figure 14: AutoCode – Semi-Structured Interviews (NVivo)

Followed by the *Open Coding Procedure*, where the interviews, or better said, the content of the interviews were allocated to the existing parent nodes, the employee perceptions of EI related to the superior factors *Perception, Resilience, Management* and *Understanding* were analysed. The *Categorisation of Codes* followed. The author complemented the selected steps of selling called *Customer Retention, Adding Value, Problem-Solving* and *Customer Relationship Maintenance* with the EI abilities that could be created because of the participants' responses in section number two of the semi-structured interviews, where they allocated and described EI abilities related to their experience and opinions. The results and citations are explained and displayed in the following chapters.

The literature review of this thesis was coded to find differences and similarities within the literature and the participants' responses. The folder was named *Lit Nodes vs Open Coding*. In Figure 15, the *EI Superior Factors* according to the literature review were tested against the participant responses already allocated to EI abilities.





Name	Description	Files	Referen
El Superior Factors	El Superior Consistency Factors according to the Literatur	1	1
Use of Emotions - R	moderate emotions which might steer the rational decisio	8	10
Strong-Minded	the ability to overcome one's weaker self	1	1
Confidence	the ability to be optimistic / positive to solve the situation	2	2
Self-Focused	the ability to disregard the negative emotions	3	3
Problem Solving	the ability to realise and solve problems	4	6
Deliberate Understa	the aptitude to understand, combine and progress emotio	8	24
Self-Irony	the ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations	1	2
Self-Assessment	the ability to realize one' capabilities - to stick to the truth	7	8
Sensitive to Emot	the ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions	7	15
Emotion Manageme	control emotions, and as appropriate to modify in oneself a	8	26
Confidence	the ability to gain trust	4	4
Self-Questioning	the ability to modify ones' and others' emotions to better	5	6
Relationship	the ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships	6	7
Self-Control	the ability to overcome stressful situations	7	11
El Perception - Socia	The Ability to perceive and identify emotions e.g. emotion	8	41
Escape	the ability to release or to let it go for the moment	4	5
Self-Effacement	tha ability to be self-controlled in one's thinking	5	7
Empathy	the ability ot be aware of emotions of others	6	8
Self-Awareness	to recongise one's feeling	5	10
Emotional Attach	the ability to establish a relationship	6	12

Figure 15: Lit Nodes vs. Open Coding – Semi-Structured Interviews (NVivo)

The qualitative data analysis of this thesis involved a manual interpretive coding procedure by the author, as the software cannot draw conclusions or recognise humour, sarcasm or irony. Figure 16 displays the process of manual interpretive coding, wherein each of the participants' responses were allocated to the appropriate node, or an appropriate node was created. Within this software, the author could read the transcripts and allocate the content of the transcript to the appropriate node. Additionally, the author could control his coding using the corresponding coding stripes that displayed the section and content allocated to the nodes. In Figure 16, in the second box from the left side, the node structure is displayed. In the middle, the text of the transcript can be found, followed by the coding stripes on the right side.

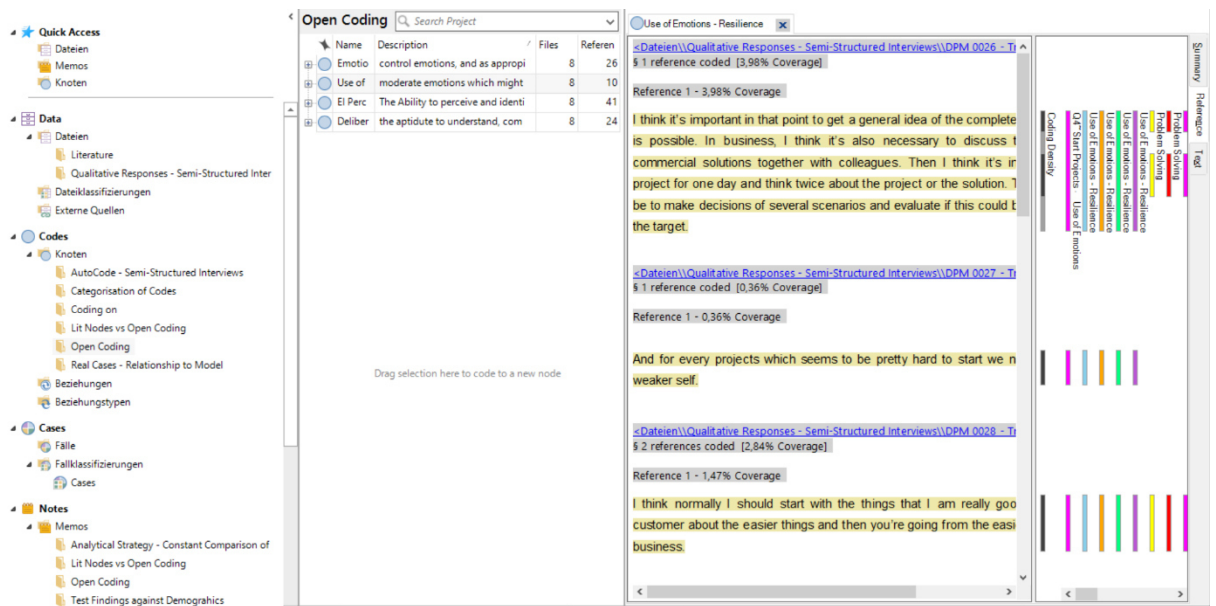


Figure 16: Manual Interpretive Coding – Semi-Structured Interviews (NVivo)

### 5.1.3 Open Coding – Compiling the Parent Nodes of EI

As already explained in Chapter 4.0 Research Design, the semi-structured interview questions were created according to the superior factors and the corresponding EI abilities. The author needed to extract the content of the participants' responses and allocate the answers to already existing factors or abilities, or create new ones, which not have been mentioned within the literature so far. Table 17 displays the correlation of the questions to existing the EI Simplification Model based on Mayer & Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001) which the author found applicable to the literature review of this thesis. Part 1 of the questions, which contained Question Q1 up to Question Q9, primarily addresses the employees' perceptions about EI in relation to already existing superior factors and corresponding abilities, whereas Parts 2 and 3 were used to research the relationship between EI and sales interaction. Here, the author was trying to develop the link to the seven steps of selling that might be influenced by certain EI abilities. The participants needed to allocate the superior factors *Perception*, *Resilience*, *Management* and *Use of Emotion* to the sequences *Customer Retention and Deletion*, *Problem-Solving*, *Nurturing the Relationship*, *Customer Relationship Maintenance*, and *Adding Value and Satisfying Needs*. Finally, the last section of the semi-structured interviews, called *Consciousness*, was used to capture the participants' experiences regarding their EI competencies that might help further

develop a model to illustrate factors or abilities to better understand or underpin the evolved model to consciously affect companies' sales performances.

Name	Description/Referring to the EI Simplification Model based on Mayer & Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001)
Part 2 Decision-Making Map – EI ~ SI Relation	The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on generating increased sales
Part 3 Consciousness	Consciously affect companies' financial performances/Real Cases
Q1~Impact on Decision-Making – EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Self-Awareness
Q2~Negative Emotions, decreasing the ability to make effective decisions – EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Self-Awareness
Q3~Understand Feelings of Others – EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Empathy
Q4~Start Projects – Use of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Use of Emotions/Managing Emotions
Q5~Strengths – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Sensitive to Emotions
Q6~Strengths and Contribution to Organisational Success – Deliberate Understand of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Sensitive to Emotions
Q7~Decrease Stress – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Self-Control (Impulsiveness)
Q8~Act Impulsively – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Self-Control (Impulsiveness)
Q9~Augment Working Relationship – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Relationship

Table 17: AutoCode – Referring to EI Simplification Model of Chapter 2.2.2

The results of this manual interpretive coding progress can be seen in Table 18. Each superior factor was complemented by EI abilities according to the participants' responses. Table 18 indicates that the participants' responses reveal more EI abilities, compared to what the author has developed through the *Simplification Model of EI* which was created through the contextual overlap of all of the models mentioned so far. Table 18 includes the frequency of files and references to determine how many participants had answers related to the relevant ability and how often they mentioned information that could add value.

Noticeable in the area of *Use of Emotions – Resilience* is the ability called *Problem-Solving*, where the participants spoke about the ability to realise and solve problems; this was

followed by *Self-focused*, which contains the ability to disregard negative emotions. Some single notes were observed, leading to the integration of *Strong-minded* and *Confidence*. The participants mentioned abilities like overcoming one's weaker self and the ability to be optimistic or positive to solve the situation.

Name	Description	Files	References
<b>Use of Emotions-Resilience</b>	Moderate emotions which might steer rational decision making process e.g. solve conflicts, or problems sensitively	8	10
Strong-minded	The ability to overcome one's weaker self	1	1
Confidence	The ability to be optimistic/positive to solve the situation	2	2
Self-focused	The ability to disregard the negative emotions	3	3
Problem solving	The ability to realise and solve problems	4	6
<b>Deliberate Understanding of Emotions</b>	The aptitude to understand, combine and progress emotions e.g. Self-awareness	8	24
Self-irony	The ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations	1	2
Self-assessment	The ability to realise ones' capabilities -- to stick to the truth	7	8
Sensitive to Emotions	The ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions	7	15
<b>Emotion Management</b>	Control emotions, and as appropriate to modify in oneself and others e.g. self-control	8	26
Confidence	The ability to gain trust	4	4
Self-questioning	The ability to modify ones' and others' emotions to better understand	5	6
Relationship	The ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships	6	7
Self-control	The ability to overcome stressful situations	7	11
<b>EI Perception – Social Awareness</b>	The ability to perceive and identify emotions e.g. emotions affect performance	8	41
Escape	The ability to release or let it go for the moment	4	5
Self-effacement	The ability to be self-controlled in one's thinking	5	7
Empathy	The ability to be aware of emotions of others	6	8
Self-awareness	To recognise one's feeling	5	10
Emotional Attachment	The ability to establish a relationship	6	12

Table 18: Open Coding – Generation of Nodes related to EI of Participants' Responses

*Deliberate Understanding of Emotions* becomes more definite. *Self-assessment* and *Sensitive to Emotions* as abilities of "to realise one's capabilities"; sticking to the truth and changing or adapting to emotional reactions can be placed in this category of EI. The results ranged from seven participants with fifteen references in the area of sensitivity. *Self-irony*, the ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations, remained as a single denomination. In *Emotion Management*, the author found a homogenous distribution of the participants' responses and references. These could be found in *Confidence*, the ability to gain trust; *Self-*

*questioning*, the ability to modify one's and others' emotions to better understand; *Relationship*, the ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships; and *Self-control*, the ability to overcome stressful situations, which was observed to have the highest figures in terms of responses of participants and references.

Finally, within *EI Perception – Social Awareness* the distribution of responses and references were quite equal to the previous category *Emotion Management. Escape, Self-effacement, Empathy, Self-awareness* and *Emotional Attachment* were detected as possible EI abilities based on the participants' responses. From this, the author deduces that the ability to let it go, the ability to be self-controlled in one's thinking, the ability to be aware of emotions, and the ability to recognise one's feelings and establish a relationship, formed this superior factor during the manual interpretive coding procedure.

The following table displays an extract of the illustrative quotes underpinning the selection and description of the EI abilities created by the author.

Cluster / EI Ability	Illustrative Quotes
Use of Emotions	-
Strong minded	"And for every project, which seems to be pretty hard to start, we need to conquer one's weaker self." {Successful Company, RESP2}
	no quote {Unsuccessful Company}
Confidence	"I make myself very much aware that there are projects I really don't like.... And at the end, it needs to be done anyway." {Successful Company, RESP4}
	no quote {Unsuccessful Company}
Self-focused	"Normally I wait till the end ... in order to have a certain pressure to stay concentrated and focused" {Successful Company, RESP6}
	"For me, the best way to do it is to do it at the very beginning of the day. I even don't grab a coffee in the morning; I have to start immediately in order to stay focused." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP7}
Problem-solving	"In the beginning, I talk with the customer about the easier things, and then later on I come to the more difficult business." {Successful Company, RESP3}
	"You need to be well prepared. Maybe a checklist of all possible scenarios might help" {Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}
Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	-
Self-irony	Don't try to take everything too seriously, so that there is still space for a little joke." {Successful Company, RESP6}
	no quote {Unsuccessful Company}
Self-assessment	"I think the way I treat customers as well as my open communication in any case is a absolute advantage." {Successful Company, RESP3}
	"Never lie to the customer – Please keep one thing in mind: Honesty in collaboration with each other." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}
Sensitive to Emotions	"So, I stay calm, control my emotions and try to focus on a rational decision-making process." {Successful Company, RESP3}
	"I do control my emotions in a way that I try to avoid to be impulsive – at least never in front of the customer." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}

<b>Emotion Management</b>	-
Confidence	“I guess it is very important to try to get a personal relationship, which has to be a trustful and truthful relationship.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP2}</i>
	“There exists one rule. The harder the discussion and negotiation becomes, the more focused I stay... I try to be trustful, open and frank.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP7}</i>
Self-questioning	“I really take a break and try to reconsider, why the feeling occurred. Sometimes I think, it could be also effective one’s emotional state. Your counterpart should know, where he better does not cross.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP4}</i>
	“I think to show an impulsive reaction from time to time, might be effective to show the customer not to cross the border. In this situations, I really ask myself if I could show my emotional state, or better not.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP8}</i>
Relationship	“The customer should appreciate to talk with you, and you should be able to create an atmosphere of trust, where he or she might give you more information as expected.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP3}</i>
	“I guess one goal, or better said, the key to reach the customer is to listen.... you have to give him the feeling that the customer is going to help to make the right proposal.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}</i>
Self-control	“It is good to release anger, but always on a neutral level so that the customer does not feel to be offended. It should be always on a very rational level.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP6}</i>
	“Before a dispute arises, I think it is important to speak first. Maybe it is even better to take a break to calm down” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}</i>
<b>EI Perception – Social Awareness</b>	-
Escape	“First of all, it makes more sense to go one step back, take another day to think about it, or make an evaluation of pros and cons.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP2}</i>
	<i>no quote {Unsuccessful Company}</i>
Self-effacement	“If you cannot make a break, it helps me to tell me that it is not personal – it is business -related ... the customer is angry with the company, not with me.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP6}</i>
	“I am convinced that sometimes it is better to listen than to start a discussion.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}</i>
Empathy	“I might be in the position to analyse the customer regarding posture, expression, or speech; if he is going to talk much louder, or is he talking slower or faster in order to read the customer to get as much as possible information.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP3}</i>
	“I try to understand, why the man or the woman in front of me, reacts as he reacts.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}</i>
Self-awareness	„If you negotiate a contract with a person you don’t like, you have to be aware that your emotions do not influence your decision-making process.“ <i>{Successful Company, RESP6}</i>
	“A negative atmosphere at work would decrease my effectiveness at work” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}</i>
Emotional Attachment	„Emotions have a big impact on the decision-making process. If I have good relationship with the customer, it might be easier to make business with him.“ <i>{Successful Company, RESP3}</i>
	“It is always important to have a private chat as well. You start with some small talk about family, hobbies or whatever, and then you come closer the issue you want to talk about. It helps to understand each other.” <i>{Unsuccessful Company, RESP7}</i>

**Table 19:** Illustrative Quotes – Complemented EI – Simplification Model

Considering Table 19 in more detail, the author provided evidence of the selection and formation of the already mentioned EI abilities. The participants talked about having projects that seemed difficult to start. However, they argue that, in this case, they “need to conquer one’s weaker self”. This then led the author to the interpretation of the ability *Strong minded*. In *Confidence*, the participants spoke about their awareness of critical projects, but “at the end, it needs to be done anyway”. If they spoke about problems they needed to start immediately without having any excuses to do anything else (“I even don’t grab a cup of

coffee”), it was categorised as the ability to stay *Self-focused*. In case of *Problem-solving* the participants had quite similar approaches. One said, “In the beginning, I talk with the customer about the easier things, and then, later on, I come to the more difficult business”, which could be interpreted as realising and solving a problem. Coming to the area of *Deliberate Understanding of Emotions*, the author defined the ability of *Self-irony*. The participants stated that, in sales, people tend to exaggerate. “Don’t try to take everything too seriously, so that there is still space for a little joke,” said one participant. The author applied the same approach to *Emotion Management*. The ability of *Confidence* was based upon “a trustful and truthful relationship”. If the participant stated that in some cases it is better “to take a break and reconsider”, the author created the ability of *Self-questioning*. *Relationship* meant that, “The customer should appreciate to talk with you, and you should be able to create an atmosphere of trust”. The ability of *Self-control* was built upon participants saying, “It is good to release anger, but always on a neutral level”. The area of *EI Perception – Social Awareness* was considered and formatted in the same manner. “First of all, it makes sense to go one step back, take another day to think about it” was interpreted in terms of the ability *Escape*. Sometimes the participants stated that it might be “better to listen than to start a discussion”, which then resulted in the ability of *Self-effacement*. Some of the participants also mentioned that they “might be in the position to analyse the customer regarding posture, expression, or speech” which could be interpreted as the ability of *Empathy*, or *Self-awareness* where the participants spoke about negative atmosphere influencing their effectiveness at work. Finally, the participants indicated that “it is always important to have a private chat” to generate an *Emotional Attachment*.

This manual interpretive coding was followed by a cluster analysis to evaluate if the selected codes were similar enough related to selected characteristics from a word similarity study. This was necessary to further condense these abilities and ensure the *EI - Simplification Model* was complemented by the highest quality responses from the interviews.

#### **5.1.4 Categorisation of Codes – Steps of Selling in relation to EI**

The second section of the semi-structured interview involved gaining information about the nature of the probable influence of EI on generating increased sales by amplifying increased sales. Consequently, the author needed to apply a manual interpretive coding approach to investigate what EI abilities salespeople need according to the participants’ responses. Using

the decision-making map, the author was able to generate and understand the real impressions of the participants. The *responsive interviewing* technique by Rubin and Rubin (2005) made it possible to keep the research design and questioning as flexible as possible in order to gain a deep knowledge, rather than width (as cited in Wahyuni, 2012, p. 74). The results of this manual coding process are displayed in Table 20. The author found that the EI abilities that were described by the respondents as driving skills for having good business related to flourishing customer relationships and therefore their sales performances.

Name	Description	Files	References
<b>Customer Retention</b>	To maintain customers	7	10
EI ability Nr. 1 for Customer Retention	The ability to conceive emotions (needs, concerns)	6	7
EI ability Nr. 2 for Customer Retention	The ability to recognise ones' feelings (how it might affect performance)	2	2
<b>Problem Solving</b>	The solve conflicts with customers	8	13
EI ability Nr. 1 for Problem Solving	The ability to handle difficult persons and situations	4	4
EI ability Nr. 2 for Problem Solving	The ability to steer emotions in order to solve problems or conflicts sensitively	7	10
<b>Adding Value</b>	Customer needs confirmation about adding value- mostly sales people try to use storytelling to get customers on board	8	13
EI ability Nr. 1 for Adding Value	The ability to understand emotions, by being sensitive to emotions	5	5
EI ability Nr. 2 for Adding Value	The ability to understand, combine and progress emotions – find mutual goals	5	7
<b>Customer Relationship Maintenance</b>	To get closer with the customer	8	14
EI ability Nr. 1 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	The ability to regulate moods and emotions to treasure their partnerships	4	4
EI ability Nr. 2 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	The ability to control emotions, and if necessary to modify in oneself and others	4	6

Table 20: Categorisation of Codes – Generation of Nodes related to EI of Participants' Responses

The first EI ability for *Customer Retention* comprises the ability to perceive emotions like the needs and concerns of others. The second ability addresses the feelings of others and how they might affect performance. Salespeople should be able to recognise these types of feelings. Coming to the area of *Problem Solving* within the customer interaction the participants explained that it is important to have a certain capacity for handling difficult persons and situations. Furthermore, they stated it is necessary to steer emotions so problems or conflicts can be solved sensitively. In *Adding Value*, the participants thought it was important to understand and be sensitive to emotions to develop feelings about how to add



value for specific customers. Additionally, they stated that salespeople need to have the ability to understand, combine and process emotions to find mutual goals.

Finally, the selling step *Customer Relationship Maintenance* was characterised by the participants' belief in having the ability to regulate moods and emotions to treasure their business relationship. They also indicated the importance of control emotions and, if necessary, modifying them in oneself or others to nurture or start relationships.

The following Table 21 displays the illustrative quotes related to the categorisation of EI abilities necessary for interacting with the customer successfully.

Selling Steps / EI Ability	Illustrative Quotes
<b>Customer Retention</b>	-
The ability to conceive emotions	"It will be very important to conceive the needs of your customers in order to affect performances." {Successful Company, RESP4}
	"You need to understand his attitude, his needs,....you need to have a certain awareness to identify what the customer really needs." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}
The ability to recognise one's feelings	"You should really feel you counterpart or at least you should guess what possible reaction might happen." {Successful Company, RESP3}
	"I am thinking to be empathic is very important to build up a connection with the customer." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}
<b>Problem Solving</b>	-
The ability to handle a difficult person	"You have to take customers seriously, even in small talk. Sometimes these guys have nothing, but they make a big problem out of it. You need to have a certain sensitivity to handle a customer." {Successful Company, RESP6}
	"If you are a good problem solver, you need to have a certain sensitivity to handle a difficult customer." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP7}
The ability to steer emotions	"...you have to get an understanding of their ideas and you have to understand their emotions." {Successful Company, RESP2}
	"... means to me, listen carefully to a customer during the customer negotiation to pick up the major problems, and to offer him an adequate solution which solves his problem." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}
<b>Adding Value</b>	-
The ability to understand emotions	"In order to create value, you need to be clear about emotions and which message they might deliver." {Successful Company, RESP3}
	"At least you should have an idea about the emotions of your customer, or better said what could touch the customer in order to get a value added." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP8}
The ability to find mutual goals	"The ability to combine and process emotions perfectly matches with the aim to find a mutual goal." {Successful Company, RESP4}
	"It is important to offer added value in order to show that our solution or our business relationship will bring him the necessary benefit." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}
<b>Customer Relationship Maintenance</b>	-
The ability to regulate moods	"However, you should control your emotions to some extent. It is not good to react impulsively within the interaction with the customer, even if you feel that he is getting personal and by far not objective anymore." {Successful Company, RESP6}
	"...you really have to take care about what and how you are going to say something. It might hurt somebody personally." {Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}

The ability to control emotions	“So, I have to control my emotions and I have to be aware that my feelings or better said my emotional status does not exceed a certain level.” { <i>Successful Company, RESP3</i> }
	“There it is very helpful to control his own emotions and these of others in order to gain trust, which will be important to have a future collaboration.” { <i>Unsuccessful Company, RESP8</i> }

**Table 21:** Illustrative - Conceptual Framework EI/SI

A detailed analysis of Table 21 provides more insights. In *Customer Retention*, the participants indicated that “it will be important to conceive needs of your customer”, as well as “you should really feel your counterpart”, leading to the ability to perceive emotions and recognise one’s feelings. In *Problem Solving*, the participants mentioned that “you have to take customers seriously” and “listen carefully”, which the author saw having the ability to handle a difficult person and steer emotions. In *Adding Value*, the author created the ability to understand emotions, and the ability to find mutual goals. These are underpinned by statements from the participants like, “You should have an idea about the emotions of your counterpart” and you should have “the ability to combine and process emotions”. In *Customer Relationship Maintenance* and the ability to regulate moods, the participants talked about “you should control your emotions to some extent. It is not good to react impulsively within the interaction with the customer”. Additionally, the participants stated, “So, I have to control my emotions” resulting in the formation of the ability to control emotions. The quotes have been displayed in Table 21 in order to underpin the selection and formation of the authors’ abilities of EI in terms of sales interaction.

### 5.1.5 Cluster Analysis of Open Coding and Categorisation of Codes

A different perspective on the collected and coded data was the cluster analysis within NVivo. The analytical process contained a word similarity approach, which was based upon the *Pearson Correlation Coefficient*. The results have been displayed as a cluster map that presents the codes with similar selected characteristics. This analytical step was necessary because the data from the systematic literature review diverged significantly from the data generated by the semi-structured interviews. The EI abilities regarding the EI superior factors were consolidated. With a correlation coefficient of 0.5 (significant) up to 0.79 (very high), the abilities of *Problem-solving*, *Self-questioning*, *Sensitive to Emotions*, *Self-awareness*, *Emotional attachment*, *Relationship*, *Confidence*, *Self-assessment* and *Self-focused* complemented or corrected the *EI Simplification Model* developed so far (see Table

22 – Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Pearson Correlation – Results – Open Coding (NVivo) and Figure 17: Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Open Coding (NVivo)).

Code A	Code B	Pearson correlation coefficient
Open Coding//Use of Emotions - Resilience	Open Coding//Use of Emotions – Resilience/Problem Solving	0.791623
Open Coding//Emotion Management/Self-Questioning	Open Coding//Emotion Management	0.737435
Open Coding//Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Sensitive to Emotions	Open Coding//Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	0.724507
Open Coding//EI Perception – Social Awareness/Self-Awareness	Open Coding//EI-Perception – Social Awareness	0.691863
Open Coding//EI Perception – Social Awareness/Emotional Attachment	Open Coding//EI-Perception – Social Awareness	0.675427
Open Coding//Emotion Management/Relationship	Open Coding//Emotion Management	0.664798
Open Coding//Use of Emotions – Resilience	Open Coding//Use of Emotions – Resilience/Confidence	0.597059
Open Coding//Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Self-Assessment	Open Coding//Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	0.582129
Open Coding//Use of Emotions – Resilience	Open Coding//Use of Emotions – Resilience/Self-focused	0.500545

Table 22: Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Pearson Correlation – Results – Open Coding (NVivo)

The same procedure was executed for the categorisation of codes. There, analysing the superimposition of the literature review results and the participants' responses in terms of the allocated abilities of EI and the steps of selling described through the literature was also inevitable.

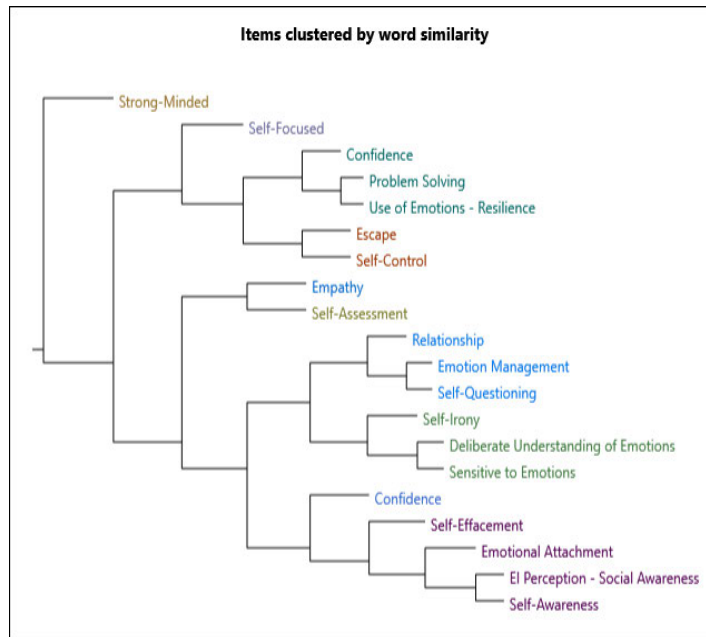


Figure 17: Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Open Coding (NVivo)

As a result, the *Seven Steps of Selling* according to the evolved *Conceptual Framework EI/SI* were complemented by the following attributes: EI Ability Nr. 1 for *Problem Solving*, EI Ability Nr. 1 for *Customer Relationship Maintenance*, EI Ability Nr. 2 for *Customer Retention*, EI Ability Nr. 2 for *Adding Value*, EI Ability Nr. 2 for *Customer Relationship Maintenance*, EI Ability Nr. 1 for *Adding Value* and EI Ability Nr. 1 for *Customer Retention*, according to their correlation coefficient results.

Code A	Code B	Pearson correlation coefficient
Categorisation of Codes//Problem Solving	Categorisation of Codes//Problem Solving/EI Ability Nr. 1 for Problem Solving	0.725987
Categorisation of Codes//EI Ability Nr. for Customer Relationship Management	Categorisation of Codes//Customer Relationship Maintenance	0.670713
Categorisation of Codes//Customer Retention/EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Retention	Categorisation of Codes//Customer Retention	0.650215
Categorisation of Codes//Adding Value/EI Ability Nr. 2 for Adding Value	Categorisation of Codes//Adding Value	0.631718
Categorisation of Codes//EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	Categorisation of Codes//Customer Relationship Maintenance	0.613737
Categorisation of Codes//Adding Value/EI Ability Nr. for Adding Value	Categorisation of Codes//Adding Value	0.573201
Categorisation of Codes//Customer Retention/EI Ability Nr. 1 for Customer Retention	Categorisation of Codes//Customer Retention	0.509945

Table 23: Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Pearson Correlation – Results – Categorisation of Codes (NVivo)

The results of these mentioned abilities range from 0.5 (significant) to 0.72 (high), as indicated in Table 23. Furthermore, Figure 18 displays the archetype of the items clustered by the word similarity analysis.

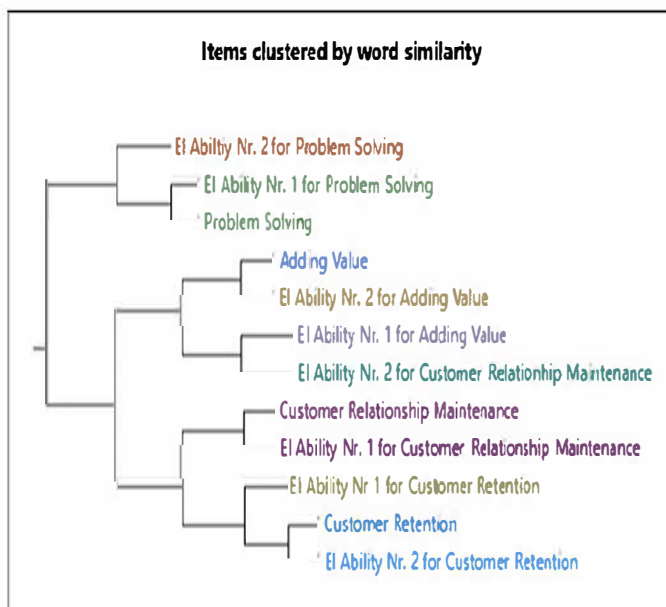


Figure 18: Cluster Analysis by word similarity – Categorisation of Codes (NVivo)

The validated abilities resulting from this word similarity analysis have been compiled in a comprehensive model combining the simplification model of emotional intelligence and the

conceptual framework of EI in combination with SI. This aggregated archetype is discussed in Chapter 5.1.5.

However, the author is aware that this cluster analysis did not mirror a causal coherence of factors and abilities, because this coherence was already given by the nature of things, as the participants could easily adopt, allocate and explain EI abilities due to their experience. Nevertheless, it was important to condense the responses by similarities to gather the most valid aggregation from the interviews. Therefore, the word similarity analysis could be used accordingly.

### 5.1.6 Coding On – The Relationship between SI, EI and Sales Performance

In the previous chapters, the *EI – Simplification Model* and the *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI* have been analysed according to the participants' responses to condense and attach valid EI abilities in each of the archetypes. The author added more EI abilities compared to those mentioned in the literature review to the process of selling (Steps of Selling) and the model of EI (EI Simplification Model).

In the second part of the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to allocate the four superior factors *Perception, Resilience, Management* and *Understanding* to each of the mentioned selling steps according to their experience. Figure 19 illustrates graphically the principal tendency of the results. As a consequence, the author implied that there is a relation of emotional intelligence and sales interaction, due to the fact, that the respondent could easily allocate and explain their selections. However, for the first view, the multiple attribution of various factors within single selling steps made it difficult to recognise just one valid solution for the aggregated model, the author tended to create.

Nevertheless, the author made a conscious decision to keep the allocation of the superior factors according the literature review related to the *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI*. That meant that *Customer Retention and Deletion* will be influenced through *EI Perception* and *Social Awareness*. The selling step of *Problem-Solving* was supported by the *Use of Emotions* called *Resilience*, where salespeople must moderate their emotions to steer the rational, decision-making process. This is followed by *Adding Value and Satisfying Needs*, where salespeople need to have *Deliberate Understanding* of emotions to understand, combine and process emotions. Finally, salespeople need to have sophisticated *Customer*

*Relationship Maintenance*, which could be supported through *Emotion Management*, where salespeople control and modify emotions in themselves and others.

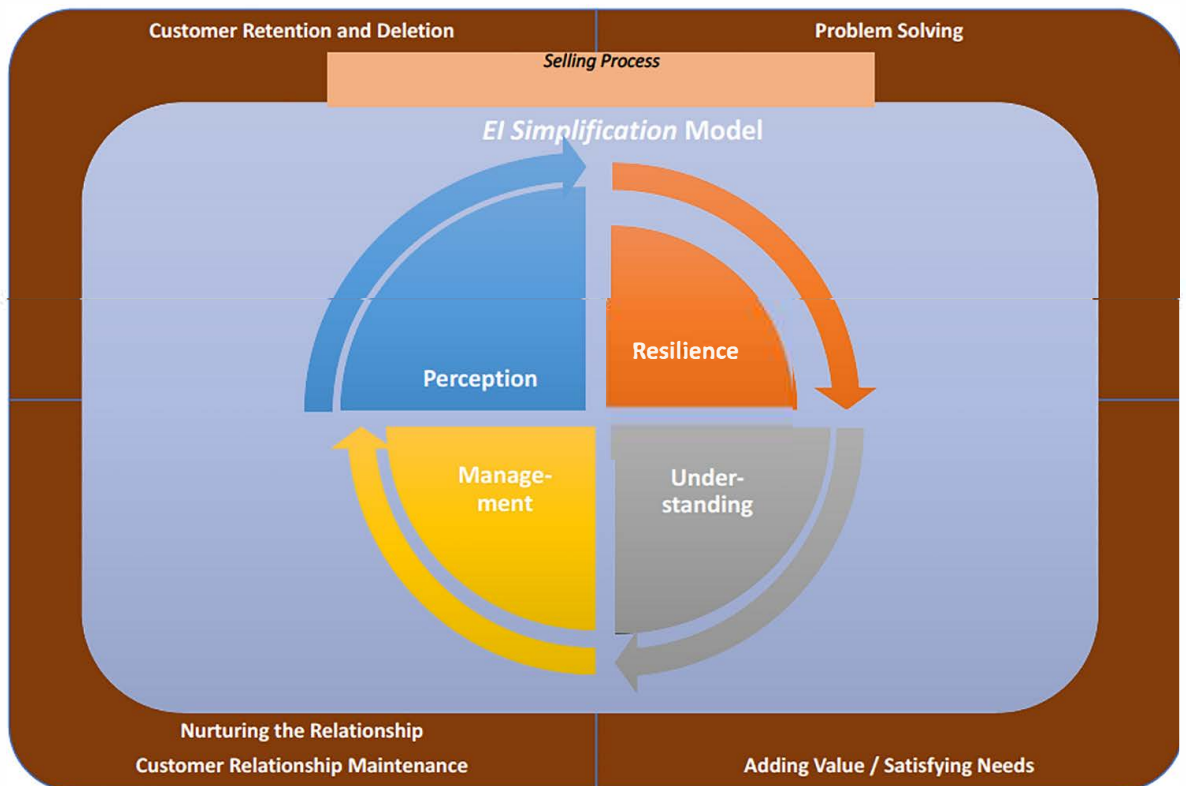


Figure 19: Graphical Tendency - Attribution of Superior Factors to Selling Steps – Semi-Structured Interviews – Part 2

The decision to use the distribution of superior factors as discussed in the literature review is also supported in Table 24, where the percentage according to the denomination of the two companies (successful and unsuccessful) is calculated. The allocation of the factors was quite equal to ones already found in the literature. Though *Resilience* had just 50% of denominations, it was interesting to see that four out of eight people chose the selection according to the literature. The other factors could be evaluated much higher, ranging from 62.5% up to 100%.

Cluster	Successful Company	Unsuccessful Company	Interviews	% Percentage
<b><i>Superior Factors – Allocation of Participants vs. Literature</i></b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>
Perception	4	3	7	87.50%
Resilience	3	1	4	50.00%
Understanding	4	1	5	62.50%
Management	3	2	5	62.50%

Table 24: Attribution of Allocation of Superior Factors of EI to Selling Steps – Semi-Structured Interviews

The connection to companies' direct sales performances was still missing, even if the author could detect in Table 24 a tendency that might predict the relationship of EI relative to sales employees' interactions with customers within a selling process by amplifying the companies' sales performances. In Table 24, the most significant attributions in numbers related to superior factors according to the literature was undertaken by participants of the *Successful Company*, which was proven to have the highest financial stability and therefore the best sales performance in terms of the previous definition of long-term sales performance. This supports the assumption that the awareness and consciousness about EI abilities led to greater success in terms of the company's sales performance.

The following *matrix analysis* of the coded simplification model of EI and the conceptual framework of EI and SI also supported the assumption made by Table 24. In Tables 25 and 26, cells were green shaded, which indicated that the majority of attributable codes and references regarding the factors and their corresponding abilities came out of the *Successful Company*. The evaluation of the cell content was calculated by row percentage. The successful company, especially in the matrix analysis of the *Conceptual Framework EI/SI* suggesting that EI does have a positive influence on sales employees' interactions with customers resulting in outstanding sales performance, reached a high average distribution of codes in regard to the denominated abilities of over 50%. Within the *Unsuccessful Company* it was possible to detect abilities like *Self-irony*, *Escape*, *Confidence*, and *Strong-minded* which not even have been mentioned by the participants of the unsuccessful company. The author chose a colour coding system in order to immediately visualise the difference of answers of the successful and the unsuccessful company. The colour blue indicates, that the ability was not mentioned so far.



Cluster/ (Open Coding)	Successfull Company	Unsuccessful Company
<b>EI Ability</b>		
<b>Deliberate Understanding of Emotions</b>		
Self-assessment	Green	Pink
Self-irony	Green	Blue
Sensitive to Emotions	Green	Pink
<b>EI Perception – Social Awareness</b>		
Emotional Attachment	Green	Pink
Empahty	Green	Pink
Escape	Green	Blue
Self-awareness	Pink	Green
Self-effacement	Pink	Green
<b>Emotion Management</b>		
Confidence	Pink	Green
Relationship	Pink	Green
Self-control	Green	Yellow
Self-Questioning	Green	Pink
<b>Use of Emotions – Resilience</b>		
Confidence	Green	Blue
Problem Solving	Green	Pink
Self-focused	Pink	Pink
Strong-minded	Pink	Blue
	Not mentioned	
	Low Distribution <25%	
	Medium Distribution >25% <50%	
	High Distribution >50%	

Table 25: Open Coding – Matrix Analysis (NVivo)

The yellow colour means that the attributable number of quotation of the results of the semi-structured interview are of a low distribution (<25%). The medium distribution with approximately ranging from 25% up to 50% was marked in pink. The highest distributions (>50%) are marked in a green colour.

Cluster/ (Categorisation of Codes)	Successfull Company	Unsuccessful Company
<b>EI Ability</b>		
<b>Adding Value</b>		
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Adding Value	Green	Pink
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Adding Value	Green	Blue
<b>Customer Relationship Maintenance</b>		
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	Green	Pink
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	Green	Pink
<b>Customer Retention</b>		
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Customer Retention	Pink	Green
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Retention	Pink	Green
<b>Problem Solving</b>		
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Problem Solving	Green	Blue
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Problem Solving	Green	Pink
	Not mentioned	
	Low Distribution <25%	
	Medium Distribution >25% <50%	
	High Distribution >50%	

Table 26: Categorisation of Codes – Matrix Analysis (NVivo)

Nearly the same results could be detected by the *categorisation of codes* (see Table 26). Even the visualisation of the codes from *Problem-Solving*, *Adding Value* and *Customer Relationship Maintenance* showed a higher numbers of coding references for the successful company. Also in this categorisation of codes, the participants of the unsuccessful company were not able to determine the *EI Ability Nr. 2 for Adding Value* or the *EI Ability Nr. 1 for Problem Solving*. Mostly, the unsuccessful company remained with medium distributions, rather having their average tendency in the direction of a low distribution (<25%). This then leads to the conclusion, that in general a higher consciousness of EI and its corresponding abilities leads to more success in their interactions with customers. This could influence the companies' long-term performances, agreeing with the results of previous studies that indicated that "sales managers might consider implementing strategies that develop their sales employees' EI to achieve optimum sales performance and compete for greater market share" (Cote et al., 2006; Heffernan, O'Neil, Travaglione, & Droulers, 2008; Morehouse, 2007, as cited in AlDosiry, Alkhadher, AlAqraa, & Anderson, 2016, p. 41).

## 5.2 Research Results – Synthesis

This research built upon a purposeful sampling strategy that seeks profound understanding by studying information-rich cases rather than to search for empirical generalisations.

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations. (Patton, 2002, p. 230 as cited in Suri, 2011, p. 3).

### 5.2.1 EI – Better Research through Interactive Mechanism

This research aimed to identify the influence of emotional intelligence on the sales performances of companies with a particular focus on sales employees' interactions with customers during a selling situation. It follows that EI was better researched through an interactive mechanism in the form of a semi-structured interview approach rather than through individual measurements of a quotient. If we consider the *EI Simplification Model* which evolved during the literature review, and compare it with the results of the Open Coding Process and the word similarity analysis, the two separated models diverged significantly, at least in regard to word similarity analysis.

Figure 20 displays the results of the manual interpretive coding process and consolidation through word similarity analysis of the results of the open coding and the codes of the categorisation, which the author then named the *Complemented EI Simplification Model*. Some attributes are comparable to each other, like *Self-Awareness* and *Empathy*. However, most of the other abilities seemed to be new definitions of EI abilities. This became clear as the author conducted the word similarity analysis of the nodes in the literature and the open coding nodes, which mainly contained discussions about EI and its corresponding abilities. There, the author found a low correlation factor of 0.14 (word similarity according to Pearson) in the literature review of this thesis and the semi-structured interviews.

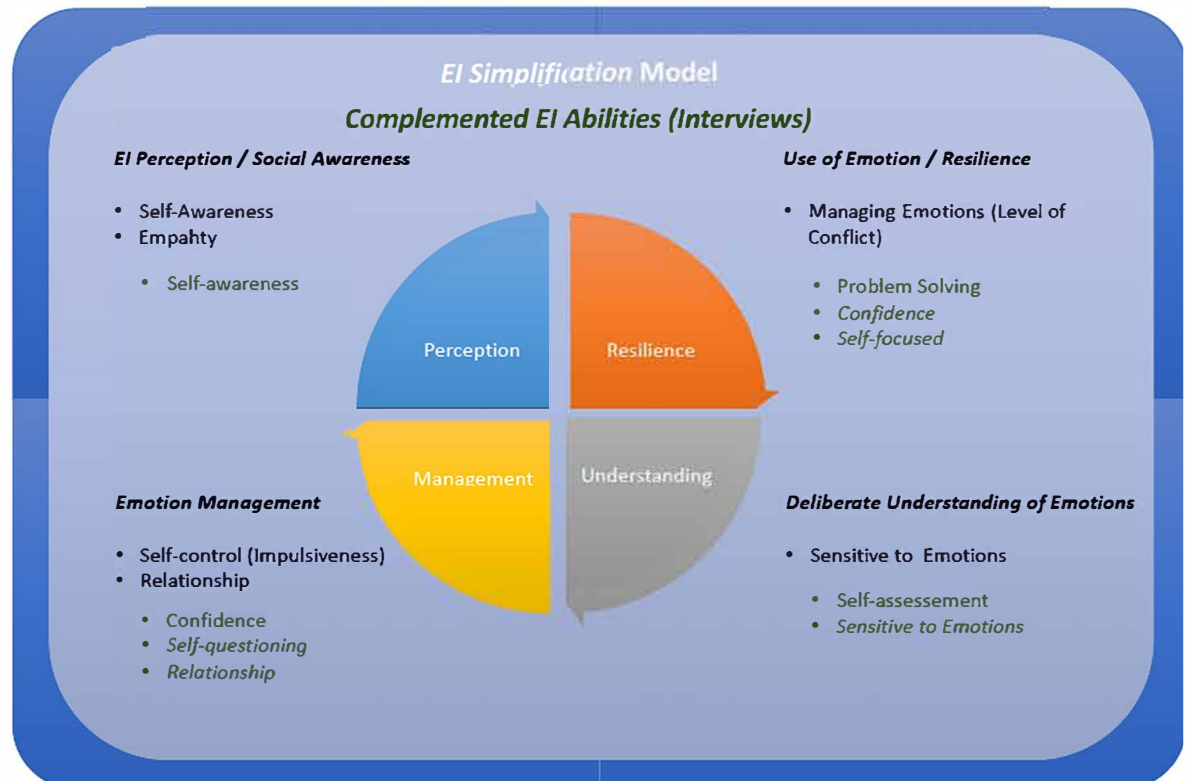


Figure 20: Complemented EI Simplification Model (Consolidated through Word Similarity Analysis – Chapter 5.4.1)

Considering the details of this cluster analysis based on the word similarity, the differences between the participants' responses and the literature seemed obvious.

However, with increasing consideration of the descriptions of the EI abilities created through the responses of the semi-structured interviews, the author was able to understand that in terms of the content, the gap between the literature and the responses still existed.

Starting with the first superior factor *EI Perception/Social Awareness*, both the literature review and the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews contained the abilities of *Self-Awareness* and *Empathy*. However, the participants added more, resulting in the creation of the EI abilities called *Escape*, *Self-effacement*, and *Emotional Attachment*. At first glance, the literature did not include any of these abilities, which are characterised by the aptitude for letting things go, being self-controlled, or establishing relationships. Therefore, Table 27 which includes the EI abilities created by the interviews and the contextual comparison of the three main models of Mayer and Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001), helped to get a clearer picture. The model of Bar-On (1997) also describes “the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled...”. However the context is a different one as Bar-On tries to express the *Independence* of the person, whereas the participants of the interviews spoke about the ability in terms of reluctance, therefore called *Self-effacement*. The same could be

described in the sense of relationship building. The participants did not speak about “well-functioning relationships”, they set their focus on the possible emotional bond with their counterparts.

Mayer & Salovey (1997)	Bar-On (1997)	Goleman (2001)
<p><b>Perception and Expression of Emotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to identify emotion in one’s physical and psychological states.</li> <li>- Ability to identify emotions in other people (Empathy)</li> <li>- Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them.</li> <li>- Ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest feelings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding of Emotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to understand relationships among various emotions</li> <li>- Ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions</li> <li>- Ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states.</li> <li>- Ability to understand transitions among emotions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intrapersonal EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Self-Regard</b> the ability to respect and accept oneself</li> <li>- <b>Emotional Self-Awareness</b> the ability to recognise one’s feelings</li> <li>- <b>Assertiveness</b> the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts</li> <li>- <b>Independence</b> the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one’s thinking and actions</li> <li>- <b>Self-Actualisation</b> the ability to realise one’s potential capabilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Interpersonal EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empathy</b> the ability to be aware of emotions of others</li> <li>- <b>Social Responsibility</b> the ability to cooperate and contribute</li> <li>- <b>Interpersonal Relationship</b> the ability to establish and maintain mutually well-functioning relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Awareness (knowing what one feels)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Emotional self-awareness</b> the ability to read and understand our emotions - recognise their impact on work performance</li> <li>- <b>Accurate self-assessment</b> a realistic evaluation of strength and limitations</li> <li>- <b>Self-confidence</b> A strong sense of self-worth</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Awareness (the ability to read nonverbal cues for negative emotions)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empathy</b> the ability to understand other people’s emotions</li> <li>- <b>Service Orientation</b> the ability to recognise customer’s need</li> <li>- <b>Organisational awareness</b> the ability to read currents of organisational life</li> </ul>
<p><b>EI Perception (Interview)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to release or let it go for the moment (Escape)</li> <li>- Ability to be self-controlled in one’s thinking (Self-effacement)</li> <li>- Ability to be aware of emotions of others (Empathy)</li> <li>- Ability to establish a relationship (Emotional Attachment)</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding of Emotions (Interview)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations (Self-Irony)</li> <li>- Ability to realise one’s capabilities to stick to the truth (Self-Assessment)</li> <li>- Ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions (Sensitive to Emotions)</li> </ul>	<p>Open Coding – Generation of Nodes</p>	<p>related to EI of Participants’ Responses</p>

Table 27: EI Abilities – Results of Manual Interpretive Coding implemented in Contextual Comparison – Superior Factor 1 and 3

Within the area of the *Deliberate Understanding of Emotions* the author detected a similar variance with the literature review. The participants saw *Self-Assessment*, the ability to realise one’s capability and to stick to the truth, as an important competence; this could be compared with the ability *Self-Actualisation* of Bar-On. However, Bar-On does not talk about the truth rather than refers to the potential capabilities of people. The ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situation and the ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions was not mentioned in any of the other models.

Considering Table 28, in the interviews, *Use of Emotion/Resilience* contained the abilities of *Problem Solving*, *Confidence* and *Self-focused*. Here, the participants indicated that abilities such as gaining trust, being positive to solve problems, disregarding negative emotions, or being able to recognise problems are part of the factor; the Problem-Solving of Bar-On is similar to ability of Problem Solving created through the responses of the semi-structured interviews. Both abilities try to “define/realise and solve problems”. The other abilities of this superior factor are also not mentioned in any of the other models.

Mayer & Salovey (1997)	Bar-On (1997)	Goleman (2001)
<p><b>Using of Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to redirect and prioritise thinking on the basis of associated feelings</li> <li>- Ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgement and memory</li> <li>- Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view</li> <li>- Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of Emotions (Interview)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the ability overcome one’s weaker self (Strong-minded)</li> <li>- the ability to be optimistic/positive to solve the situation (Confidence)</li> <li>- the ability to disregard the negative emotions (Self-focused)</li> <li>- the ability to realise and solve problems (Problem Solving)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adaptability EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Reality Testing</b> the ability to validate one’s emotions</li> <li>- <b>Flexibility</b> the ability to adjust one’s emotions</li> <li>- <b>Problem-Solving</b> the ability to define and solve problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Relationship Management (the ability to attune ourselves to or influence emotions of persons)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Developing others</b> the ability to foster people through feedback and guidance</li> <li>- <b>Influence</b> the ability to apply a range of persuasive tactics</li> <li>- <b>Communication</b> the ability to listen</li> <li>- <b>Conflict management</b> the ability to de-escalate</li> <li>- <b>Leadership</b> the ability to take charge and inspire</li> <li>- <b>Change catalyst</b> the ability to initiate new ideas</li> <li>- <b>Building bonds</b> the ability to maintain relationships</li> <li>- <b>Teamwork &amp; collaboration</b> the ability to promote cooperation</li> </ul>
<p>Open Coding – Generation of Nodes related to EI of Participants’ Responses</p>		

Table 28: EI Abilities – Results of Manual Interpretive Coding implemented in Contextual Comparison – Superior Factor 2

Finally Table 29 was created in order to consider the last superior factor, *Emotion Management*, where the abilities *Confidence*, the ability to gain trust; and *Self-questioning*, the ability to modify one’s and others’ emotions to better understand were implemented into the matrix of the contextual comparison of the three main models of this thesis. In the existing models Mayer and Salovey and also Bar-On speak about managing emotions of oneself and of others. However, the participants spoke about modifying “one’s and others’ emotions to better understand” which results in a distinction. The ability to “overcome stressful situations” distinguishes from Bar-On’ *Stress Tolerance* in so far, that Bar-On tries to endure the situation rather than to overcome it. Surprisingly, the ability *Relationship* which concentrates on establishing and maintaining relationships were not mentioned in any of the other comparable superior factors of the models.

Mayer & Salovey (1997)	Bar-On (1997)	Goleman (2001)
<p><b>Emotional Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.</li> <li>- Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.</li> <li>- Ability to engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state</li> <li>- Ability to manage emotions in oneself.</li> <li>- Ability to manage emotions in others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Emotion Management (Interview)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the ability to gain trust (Confidence)</li> <li>- the ability to modify ones' and others' emotions to better understand (Self-questioning)</li> <li>- the ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships (Relationship)</li> <li>- the ability to overcome stressful situations (Self-control)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stress Management EQ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Stress Tolerance</b> the ability to endure stressful situations</li> <li>- <b>Impulse Control</b> the ability to resist an impulse (e.g. anger)</li> </ul> <p>Open Coding – Generation of Nodes</p>	<p><i>Self-Management (the ability to regulate distressing effects)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Self-control</b> the ability to control emotions</li> <li>- <b>Trustworthiness</b> the ability to be honest and to be of integrity</li> <li>- <b>Conscientiousness</b> the ability to manage yourself</li> <li>- <b>Conflict management</b> the ability to solve conflicts</li> <li>- <b>Adaptability</b> The ability to adjust and to change due to situations</li> <li>- <b>Achievement drive</b> the ability to meet excellence</li> <li>- <b>Initiative</b> a readiness to capture opportunities</li> </ul> <p>related to EI of Participants' Responses</p>

Table 29: EI Abilities – Results of Manual Interpretive Coding implemented in Contextual Comparison – Superior Factor 4

Consequently, the author concluded that EI was better researched through an interactive mechanism such as a semi-structured interview approach. The participants needed to explain EI and their corresponding abilities in their own words and in relation to their experience, because even there the understanding and meaning of EI and its related abilities was often misunderstood or interpreted differently (see Table 27-29).

Therefore, the measurement of an existent quotient mainly using self-report measures, as nearly all of the existent models have tried so far, became blurred, because of the different understanding of definitions and abilities in general in the field of EI. For the recommendation that EI might be better research through an active mechanism still the question remains, how such individual interpretations could be made tangible to have a realistic measurement for the competencies of EI for each individual. Because one thing is clear, the participants in this research proved to have a certain understanding of EI, even if it did not match with existing literature in general.

### 5.2.2 Affecting Companies' Sales Performances (Summary)

Figure 21 highlights the new categories of EI developed by looking at the expectations and interpretations of the participants in the semi-structured interviews. The categories contain attributes and descriptions of abilities likely to influence companies' sales performances via the deliberate interaction of salespeople within a selling process. These deliberate actions are supported through the *Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI*. There, the important steps within customer interaction are complemented by EI abilities that could be consciously applied to gain increased sales and amplify companies' sales performances.

In the area of *Customer Retention and Deletion*, salespeople should consider further developing their abilities related to perceiving emotions and recognising one's feelings. The corresponding abilities within the field of EI were detected in *EI Perception/Social Awareness*, which is concerned with people's ability to perceive and identify emotions. Salespeople should have awareness and empathy by recognising one's feelings. In *Problem-Solving*, which is mostly in every business relationship a topic from time to time, skilled salespeople should be able to handle difficult persons and situations. A few more EI abilities should be considered related to overcoming those difficulties. Sales employees should be able to recognise problems. Furthermore, they should be able to stay optimistic to solve the problems, and they should stay *Self-focused*, which deals with the ability to disregard negative emotions. It is also important that salespeople *Add Value and Satisfy Needs*. For this, understanding emotions and finding mutual goals is important. The corresponding EI category concentrates on *Self-assessment* and *Sensitivity to Emotions*, which means employees should stick to the truth and try to learn, change and adapt to emotional reactions, even if the situation is critical and tense.

Finally, the process of *Nurturing the Relationship* and *Customer Relationship Maintenance* is an important step for maintaining and fostering existing business partners. Sales employees must regulate their moods and avoid offending customers. The corresponding EI abilities are the ability to gain trust (Confidence), the ability to modify one's and others' emotions to understand better (Self-questioning), and the ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships (Relationship).



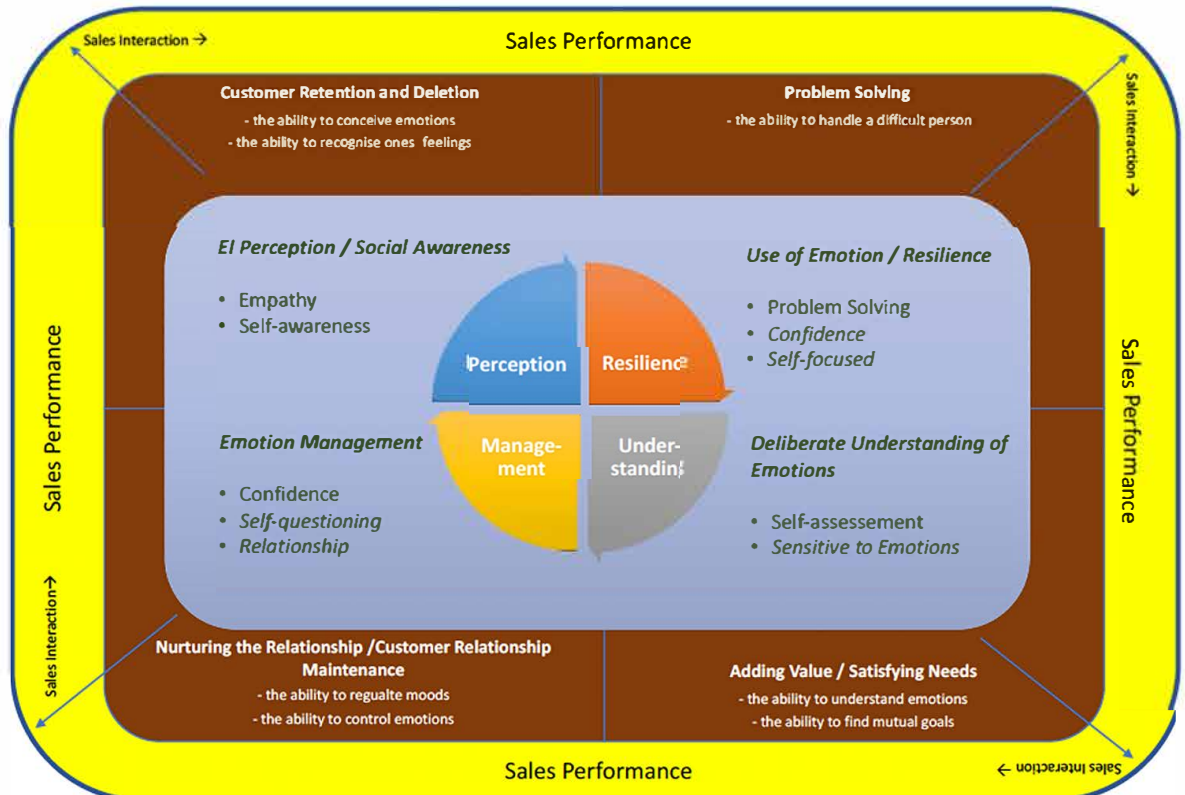


Figure 21: Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI

The *Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI* is supplemented by real cases/true stories, which were linked with specific EI abilities. This creates a kind of manual to help individuals consciously use EI by reading descriptions of the participants’ cases, which might help them apply and understand EI in similar situations. The linkage between EI and the real cases/true stories are displayed in Table 30.

Therefore, salespeople might gain a much clearer picture of the abilities within the conceptual framework. They might also use it to imagine situations where such EI abilities might be successfully applied to their specific sales interactions, which is definitely missing in the current literature.

Selling Steps/ EI Superior Factor/Ability	Real Case/True Story
<p><b>Customer Retention</b></p> <p><i>Emotional Perception</i></p> <p>Self-Awareness – to recognise one’s feelings</p>	<p>“I was invited to have a final negotiation at the customer premises. I was prepared to have an ugly price war. However, when the owner of the company entered the room, I saw how fashionable he was dressed and at least I felt that this man would not buy the cheapest. I was open to my impression/feeling for the owner and his personality. I took the risk and adopted the strategy of a premium supplier with the corresponding highest price. Furthermore, I gave him the feeling that we would be happy to work with him; however it was not necessary to have his order. That worked. I finally got the order. What I am trying to say, we have to investigate our counterpart very carefully in order to immediately adapt the strategy.”</p> <p>“The whole process took me about three or four years. It was a small start-up company. They came up with a new idea for a solar cell pain the States. They were in Silicon Valley and they had a meeting with a big client there, and somebody said, ‘Well, I heard about them, let’s go there.’ {Successful Company, RESP4}</p>
<p><b>Adding Values</b></p> <p><i>Deliberate Understanding</i></p> <p>Sensitive to Emotions – to change or adapt to emotional reaction</p>	<p>“So, we talked and again, the concept was really nice and fancy and there were a lot of opportunities for our machines in the States, but they had no money. So, I decided, ‘Well, always when I’m in the States, I will go to visit them.’ The problem-solving was at this stage not to identify the possibility to put our product somewhere. It was that I always have to explain to my own management that it’s worth to take a visit to them. Even the flight was paid already by visiting somebody else, but then they counted this two-hour visit. They called it waste of time. So, I always had to fight that I could visit them.”</p> <p>“Then after about two years, an investor came on board and they got about \$25 million from First Solar at this time. In the meantime, we had six, seven, eight meetings and identified where we could put our product as a real added value for their production line.”</p> <p>“Finally, when it was published that they had money, my boss came and said, ‘X, you have to go there. You should try to sell something.’ I said, ‘Well, if I would have any relationship with them, now it would be worth it.’ Finally, after another eight to ten months, we got an order for about six million, a special product customised for them, and it was a really bad economic time for us, so it was really a good project for the company at the right time. What I learned out of it, it’s sometimes not only that you have to fight with the customer, you always have to fight with your management. Because they sometimes just see from one quarter to the next quarter and try to save money instead of seeing or looking at the overall picture.” {Unsuccessful Company, RESP5}</p>
<p><b>Adding Values</b></p> <p><i>Deliberate Understanding</i></p> <p>Self-Assessment – to realise one’s capabilities</p>	<p>“For example, with customers, if you have a good relation, they ask for something special. They ask, ‘Please can you send the drawing for a particular component, I want to make it somewhere else, due to price and delivery time.’ And it’s not a know-how part. And I said, ‘Okay, I will help you.’ And then I sent him the drawing and then he finally got the problem solved very quick. Or sometimes the customer asked me for very special discount. I’ve gave him this discount. And my boss blamed me for that, ‘You give a big discount.’ I said ‘Yes, I gave a big discount.’ That caused me bigger problems with my boss than later on with the customer. This 1000 euros will earn me 50,000 in the future because the customer now has trust. I helped him and the next order we don’t have to discuss these things in too much detail anymore. He will say, ‘Okay, you know what? Mr. X come on.’ You helped me, and I will help you now. And I think these are many small things over the years in this project life that if you have a good relation, good emotions, good feelings with the customer, it is not only a benefit for customer, it can even double your account in terms of future decisions which might not in your direction because of price differences.” {Unsuccessful Company, RESP7}</p>
<p><b>Adding Values</b></p> <p><i>Deliberate Understanding</i></p> <p>Sensitive to Emotions – to change or adapt to emotional reaction</p>	<p>“We are actually facing a very critical situation with one of our Polish customers. He’s waiting for the completion of the contract since more than a year now. And I cannot make him happy, but I try to be sensitive due to his anger and of course it took me a lot to control my anger, because the guys from management became really upset. So, I think the last two points do fit very well to this situation. And actually, we have Skype conversations with the customer regularly, three times a week. And you can easily imagine that nobody here in the house likes to attend to these discussions because everybody knows what happens. But I am of the opinion, exactly, now we have to attend. Exactly, now we have to sit there, listen to what the customer claims, and at least, give him the feeling that we take it seriously. Even if we have an absolute disaster in any business case, you need to be open in communication and you should not avoid the confrontation. Always talk to the customer.” {Successful Company, RESP6}</p>
<p><b>Problem-Solving</b></p> <p><i>Use of Emotions</i></p> <p>Problem-Solving – the ability to realise and solve problems</p>	<p>“In my former company, I had a case. The customer had only machines of a competitor in the exhibition room. However there came a time, where your competitor needed to solve some problems with the machine. They could not and try to blame the customer. I pointed out the real problem very clearly and provided a good and reliable solution for his problems. So, we pushed our competitor out and got in the exhibition center for your product.” {Unsuccessful Company, RESP1}</p>

Confidence – the ability to be optimistic to solve the problem	
<b>Problem-Solving</b> <i>Use of Emotions</i> Confidence – the ability to be optimistic to solve the problem	“At the beginning of this year, there was a project where we were in a very good position from my point of view, on the driver’s seat. With regard to technology we were number two. Pricewise it was okay. But there was a problem with the purchasing department. And the main problem was the exchange rate between euro and US dollar. And to solve this problem it was very important to talk to the buyer directly. We tried at the very beginning to solve the problem, all the time by email more or less and letters. But afterwards we made the decision that it makes sense to come together for a meeting. And then we solved the problem directly face to face.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP2}</i>
<b>Problem-Solving</b> <i>Use of Emotions</i> Self-Focused – the ability to disregard negative emotions	“If you have a problem with a customer, for example, you have to discuss delays of deliveries with them, you have to find a solution, which is acceptable for both parties. Sometimes it could happen due to a downtime of a machine—so you have to explain to them very clearly, what you are going to do right now and how long it would take. I try to deliver it very sensitively and find a solution, which was at least to some extent still acceptable for the customer. At least you need to have a thick skin.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP3}</i>
<b>Customer Relationship Maintenance</b> <i>Emotion Management</i> Self-Control – the ability to overcome a stressful situation	“If a customer calls you that he is upset with the service or something like that, then I often say, ‘Please come back to the basics and other manufacturers have the same problem’. I’ll try to take care of your problem personally to give a satisfactory solution to you.’ I would allocate that in the emotion management. There you need to control yourself in order not to reach the same level as the angry customer.” <i>{Successful Company, RESP6}</i>

**Table 30:** Consciously affecting Companies’ Sales Performances – Real Cases/True Stories

The examples provide stories about recognising emotions, where a participant described that he “saw how fashionable he was dressed” and at least that he “felt that this man would not buy the cheapest product”. This conscious recognition of this momentary feeling might have brought the necessary advantage within this negotiation. Other participants talked about *Adding Value*, where they had to convince not only the customer but the management; “That caused me bigger problems with my boss than later on with the customer”. Furthermore, Table 30 includes examples for *Problem-Solving* and *Customer Relationship Maintenance* where the participants described situations in which it was really helpful to have *Confidence*, which meant staying optimistic to solve the problem, even if their competitor did not manage to handle the situation successfully. They stayed *Self-focused* even if they had to deliver negative messages, like delays of delivery. They even described situations where they had to overcome stressful situations, which meant to be *self-controlled*; “Please come back to the basics and other manufacturers have the same problem”, which describes a situation where the sales employee did want to enter the same emotional level as his customer did.

Consequently, Table 30 was used to close the gap between the theoretical description of the *Complemented Conceptual Framework of SI/EI* and business life. The author considered these true stories and real cases as a necessary encouraging variable of this research.

## 6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the key findings of this research study and clarifies its contribution to knowledge, theory and business practice. Furthermore, the chapter includes the limitations of this thesis and provides an outlook for possible further research.

Automobile sales organisations hire sales representatives to generate revenue and achieve sales goals. If management could screen sales representatives and predict sales performance success by EI scores, the automobile sales organisations could be more successful. (AlDosiry, Alkhadher, AlAqraa, & Anderson, 2016, p. 41)

This research identifies the influence of emotional intelligent salespeople on companies' sales performances where their sales success refers to the deliberate understanding and usage of EI abilities during their sales interactions with customers within a selling situation. The author assumed to measure long-term performance according to the financial stability of the group of company under study. Considering the evaluation of the financial performances of each of the companies the author was able to group the participants into two categories (successful & unsuccessful). The successful company seemed to provide evidence that a higher consciousness of EI and its corresponding abilities led to greater success via generating increased sales through their deliberate interactions, influencing the sales performance of a company. The proper implementation of EI has been a major concern for this research. The existing work found in the literature review was quite instrumental for making use of key terms from different concepts that appeared to be confusing related to describing the abilities and categories of EI.

Based on the *EI Simplification Model* of the literature review in this thesis, which was developed by analyzing and comparing the existing models and merging them to one consistent one, the participants of the semi-structured interviews needed to explain EI and their corresponding abilities in their own words, and in relation to their experience. Because of the different understandings about and misinterpretations of EI and its corresponding abilities, the simplification model was condensed and complemented through the evaluation and comparison of the literature and the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the author could conclude that EI might be better researched using an active mechanism, such as semi-

structured interviews, rather than through individual measurements of a quotient, because of the divergent results of the participants' responses and the critical evaluation of literature review.

Based on the *Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI*, which was developed by consolidating the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses and the intensive literature review, the results are displayed in a matrix highlighting the new categories of EI, containing descriptions of the attributes that likely influence companies' sales performances through peoples' deliberate interactions in sales within a selling situation. The model is supplemented by real cases/true stories, which are linked with these EI abilities. These cases contain descriptions of the participants' experiences, which might help others apply and understand EI in similar situations.

## **6.1 Contribution to Knowledge**

The main contribution to knowledge are:

1. to interpret the influence of EI on sales performance of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process
2. to develop new categories of EI in order to provide operations instructions for sales employees to consciously affect sales performance of companies

Table 31 displays the gap of knowledge and its corresponding contribution to knowledge regarding RQ1. The table includes the different sections of the thesis where the literature review and data analysis refer to specific content related to RO1.

Salespeople need to think about more specialised abilities when interacting with a customer compared to the mostly very unsubstantial abilities like e.g. "managing emotions". Salespeople need to have a specific guidance focusing on their selling situations in order to recognise, steer, validate and apply their own emotions, or the emotions of others appropriately in order to enhance their sales performance. Sales performance was defined in terms of building and maintaining customer relationships, whereas this non-explicit performance criterion was measured by the long-term financial stability of companies.

<b>Research Question 1: In how far does EI appear to influence sales performances of companies during salespersons' interactions within a selling process?</b>		
<b>Gaps in Knowledge</b>	<b>Contribution to Knowledge</b>	<b>Section</b>
There exists research gap in the academic field and management literature concerning a performance criterion of the long-term sales performance of a company in accordance with building and maintaining relationships with customers. Furthermore, little research was found identifying specific emotional abilities that might help researchers understand and determine upcoming emotions in terms of sales interaction to enhance performance. The studies so far do not cover the complex nature of sales interactions, and still consider sales behaviour as somewhat exceptional from the interaction with the customer.	The link between emotionally intelligent salespeople and sales performances of companies considering the influence of EI on the sales employees' interactions with customers within a selling situation.	2.3.1 2.4 4.1.1 5.1.1 5.1.5

**Table 31:** Contribution to Knowledge – Research Question 1

In Chapter 5.1.5 the matrix analysis of the coded *EI Simplification Model* and *Conceptual Framework of EI/SI* indicated that the majority of attributable codes and references regarding the factors and their corresponding abilities came out of the successful company. Especially the matrix analysis of the *Conceptual Framework EI/SI* revealed that EI seem to have a strong influence on sales employees' interactions with customer increasing their sales performances.

Table 32 addresses the link between RQ2 and the contribution to knowledge. The author linked the corresponding sections of the thesis with RO2 to allow readers to trace backwards in terms of content and analysis.

<b>Research Question 2: How could sales employees consciously affect companies' sales performances along defined emotional intelligence abilities during their customer interactions?</b>		
<b>Gaps in Knowledge</b>	<b>Contribution to Knowledge</b>	<b>Section</b>
Sales behaviour is isolated from the interaction with customer, at least in the existing literature. The business literature is, therefore, limited to the company level rather than considering the individual levels of the sales employees involved, including their EI skills and abilities.	Based on the <i>Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI</i> , which was developed by consolidating the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses and the intensive literature review, the results are displayed in a matrix highlighting the new categories of EI, containing descriptions of the attributes that likely influence companies' sales performances through peoples' deliberate interactions in sales. The model is supplemented by real cases/true stories, which are linked with these EI abilities. These cases contain descriptions of the participants' experiences, which might help others apply and understand EI in similar situations.	2.3.2 2.4 5.1.3 5.1.4 5.1.5 5.2.2

**Table 32:** Contribution to Knowledge – Research Question 2

The developed *Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI* consolidates the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses and the intensive literature review. The new categories of EI contain descriptions of attributes that likely influence companies' sales performances through peoples' deliberate interactions in sales, supplemented by real cases/true stories. The cases/true stories contain descriptions of the participants' experiences, which might help to apply the concept of EI.

### **6.1.1 Contribution to Business Practice**

Management makes decisions based on available evidence. Therefore, the research-practice gap should be closed to avoid organisations to do so (Rousseau, 2006).

However, there should be at least a quality criterion for the best available evidence that the author called *continuous reflective professional development*. Good critical thinking and writing can always add value to practice. This doctoral thesis provides information on how EI likely influences companies' sales performance by consciously influencing the sales interactions with customer within a selling process.

These influencing interactions are supported through the Complemented Conceptual Framework of EI/SI, where the important steps within the customer interaction are complemented by EI abilities which could be consciously applied to build and maintain relationships with customers by amplifying companies' sales performances. Former researcher was not able to provide a direct link between EI and sales performance or successful business, nor how employee EI could add to the value of companies. Furthermore, the existing studies considered the behaviour of salespeople as isolated from their interactions with customers, whereas this research focused on influencing SI with behavioural elements of EI.

Weick (2003, p. 457) states that the debate about theory-to-practice is about the "know-how rather than the know-that". This thesis concentrated on the explanation of theory, but mainly set their focus on the understanding of the theory, which seem to close the gap between theory and practice.

Finally, the concepts of Mayer and Salovey (1997), Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001) might be reviewed in regard to their measurement approaches, because all of the models have been criticised in terms of their validation and comparability in results. This research discovered that EI was better researched through an interactive mechanism in the form of, for example, a semi-structured interview approach. The participants explained EI abilities in their own words and in relation to their business experience. There even the understanding of the description and meaning of EI abilities was varying.

## 6.2 Limitations

The difficulty in constructivist research is exactly demonstrating that the participants' view of the situation as reported in research findings is not simply the result of researchers' interpretive whim, and that negotiation of meaning has in fact occurred. (Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 88)

This research employed a social constructivist qualitative research approach, using semistructured interviews. The author relied upon the participants' responses of the interviews (Creswell, 2003, as cited in Mojtahed et al., 2014, p. 88). This research is also limited to the



available data concerning the number of the participants of the selected companies. Also, the information gathered from the interviews might not reflect the understanding evident in another group of participants elsewhere. Propositions came from literature analysis or personal/professional experience that enabled the researcher to place limits on the scope of the research. The propositions needed to have a distinct focus and purpose to guide the data production and to form the conceptual framework of the study. A possible proposition for this research was Goleman (2004) assertion that large companies have employed psychologists to develop EI models to identify, train and promote likely star performers. This indicated that concentrating on interaction, especially in sales (e.g. with customers), was a good limitation of scope within this research. Organisational procedures, exercises or product types might have had an influence, but would have extended the exploration of EI influences on financial performances immeasurably. Many processes could bring along certain causal relationships regarding companies' financial performance, especially in sales. For example, an outstanding technical feature of the product or convincing branding. There, EI might not be the decisive component.

The data were processed and analysed within NVivo. The formation of nodes, categories and themes refer to the author's interpretation; therefore, it must be acknowledged that at least some kind of bias of the author's interpretation might play a subconscious role.

The key concepts discussed and explored within this research of EI and sales interaction are based on the literature review of this thesis, which might lead to a circumstance wherein the concepts and discussion might change because of research undertaken by another researcher. Additionally, because the author discussed and analysed four different concepts of EI, each of the concepts received less attention that would have been the case if the author had concentrated on just one.

Issues concerning the researcher's bias, as well as the participants possibly 'socially desirable answers', might also have played a part in the research. For the data collection of this research, a decision-making map was used as a data protection instrument to generate new ideas, instead of participants answering to give positive impressions or to agree on the already existent statements. Additionally, the author used NVivo to ensure the necessary replicability and transparency was achieved.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study does not contain any distinction between gender differences, even if differences in performance measures or self-reports in terms of EI could be detected (Sanchez-Nunez, Fernández-Berrocal, Montañés, & Latorre, 2008). The results of the research do not sustain objective, law-like generalisations, because the researcher played a crucial role. This study sought the expansion of ideas and generalisation via the implementation and application of the qualitative methodology.

### 6.3 Suggestions for Further Study

The suggestions for further study result from the limitations of this study and are listed as follows:

1. Since this study was conducted within a group of companies with a limited number of uniform participants, the research needs to be expanded by researchers in other sectors or industries. Future researchers should investigate differences in gender, age, industry or culture.
2. This research focused on a qualitative research approach, which was dependent on the author's interpretation and attribution of findings in the field of EI. A larger data set comparing the different abilities of EI might result in a different simplification model of EI.
3. For this research the understanding of incorporated solutions and relationship building predominantly for high-value goods and services was used to discover the relationship between EI and sales employees' interactions with customers. Further research should also expand the investigation to other industry sectors.
4. As the key concepts of this thesis are based upon the literature of EI and sales interaction, empirical investigation is needed in the area of the complex and interactive nature of sales. This research should consider sales behaviour as an important component of the interaction with customers, consciously influenced by EI.
5. The measurement of a quotient of EI becomes blurred because, even for active mechanisms, everyone understands EI differently. Other researchers may expand their research by concentrating on a valid and adjustable measurement system in the field of EI.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

6. The new categories of the Conceptual Framework of EI/SI may lead other researchers to more sampling and investigation in that dimension of EI relative to other organisational entities.
7. Other researchers should also investigate the projected power of EI abilities, and whether these abilities could be trained and developed successfully.
8. Researchers may expand this concept to the level of organisational culture, because sales might be just a microcosm of a complex system like organisational culture.

Collins and Porras (2005) and De Geus (1997) also determined that organisational culture plays a crucial role when looking at long-lived, financially successful companies. They did not concentrate on a single factor or dimension like adaptiveness. They described progress relative to a core ideology involving “...values and sense of purpose that go beyond just making money” (Collins & Porras, 2005, p. 3).

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## Appendices

### 1.0 Consent Form

Dear Participants in the Research of **“The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Sales Performances of Companies – With a Particular Focus on Salespersons’ Interactions within a Selling Process”**,

The goal of this research is to provide a qualitative analysis of the assumption that there is a significant positive influence of emotional intelligence on sales employees’ interactions with customers within a selling situation, having a positive effect on companies’ sales performances. Especially single abilities of emotional intelligence, as i.e. self-awareness, empathy, will be tested to identify the factors of maximum influence and to get to know employees’ perceptions of these abilities.

However, for you as a participant for this research, it might be inevitable to understand the term of EI. Therefore Mayer & Salovey (1997, p. 10) provided a short but well-made definition of EI which follows within this paragraph.

“Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions, the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”

Therefore, this research tries to make a significant contribution to knowledge in this field, because it intends to identify the link between emotional intelligent salespeople and the sales performances of their companies. This will lead to the development of new categories of emotional intelligence for example *empathy* which might enable salespeople to understand and conjecture customer needs, including operations instructions in terms of business supporting criteria that are likely to stimulate sales performance through peoples’ deliberate interactions in sales.

The data generation and analysis requires a constant comparison, which in this research will be done with a semi-structured interview methodology. This qualitative approach aims to value respondents' perspective and to explore the importance of peoples' interaction and experiences (Kvale, 1996).

The number of participants for the semi-structured interview will be eight participants. The author considers the possibility of using a mixture of a decision-making map and a kind of oral exercise with the participants to facilitate the data collection during the interviews (Drew, 2014; Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014). The literature review around sales interaction and emotional intelligence led the author into the identification of five possible selling steps, probably influenced through emotional intelligence abilities during the interaction with customers. As a result, these five steps of selling are used to further investigate the influence of emotional intelligence abilities on these sales steps with special focus on the behaviour during their sales interactions with customers.

The first section includes questions that attempt to collect data of the participants' perceptions about emotional intelligence. The second section is created to gain information about the nature of the probable influence of emotional intelligence on generating increased sales. Finally, the last section of the interview is constructed to determine the appropriateness of the participants' perspectives and assumptions to the specific content.

The information created by this semi-structured interview is considered confidential information to be held by Mr. Thorsten Mehlhorn and the University of Gloucestershire. The results will be anonymously processed in this doctoral thesis to qualitative validate, if there is a positive correlation of emotional intelligence on companies' sales performances.

The interviews will take place in safe environment, and you as a participant have the possibility to withdraw at any time. The content will be kept anonymous and confidential

Furthermore, the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation 2018) requires that the interviewees must be provided with a privacy information regarding the collection, usage, and retention of their personal data. Therefore, please find the attached file of the Research Privacy Notice, and please find also link to the Privacy Notice, which is published on the website of the University of Gloucestershire:



<http://www.glos.ac.uk/docs/download/Privacy-notices/Research-Participants-Privacy-Notice.pdf>

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Thorsten Mehlhorn

e-mail:

Mobil:

## 2.0 Questionnaire

Company:.....

Industry:.....

Position:.....

Gender:  male  female

### 0.1 Experience

> 5 years  > 10 years  > 15 years.....

Further education:  Technician  foreman  business administrator   
other.....

University Degree:  Engineering  Economics  other.....

0.2 Age:  < 30  30 – 40  > 40  > 50  not specified

### Part 1 – Employee Perception

1.0 What impact do emotions have on your decision-making?

2.0 If negative emotions are decreasing your ability to make effective decisions, what are you going to do?

3.0 How would you proceed to better understand the feelings of others?

4.0 How do you get projects/tasks started?

5.0 What are your strengths?

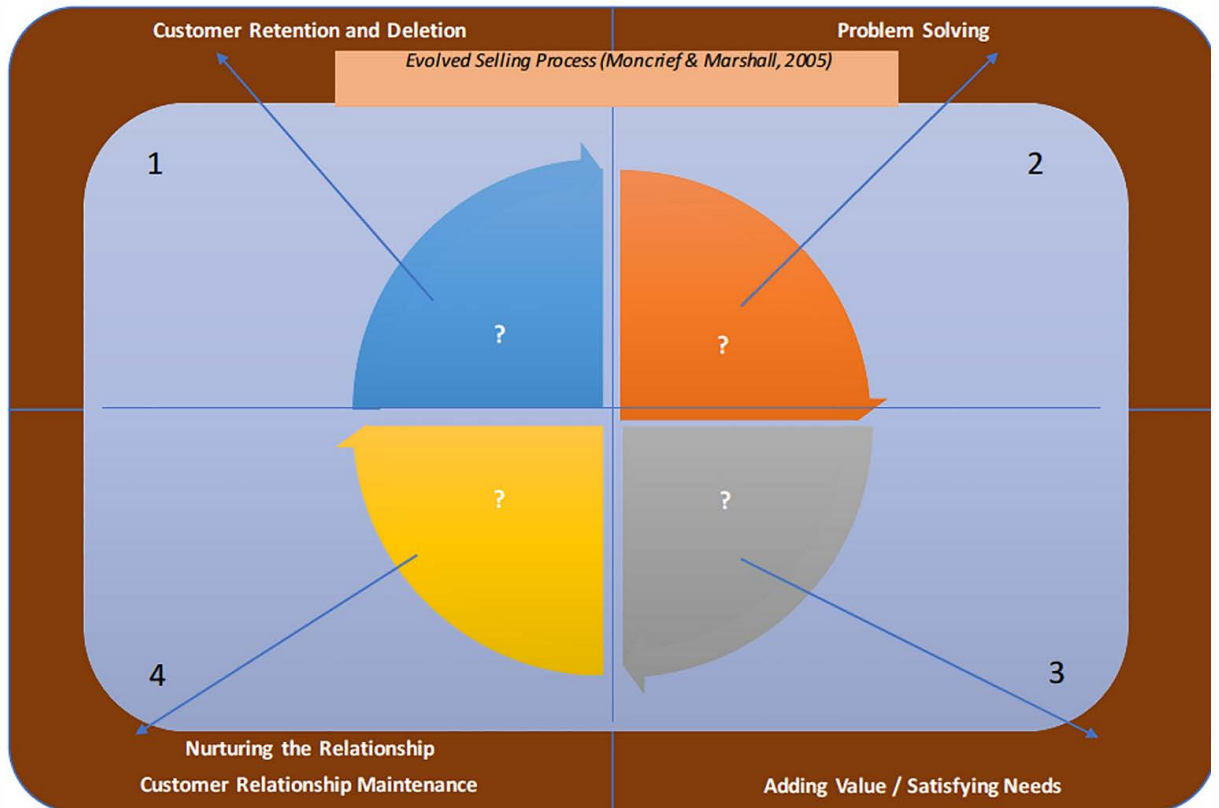
6.0 How could your strengths contribute to your organisation's performance and success?

7.0 How do you decrease your levels of stress?

8.0 How do you solve situations where you are in the position to act impulsively?

9.0 How do you augment a working relationship?

**Part 2 Decision-Making Map – EI/SI Relation**



*(the Decision-Making Map was used as a poster to provide enough space for the participants to add on)*

1.0 Please allocate the following named four superior consistency factors to each of the mentioned selling steps according to the displayed number, 1 to 4?

Please comment and explain your selection.

*(In the beginning, the researcher explained the term superior factor)*

***EI Perception/Social Awareness:*** *The ability to perceive and identify emotions, e.g. how emotions affect performance; empathy.*

***Use of Emotion/Resilience:*** *To moderate emotions which might steer the rational decision-making process, e.g. to solve conflicts or problems sensitively.*

***Emotion Management:*** *To control emotions, and as appropriate to modify in oneself and others, e.g. self-control; to overcome stressful situations.*

***Deliberate Understanding of Emotions:*** *The aptitude to understand, combine and process emotions, e.g. self-awareness; be sensitive to emotions (e.g. to regulate anger).*

**2.0** Please think about possible emotional intelligence abilities which might fit to each of the already allocated superior factor and selling step and place them regarding to your knowledge of emotional intelligence.

### **Part 3 Consciousness**

Please complete your decision-making map with real cases, true stories and useful examples of practice that might help to better understand the allocation of your emotional intelligence abilities in terms of generating increased sales.

### 3.0 CodeBook

DBA\_Munich11\_Mehlhorn- NVivo File  
Knoten\\AutoCode - Semi-Structured Interviews  
Heading = Questions = Sections

Name	Description
Part 2 Decision-Making Map – EI ~ SI Relation	The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on generating increased sales
Part 3 Consciousness	Consciously affect companies' sales performances/Real Cases
Q1~ Impact on Decision-Making – EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Self-Awareness
Q2~ Negative Emotions, decreasing the ability to make effective decisions – EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Self-Awareness
Q3~ Understand Feelings of Others—EI Perception	Employees' Perceptions – EI Perception/Social Awareness/Empathy
Q4~ Start Projects – Use of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Use of Emotions/Managing Emotions
Q5~ Strengths – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Sensitive to Emotions
Q6~ Strengths and Contribution to Organisational Success – Deliberate Understand of Emotions	Employees' Perceptions – Deliberate Understanding of Emotions/Sensitive to Emotions
Q7~ Decrease Stress – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Self-Control (Impulsiveness)
Q8~ Act Impulsively – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Self-Control (Impulsiveness)
Q9~ Augment Working Relationship – Emotion Management	Employees' Perceptions – Emotion Management – Relationship

Knoten\\Categorisation of Codes

Categorisation consists of: Customer Retention and Deletion, Problem-Solving, Nurturing the Relationship, Customer Relationship Management, Adding Values, Satisfying Needs

Name	Description
Adding Value	The customer needs confirmation about adding value—mostly salespeople try to use storytelling to get the customer on board.
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Adding Value	The ability to understand emotions by being sensitive to emotions.
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Adding Value	The ability to understand, combine and process emotions—find mutual goals.
Customer Relationship Maintenance	To get close with the customer.
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	The ability to regulate moods and emotions to treasure their partnerships.

Name	Description
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Relationship Maintenance	The ability to control emotions, and if necessary, to modify behaviour in oneself and others.
Customer Retention	To maintain customers.
EI Ability Nr 1 for Customer Retention	The ability to conceive emotions (needs, concerns).
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Customer Retention	The ability to recognise one's feelings (how they might affect performance).
Problem-Solving	To solve conflicts with customer.
EI Ability Nr. 1 for Problem-Solving	The ability to steer emotions to solve problems or conflicts sensitively.
EI Ability Nr. 2 for Problem-Solving	The ability to handle difficult persons and situations.

Knoten\Coding on

Classification and allocation of codes to their corresponding parent nodes and categories

Name	Description
Adding Value	The customer needs confirmation about adding value—mostly salespeople try to use storytelling to get customer on board.
Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	The aptitude to understand, combine and process emotions, e.g. self-awareness.
Use of Emotions—Resilience	To moderate emotions which might steer the rational decision-making process, e.g. to solve conflicts or problems sensitively.
Customer Relationship Maintenance	To get close with the customer.
EI Perception—Social Awareness	The ability to perceive and identify emotions, e.g. how emotions affect performance.
Emotion Management	To control emotions and, as appropriate, modify in oneself and others, e.g. self-control.
Customer Retention	To maintain customers.
Problem-Solving	To solve conflicts with customer.

Knoten\Lit Nodes vs Open Coding

Name	Description
Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	The aptitude to understand, combine and process emotions, e.g. self-awareness.
Self-Assessment	The ability to realise one's capabilities—to stick to the truth.
Self-Irony	The ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations.
Sensitive to Emotions	The ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions.
EI Perception—Social Awareness	The ability to perceive and identify emotions e.g. emotions affect performance.
Emotional Attachment	The ability to establish a relationship.
Empathy	The ability to be aware of emotions of others.
Escape	The ability to release or to let it go for the moment.
Self-Awareness	To recognise one's feelings.
Self-Effacement	The ability to be self-controlled in one's thinking.

Name	Description
EI Superior Factors	EI Superior Factors according to the literature review of this thesis—including description of abilities.
Emotion Management	To control emotions and, as appropriate, modify them in oneself and others, e.g. self-control.
Confidence	The ability to gain trust.
Relationship	The ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships.
Self-Control	The ability to overcome stressful situations.
Self-Questioning	The ability to modify one's and others' emotions to better understand.
Use of Emotions—Resilience	Moderate emotions which might steer the rational decision-making process, e.g. solve conflicts, or problems sensitively.
Confidence	The ability to be optimistic/positive to solve the situation.
Problem-Solving	The ability to realise and solve problems.
Self-Focused	The ability to disregard the negative emotions.
Strong-Minded	The ability to overcome one's weaker self.

Knoten\Open Coding

Parent Codes consists of: EI Perception, Use of Emotion, Emotion Management, Deliberate Understanding of Emotions

Name	Description
Deliberate Understanding of Emotions	The aptitude to understand, combine and process emotions, e.g. self-awareness.
Self-Assessment	The ability to realise one's capabilities—to stick to the truth.
Self-Irony	The ability to gain sympathy to solve critical situations.
Sensitive to Emotions	The ability to change or adapt to emotional reactions.
EI Perception—Social Awareness	The ability to perceive and identify emotions, e.g. emotions affect performance.
Emotional Attachment	The ability to establish a relationship.
Empathy	The ability to be aware of emotions of others.
Escape	The ability to release or to let it go for the moment.
Self-Awareness	To recognise one's feelings.
Self-Effacement	The ability to be self-controlled in one's thinking.
Emotion Management	Control emotions and, as appropriate, modify them in oneself and others, e.g. self-control.
Confidence	The ability to gain trust.
Relationship	The ability to establish and maintain efficient relationships.
Self-Control	The ability to overcome stressful situations.
Self-Questioning	The ability to modify one's and others' emotions to better understand.
Use of Emotions—Resilience	Moderate emotions which might steer the rational decision-making process, e.g. solve conflicts or problems sensitively.
Confidence	The ability to be optimistic/positive to solve the situation.
Problem-Solving	The ability to realise and solve problems.
Self-Focused	The ability to disregard the negative emotions.
Strong-Minded	The ability to overcome one's weaker self.

## Knoten\\Real Cases—Relationship to Model

The relationship between the Nodes of EI - SI will be linked with real cases

Name	Description
Adding Value—Satisfying Needs	-
Customer Retention and Deletion	-
Nurturing the Relationship—Customer Relationship Maintenance	-
Problem-Solving	-