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Shima Pourazami

Emotional intelligence in sales

– self-management competency from the
salesperson's point of view



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The present Master's thesis focused on the importance of self-management competency in sales from a salesperson's point of view. Self-management competency is an essential part of showing that a salesperson is a reliable person. Those without this competency may be unpredictable. Hence, the first step to success for a salesperson is to manage oneself. Based on Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence theory and his EI competency model (2000), the present study was carried out through documentary and library studies, electronic resources, and interview methods of data collection. Four sellers from different B2C and B2B companies with various positions and backgrounds within professional sales in Finland were interviewed to investigate the presumptions.

The study aims to investigate the importance of self-management competency from the salesperson's point of view. It was carried out by highlighting the skills that constitute self-management competency. The main research questions of the study focused on how important self-management competency is for a salesperson, how do salespersons describe the role of self-management competency in sales success. and what is the role of the six skills subdivisions of self-management play. The results of the study confirmed that self-management competency is important for a salesperson and its constituent

skills may have an impact on the salesperson's ability to establish successful relationships with customers.

Keywords:

Emotional intelligence, Emotional intelligence competency, Sales, Self-management.

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List of abbreviations

EI	Emotional intelligence
EIC	Emotional intelligence competency
IQ	Intelligence quotient
B2C	Business to Consumer
B2B	Business to Business

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of study

One of the essential features in today's dynamic sales environment is a salesperson's knowledge and skills for developing an organization's performance, creativeness, innovativeness, and competitiveness. In today's modern world, every organization wants to be successful as they compete and face different challenges to achieve their targets. Globalization and technological advancement can bring more initiative for achieving the targets. It means that the organization's success depends on the salespersons, and because of their significant roles, there is a need for salesperson motivations (Dutt, 2015).

"In the sales literature, it is often recognized that sales account management requires a manager who possesses emotional skills and can maintain self-control under pressure in all sales tasks" (Whisker & Poulis, 2015, p. 188). A highly emotionally intelligent salesperson "will be resilient, and able to maintain self-control and deal with demanding situations" (Whisker & Poulis, 2015, p. 189). Although EI is commonly applied in management and leadership, it may also have a substantial impact on sales. Based on preliminary research, there is a robust causal relationship between emotions and people's success in sales (Bryant, 2005).

The term Emotional intelligence refers to a set of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills which help individuals in recognizing and understanding emotions, motivating themselves and others, and to maintain emotional stability (Houston, 2020). A salesperson with high emotional intelligence can understand and manage subconscious excitement and client excitement. Based on published research results, increased emotional intelligence level appears to be an influential factor in improving salespeople's success (Goroka, 2019). Self-management competency is an essential part of showing that a salesperson is a reliable person (Glassdoor, 2021). Those without this competency may be

unpredictable. With self-regulation, a salesperson can calm intense emotions and thoughts, leading to more innovative actions (Glassdoor, 2021).

Emotional intelligence has been defined as a set of interconnected emotional competencies consisting "of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management" (Clarker, 2012, p. 7). In this study, self-management competency was selected - from the four EI competencies - as the primary study focus, because self-management, in addition to its connection to the other competencies, is the main prerequisite for social awareness and relationship management (Goleman, 1998). The first step to success for a salesperson is to manage oneself (Cates, 2017). This interconnection was also a reason behind the focus of this study.

To better grasp the concept and importance of emotional intelligence in sales, it is important to first define the elements and properties which are influenced by EI. "As selling is a multifaceted and demanding line of work and to be able to sell, salesperson must have excellent communication skill" (Doyle, 2020, para. 10). Thus, the role and importance of EI in sales is then perhaps best understood within the confines of the salesperson, the role of which, to no small extent, depends on whether the company in question is selling directly to consumers or to other businesses (Churchill et al., 1985).

The salesperson is an individual that represents a company to the customers by performing tasks such as prospecting, communicating, selling, servicing, information gathering, and relationship building (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Today, the salesperson must be able to use a wide array of skills for modern selling activity which also concern customer perspective (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). The salesperson is among an organization's most critical assets (Goleman, 1998).

Since salespersons' positions require them to relate to their customers, it is understood that sales professionals can communicate effectively, empathize, have self-control, initiative, and respect their clients' needs. However, EI has yet to be thoroughly researched in the sales field. While Bryant - in his quantitative

research - had shown that emotional intelligence affects sales relationships, he also stated that more research needs to be conducted (Bryant, 2005).

Previous research has primarily explored emotional intelligence at the level of management and organizational leadership (White, 2019). There has been limited research on the effects and importance of emotional intelligence for salespeople and sales success. Existing parameters such as individual success also impose challenges in exploring the full influence of EI, in parts due to the complexity arising from their measurements.

Furthermore, some industries naturally place a lot of emphasis on IQ (White, 2019). Intelligence Quotient (IQ) - calculated through an intelligence test – is a measurement of individual intelligence which is expressed in numbers and is often used to counterargue emotional intelligence (Grant, 2014). While IQ has substantial relevance in sales, it is important to note that interpersonal relations act as a foundation of any business. Individuals who advocate for emotional intelligence often argue that IQ plays a minimal role in people's success, while emotional intelligence enhances it (Landry, 2019).

1.2 Goals and Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the importance of self-management competency from the salesperson's point of view. This is investigated by highlighting the skills that constitute self-management competency. By interviewing four self-proclaimed successful salespersons, the study aims to investigate the importance of self-management competency for a salesperson and answer the following research questions:

1. How important is self-management competency for a salesperson?
 - 1.1. How do salespersons describe the role of self-management competency in sales success?
 - 1.2. What is the role of the six skill subdivisions of self-management?

The level of emotional intelligence varies from person to person, and how one learns EI competencies will be different for each person (Shaban & Yadav, 2018). Emotional intelligence entails recognizing and controlling emotions; thus, it plays a role in individual success and organization efficiency (Shaban & Yadav, 2018). In other words, an individual with higher emotional intelligence successfully mixes cognitive, physiological, and competitive emotional components (Shaban & Yadav, 2018).

1.3 Research methods

A literature review was conducted to assess a comprehensive overview of resources, such as books, dissertations, project reports, journals, and scientific journals. In addition, electronic resources provided an opportunity to obtain extensive added information and relevant scientific articles. A series of personal face-to-face interviews were then conducted with salespersons with different working experiences and backgrounds. The aim of the interviews was to investigate the importance of self-management competency for salespeople from a salesperson's point of view, which included investigation of the skills which constitute self-management competency. Everyone's perception and perspective of the importance of self-management competency was described based on the Goleman competency model (2000).

The interview questions covered all four competencies of emotional intelligence. However, as the primary focus of the research was on self-management competency, the questions related to self-regulation and self-motivation, which constitute self-management competency as well as the questions about sales performance were the focus point of the data collected from the interviews. The complete interview questionnaire is presented in appendix 2.

The interview was based on the questionnaire used by Felton (2009) which originated from McCann, Matthews, Zeidner test (2003). It is noteworthy to mention that the questions were open-ended and asked in a non-leading, neutral manner that allowed the participants to express themselves in their own

words. Everyone was interviewed separately and was given the freedom to express and explain their opinion. The duration of the interviews varied from 60 to 90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours), depending on each interviewee.

The collected data was subsequently reviewed and compared with relevant literature based on General Data Protection Regulation (2016), all data are in a safe file, and the author has the responsibility of securing confidential information. Therefore, the author, after finalizing this study, removes and deletes all data. The interview was conducted with four salespersons from different B2C and B2B companies with various positions, as presented in table 1. This diversity within the study provided an opportunity to gain different perspectives of the effects of emotional intelligence on salespersons' performance. All interviewees have more than ten years of sales experience in Finland.

Table 1. Interviewee's information.

Interviewees	Sex	Title	Age	Type of business & sales experience
person A	Female	Store manager, department store.	30-40	B2C / 12 years
person B	Female	Spa manager.	40-50	B2C /23 years
person C	Male	Sales representative.	35-45	B2B, B2C /15 years
person D	Male	Customer service manager representative.	35-45	B2B, B2C /18 years

2 Literature Review

2.1 Emotional intelligence concept

This study's literature review is based on Goleman's theory (1995) and Goleman's competencies model, which was published by Daniel Goleman (2000) in *Emotional intelligence*. Emotional intelligence, a unique way of being smart, is a key to high performance at all levels, particularly for outstanding leadership (Key step media, 2017). "Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize our own feelings and those of others and manage emotions effectively in ourselves and our relationships. It is about much more than just having empathy or being sensitive – that's a common misconception about EI" (Key step media, 2017, para. 2).

Researchers who study industrial-organizational psychology have always considered mood and intelligence as two research areas even before the term emotional intelligence was coined. Most of the research has been based on the understanding of cognitive factors (Goleman, 1995). Thorndike (1920) had previously found that many things could not be explained with intelligence, therefore he put forward social intelligence (Thorndike, 1920). Although then, social intelligence was a multi-dimensional concept (Thorndike, 1920).

Popularity of Emotional intelligence as a concept, first grew from the first construct laid by Howard Gardener in his Social Intelligence studies (1983). This construct distinguished two types of intelligence: Interpersonal intelligence and Intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence refers to an individual's ability to react to the emotions of others and includes both the ability to perceive emotions and empathize. The importance of interpersonal intelligence can be exemplified by observing how emotions are often expressed through vocal tones, facial expressions, and other nonverbal ways, rather than verbal (Goleman, 1995). Intrapersonal intelligence relates to perceiving one's own emotions and comprises self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation (Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2003).

Emotional intelligence theory developed more rapidly after 1983. In 1990, Mayer was the first to put forward emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004); he defined emotional intelligence as emotions and feelings that individuals use to monitor themselves and behaviors in others. Furthermore, people use such information to guide their thoughts and actions (Mayer et al., 2004). He believed that emotional intelligence consisted of three parts: individual appraisal and their ability to express feelings, to adjust their emotions, and to use emotions to deal with problems (Mayer et al., 2004).

With further research advancements, Mayer successively adjusted his classification of EI three times and formed four dimensions, which were more in-depth one after another, including the perception of emotions, appreciation, and ability to express, the promotion of emotion towards thinking ability, understanding, and analysis ability of emotions, and mature regulation ability to the emotions (Mayer et al., 2004). Many subsequent studies have been based on emotional processing abilities, called a capacity model (Hou & Shao, 2016), characteristics of which are shown in table 2.

Table 2. The four theoretical models of EI.

Theoretical model	Definition	Characteristics
Capacity model (Mayer, 1990).	Individuals monitor their own emotions and emotions in others; and they identify and use these information to guide their own ability.	Strictly limit it in the emotional domain.
Hybrid model (Goleman, 1995).	Display the competency form the four aspects, namely, self-consciousness, self-management, social awareness and social skills in effective ways.	Broadly contain specific social communication skills, such as optimism.
Competency model (Bar-on, 1988).	Knowledge and ability of effectively dealing with a series of social emotions existed in the environmental requirements.	Emotional intelligence is a kind of personal management ability, while social intelligence is a kind of relationship skill.
Trait model (Petridse & Furnham, 2001).	A collection of personality traits rooted in the lower level of society and self perception ability.	Include social intelligence, cognitive intelligence, selfconsciousness, personality characteristics and other factors.

(Hou & Shao, 2016). Theory of emotional intelligence development both at home and abroad.

Goleman viewed emotional intelligence as a type of ability which an individual would use in specific situations, at appropriate times, often in effective ways to display self-consciousness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). Unlike Mayer's point of view, he put some understanding and emotional expressions into specific social and communication skills, such as optimism, motivation, self-consciousness, into the emotional intelligence category (Goleman, 1995). Compared to the ability model, this division about the emotional intelligence ability model was broad. Goleman believed that emotional intelligence had been composed of the ability to understand self-emotions, effectively managing those emotions, self-motivation, understanding emotions in others, and the management of interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, he added personality traits into emotional intelligence, however since there were no clear boundaries, the later generations called it a hybrid model (Hou & Shao, 2016). In this model, emotional intelligence had been treated as a social skill and was quickly expanded into the business management field (Goleman, 1995).

The competency model put forward by Bar-on (1988) took emotional intelligence as a series of social knowledge and abilities of a series of emotions affecting the environmental requirements (Bar-On, 1988). He carried on the strict distinction between emotional intelligence and social intelligence, which are highly related (Bar-On, 1998). Furthermore, he believed that emotional intelligence is an essential factor which impacts whether a person can succeed, thus directly affects the person's mental health (Bar-On, 1998).

The trait model held that emotional intelligence is some of a series of personality traits. Petrides (2001) defined emotional intelligence as “a collection of the personality traits rooted in the lower level of humanity and self-perception ability” (Petridse & Furnham, 2001, p. 425–448). Petrides believed that emotional intelligence includes social intelligence, cognitive intelligence, self-consciousness and personality characteristics, and other factors (Petridse & Furnham, 2001).

The above are the current mainstream theories of emotional intelligence, and subsequent scholars based their researches on these theories. In table 2, four theories of emotional ability, hybrid model, competency and personality traits proposed definitions which explained emotional intelligence. The four theoretical models have been developed since (Hou & Shao, 2016).

2.2 Emotional intelligence competency

Daniel Goleman has defined emotional intelligence as a set of interconnected emotional competencies consisting of self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, self-discipline, self-motivation, and social skills (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence competency can be further categorized as individualistic or social. Individualistic competencies include self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation (Goleman, 1998). Social competencies include empathy, relationship management, and social awareness (Goleman, 1998). Adrian Cain, in his presentation (2015), described Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence at work by constructing a table, an overview of this table is presented in picture 1.

Picture 1. Five components of emotional intelligence at work.

Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work

	Definition	Hallmarks
Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to recognise and understand your moods, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-confidence Realistic self assessment
Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses or moods The propensity to suspend judgment – to think before acting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustworthiness and integrity Comfort with ambiguity Openness to change
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong drive to achieve Optimism, even in the face of failure Organisational commitment
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expertise in building and retaining talent Cross-cultural sensitivity Service to clients
Social skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks Ability to find common ground and build rapport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness in leading change Persuasiveness Expertise in building and leading teams

(Cain, 2015). Emotional intelligence in the workplace secretary's forum.

"In (2000), Goleman developed his emotional intelligence competency model further, focusing on four key categories and various sub-categories. These categories are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management" (Bond, 2016, para. 9). In the developed model, self-regulation and motivation have been merged and produced a self-management category (Singh, 2004). Picture 2 provides a brief overview of this newly developed model.

Picture 2. Daniel Goleman developed EIC model.

Category	Personal Competencies (Self)	Social Competencies (Other)
Recognition	Self-Awareness (it includes three sub-competencies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emotional self-awareness ● Accurate self-assessment ● Self-confidence 	Social Awareness (it includes three sub-competencies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathy ● Service orientation ● Organizational awareness
Regulation	Self-Management (it includes six sub-competencies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emotional self-control ● Trustworthiness ● Conscientiousness ● Adaptability ● Achievement drive ● Initiative 	Relationship Management (it includes eight sub-competencies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing others ● Influence ● Communication ● Conflict management ● Visionary leadership ● Catalyzing change ● Building bonds ● Teamwork and collaboration

(Chermiss & Goleman, 2001, P. 28). An updated version from the 1998 model by Goleman combined motivation and self-regulation under self-management.

2.3 Self-management competency

The self-management competency category that Goleman established was to exercise control over temperament, emotions, and possibilities. The Self-Management category of EI abilities encompasses six skills. According to the emotional competency model by Goleman (2000), the competency of self-management consists of emotional self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive, and initiative. In the below table, all self-management's skills are described shortly one by one.

Table 3. Operational definitions of self-management variable.

Variable	Operational Definition
Emotional self- control	Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control.
Trustworthiness	Displaying honesty and integrity.
Conscientiousness	Demonstrating responsibility in managing oneself.
Adaptability	Flexibility in adapting to changing situations or obstacles.
Achievement drive	The guiding drive to meet an internal standard of excellence.
Initiative	Readiness to act.

(Faiz Osman, 2014, p. 2). The relationship between emotional and job satisfaction.

Self-Control

"First on the list is self-control skill, which manifests as the absence of distress and disruptive feelings. Signs of this competency include being unfazed in stressful situations or dealing with a hostile person without lashing out in return" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001, p. 6). Self-control is considered as one of the hidden competencies (Goleman, 1998). To achieve self-control skill, self-awareness is a prerequisite. Self-control helps individuals transform what appears as threatening into an opportunity and a propelling challenge (Goleman, 1998). Individuals who possess this skill can control sudden and unpleasant emotions. They remain calm, in control, and optimistic, even during exhausting moments. Furthermore, they stay focused and perceptive under pressure (Goleman, 1998).

It is important to note that exercising self-control is not about absolute control, which can lead to emotional and self-control suppression. Emotional self-control

is emotional competency, translating into how to choose to express emotions. Expression of emotions differs in diverse cultures (Goleman, 1998). Therefore, cultures can have a profound impact on how people display, perceive, and experience emotions. The concept of culture is a shared set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, and behavior organized around a central theme and found among speakers of one language, in one period, and in one geographic region (Lumenlearning, 2021). This is a broad topic that the author will not touch upon here.

Trustworthiness and Conscientiousness

Trustworthiness skill means being aware that "others know one's values and principles, intentions, and feelings and acting in the same more consistent ways" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001,p. 7). "Trustworthy individuals speak openly about their own mistakes" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001,p. 7) in front of others. A deficit in this ability can impact work procedures and performance (Goleman, 1998). Trustworthiness is to maintain honesty and to adhere to one's moral guidelines, and conscientiousness is the main principle of success in any field (Goleman,1998).

Research on professional performance shows that high performance in every occupation depends on individual conscientiousness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Conscientiousness holds significance in achieving outstanding performance (Goleman, 1998). Based on Goleman's writings (1998), it is worth to note that conscientiousness in the absence of empathy or social skills could be problematic. Conscientiousness should not be replaced by the drive to satisfy administration expectations, as this can lead to the subjugation of individual creativity. Conscientiousness is highly valued. However, without empathy and other social skills, it can lead to problems in social groups. For example, conscientious individuals set extremely lofty standards for themselves and are often quick to compose themselves; therefore, they are inclined to be judgmental about those who may struggle to turn up on time or keep their promises. Conscientiousness can also take the form of rigid maintenance of

standards, which can dampen creativity (Goleman, 1998). Furthermore, conscientious individuals are often committed and stay faithful to their promises; they hold themselves accountable and are focused and disciplined in their work (Goleman, 1998).

Adaptability

Adaptability in the face of change is a significantly valuable and useful skill (Goleman, 1998). Flexible individuals effortlessly face numerous demands, priority switches, and fast changes. Depending on the situation, they readjust their reactions and work solutions to different situations; and exercise flexibility in their perspective (Goleman, 1998). Emotional resilience allows an individual to deal more easily with the emotions that often accompany uncertainty on the job (Amabile, 1988). A person with this skill can be creative in applying innovative ideas to achieve results. Conversely, people who are not comfortable with taking risks "and change become naysayers who can undermine innovative ideas or respond slowly to any change in the marketplace" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001, p. 7). Businesses that are less formal and offer more flexible roles to employees keep an open information flow; such businesses develop multi-disciplinary team-oriented structures and experience a more significant degree of innovation (Amabile, 1988).

Achievement Drive

Achievement drive refers to an optimistic strive towards continuous improvements in performance (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). It is characterized by the amount of desire an individual has towards a certain goal, as well as the amount of effort and commitment that they are willing to put in, to achieve it (Schimetz, 2103). Motivation, a key factor which can stem from various sources, underlies the amount of effort and commitment that characterizes achievement drive.

Substantial endeavors begin with acute emotions. Emotions compel individuals to follow their goals and intensify their motives, which in return, guides their perceptions and leads to actions (Goleman, 1998). Motivations are the

navigator of consciousness for discovering opportunities and its own is the prerequisite to the following (Goleman, 1998):

- Reason for Progress (motive)
- Commitment
- Creativity and Optimism

Success and progress are aligned with one another. Strive to achieve or to reach ameliorated standards best defines motivational skills. Those who possess this set challenging goals for themselves and take calculated risks; and to remove doubts and discover better work solutions, seek to gain information and welcome development (Goleman, 1998).

Individuals who fiercely pursue their goals display an obsessive interest in discovering information and new theories, especially if they are relative to their goals (Goleman, 1998). They systematically establish connections with other individuals to gain insight into different perspectives; and organize them into an active network to continuously access the newest information (Goleman, 1998). Those who lack this capability are satisfied with any information that is accessible to them (Goleman, 1998).

Commitment can be defined as a state of harmony with the goals of a group or an organization. Harmonizing and unifying personal goals with the goals of a company is the essence of commitment (Goleman, 1998). Commitment is an emotional category; when these goals are unified, individuals will experience an intense sense of belonging. Those who value organizational responsibilities and honestly believe in them not only put their full effort into their fulfillment, but they are also prepared to make sacrifices - if necessary. They gain a sense of satisfaction from risky objectives and actively pursue opportunities to accomplish their group duties (Goleman, 1998). Employees who understand their values or ambitions know whether they fit within an organization or not. Once they feel harmony, their duty is spontaneous and iron-clad (Goleman, 1998).

A creative individual takes enjoyment in their originality. Their creative work is grounded in innovative ideas to achieve results. Those who possess this talent can quickly identify critical subjects and make incredible complex problems look easy. More importantly, they can discover unique connections and patterns often concealed from others (Goleman, 1998).

"Optimism is a crucial ingredient of achievement because it can determine one's reactions to events or circumstances; those with high achievement are pro unfavorable active and persistent, have an optimistic attitude toward setbacks, and operate from the hope of success" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001, p. 7). Regarding optimism, those who possess this competency persist in their pursuit of goals - despite obstacles and problems along the way. Moreover, instead of being fearful of failure, they are hopeful of succeeding. These individuals view issues as the cause of controllable situations, not personal errors (Goleman, 1998).

Initiative

Individuals who act before being forced to do things possess the initiative skill. This entails taking anticipatory action to avoid problems before they even happen. In addition, this skill allows the person to take advantage of valuable opportunities before others (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). Individuals who do not take initiative are not pioneers and are more of reactionary individuals and short-sighted (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). Those who possess this skill seek unique ideas from diverse sources, propose unique solutions to problems, contemplate topics with a fresh perspective, and are adventurous (Goleman, 1998).

2.4 Self-management competency in Sales

Influencing and persuasion are only one part of selling (Pederson et al., 1988). Selling also involves helping customers identify the problems, supplying information on potential solutions, and providing after-the-sales service to ensure long-term sustainable relationships (Pederson et al., 1988). Thus, selling

is the process of understanding the customer's problem, helping them to understand that problem, solving the problem with the product or service, and maintaining the relationship for long-term value (Pederson et al., 1988). Selling is not only about matters of leads, sales meetings, and closing contracts (Gitomer, 1994); it is not even a matter of the quality of the product and the service's response, instead, selling is a matter of who the salesperson is, what his/her attitude is, and how dedicated the salesperson is to personal excellence (Gitomer, 2008). A salesperson with low EI can make mistakes, even with the best sales training. At the same time, salespersons with both high intrapersonal and interpersonal EI will constantly be ahead of others (Stanley, 2013). Emotionally intelligent salespeople are strong in both self-management and people management (Stanley, 2013).

Research around customer satisfaction shows that customer satisfaction and future recommendations are based on an emotional connection with the salesperson (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). "Customers who like their salesperson are twelve times more likely to continue to repurchase." (Smith & Rutigliano, 2003).

As presented earlier, many salespersons have heard the common saying that sales are an art and a science. The art of sales pertains to the salesperson's ability to read and connect with the buyer by paying attention to nonverbal clues (Stanley, 2013). And the science of sales involves following a defined sales process and applying specific selling skills at each stage of sales (Stanley, 2013).

However, as Stanley (2013) said in *Emotional intelligence and sales success*, it is time to update and introduce sales as a combination of art, science, and neuroscience (Stanley, 2013). Neuroscience is defined in The Merriam-Webster Dictionary as " a branch of the life sciences that deals with anatomy, physiology, biochemistry or molecular biology of nerves and nervous tissues, especially with their relation to behavior and learning." (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

Knowledge of neuroscience increases the effect of both the art and science of sales and ensures that salespeople consistently execute the influence skills they have garnered to achieve sustainable sales results (Stanely, 2013).

Goleman, after investigating scientific neuroscience literature, claimed that conflicts and pressures occur continuously and consistently during the worst possible times. The human body does not distinguish the home from the workplace, and pressure builds up regardless of the distraught source. Hormones discharged under pressure are sufficient to fight or escape threatening situations (Goleman, 1998). Unfortunately, this discharge continues for hours and quickly affects blood pressure, and subsequently raises the heart rate while lowering the concentration of sugar in our blood. An individual who can find robust and logical solutions and make the right move despite these circumstances. Naturally, mental pressures manifest consciously or unconsciously and are often inescapable (Goleman, 1998).

The significance of self-control displayed the value of emotional control in critical moments (Goleman, 1998). Whenever tension transpires or is instigating between a customer and a seller, those who exercise self-control and keep their emotions in check triumph (Goleman, 1998).

In a challenging sales situation, emotions take over and lead to self-doubt and frustration (Stanley, 2013). But, according to Dr. John Arden, author of *Rewire Your Brain*, “you cannot change how you think and feel without changing your brain.” (Arden, 2010). This entails that, unless a salesperson changes their mental pathways, new behaviors, responses, and skills will not be executed. Conversely, when the salesperson understands better how their brain works, they are more likely to be successful (Stanley, 2013).

During intense situations with angry customers, the following characteristics are often noted from salespersons who lack self-management competency (Stanley, 2013):

- The salesperson becomes more aggressive and leans forward towards the prospect.

- The salesperson speaks faster and louder.
- The salesperson becomes defensive, and the tone of his voice becomes sharp and short.
- The salesperson goes into a product dump to prove how smart they are.
- The salesperson tries to engage the hostile buyer by asking specific questions.

The fight-or-flight response, triggered by the lack of adequate emotional management, is often the root cause of the lack of sales skills execution (Stanley, 2013). The salesperson knows that they must follow their sales process, but the salesperson falls into the prospect's buying process under pressure because of pressure (Stanley, 2013). As a result, the salesperson cannot respond to certain skills that they have been taught (Stanley, 2013). At this stage, self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability, and initiative skills will help salesperson to change the way of discussion. When customers feel that a salesperson has control over themselves, displays trustworthiness, and is conscientious, they feel safe and engage more openly in conversation (Stanley, 2013).

Self-control competence leads a salesforce to show ethical behavior. The ethical behavior of salesforces is also essential in creating customer satisfaction because salesforces present their organization image in their behavior and interactions with customers. According to Laith Alrubaiee (2012), ethical behavior of a salesperson significantly impacts customer relationships and commitment. When the salesperson shows high ethical behavior, customers will have more trust in the organization. So, the salespersons' direct actions can increase the customer trust in salesforce and organization (Zia et al., 2016).

Salesperson who possesses this competency breed trust through proper behavior. They accept their mistakes; oppose the malevolence and immoral acts of others, and maintain a moralistic stance (Goleman, 1998). To these salespeople, conscientiousness competency has been well-defined (Goleman, 1998). In the face of the complex performance environment, there is a need to return to human motivation basics to understand that financial incentives hope

to move the sales department's behaviors, and non-financial incentives are equally essential to support sales performance growth. Hence motivation is the critical factor in influencing humans to work better, and an increase in motivation will result in higher productivity and more profit for organizations. Kalu and Better (2010), in their research, mentioned that working harder or putting more effort into work is directly correlated with the performance of the salesperson, and the salesperson believes that doing a certain amount of work will get him a certain amount of reward (Dutt, 2015). In the motivation literature, it has been observed that motivation (i.e., Financial, and nonfinancial) and training impact Salesperson performance. Organizational performance and effectiveness depend upon salesperson performance, and training is a tool to improve salesperson performance (Dutt, 2015).

As presented earlier, the face of a company and the primary source of revenues, the salesperson is among an organization's most critical assets. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a high-performing salesperson, especially in industries or companies undergoing meaningful change. With constant shocks such as internal strategic shifts, deregulation, globalization, customer behavior changes, and new competitors' tactics, many salespersons have lost track of customer behavior and best practices for succeeding in their industries. Thus, having a salesperson with initiative and adaptability competencies can change the game, since there is more than one set of skills required to satisfy customers. For example, a salesperson with adaptability and initiative skills requires self-control and optimism competency (Landry, 2007).

3 Results

3.1 Important self-management competency

This chapter presents the key findings from the interviews with the goal of understanding the essentiality of self-management competency. The purpose of the interview was to investigate the importance of self-management competency for salesperson and to understand how salespersons describe the role of self-management competency in their sales success. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate whether a salesperson would find the six skills which constitute self-management competency to be important or not. In this chapter, the author shared each interviewee's primary and vital data based on six skills that constitute self-management competency.

Emotional self-control

All interviewees valued self-control skills and they believed that it effectively impacted their relationships with customers. All interviewees agreed control emotions are essential and have an impact on successful sales and customer relationships. Each interviewee had their own ways to maintain self-control. One of the interviewees - during exhausting moments - tried to solve customers' problems by displaying their passion for the work. The interviewee replied that she begins to breathe hard and feels pressure at her temples; and to control these emotions, she could drink icy water. Another interviewee kept calm and in control when listening to an angry customer, which helped him to understand the customer's situation better. He also mentioned that he takes a moment to organize his mind and remains silent for a few seconds to find the right words. The interviewee answered that controlling emotions during a sales call (conversation, meeting, presentation) is important because a salesperson should never build up negative feelings between himself and a buyer. One interviewee believed that controlling has a beneficial effect on the sales process. However, he also mentioned that one should not always control emotions and let the customer evaluate what he/she is losing. The table below

presents some highlight points from the interview answers about emotional self-control skills.

Table 4. Emotional self-control from the perspective of the interviewees.

emotional Self-Control	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
<p>Show passion.</p> <p>Listen to the angry customer.</p>	<p>Dealing with an angry person without doing retaliating.</p> <p>Salesperson should never build up negative feelings between themselves and customers.</p> <p>Controlling emotions is essential and must maintain control, yet occasionally it is not easy to control negative emotions.</p>

Trustworthiness

All interviewees were adhering to this competency as a moral guideline. In complicated situations, they ask questions to make clear the issue and show customers that they are a part of the solution. The interviewee tried to show empathy with customers, he/she tried to show the customers they are valuable, and customers' needs are prioritized. The interviewee replied that he asks customers whether they want to listen to his words. Moreover, he tries to offer the best solution and wants to show that he can discuss issues. Another interviewee mentioned that when she started asking questions, customers understood that they do not need to be angry since they understand that she wishes to fix the problem quickly. The interviewee tried to empathize and show them that she wanted to be part of the solution. The highlight points noted from the interviewees' response regarding trustworthiness is presented in table 5.

Table 5. Trustworthiness from the perspective of the interviewees.

Trustworthiness	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
<p>Ask questions.</p> <p>Show empathy.</p>	<p>When customers feel that salespersons have control over themselves and talk with trustworthiness, they feel safe and engage more openly in conversation.</p> <p>More conversation helps salesperson to improve customer relationships.</p>

Conscientiousness

All interviewees pointed to conscientiousness skills when answering questions about the importance of self-control. The interviewee replied that it is difficult sometimes for her to not take this personal issue, as some customers think that she has created the products and they want her to accept it as her responsibility. But she tried to dose not to personalize issues. Another interviewee explained that based on customer rules in her organization, she is not allowed to take the issue personally; and she must reconnect with the customer positively. Another interviewee tried to empathize and accompany them that he wants to be part of the solution, to show his commitment and the company's responsibility. To another interviewee also, it was especially important to have a commitment to her customers. Table 6 contains highlight points noted regarding interviewees' perspectives on conscientiousness.

Table 6. Conscientiousness from the perspective of the interviewees.

Conscientiousness	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
Empathize and accompany. Do not personalize issues. Do not judge customer behavior. Adhere to company rules and policies.	Commitment to the customers and business or company goal /Take responsibility. They agreed that commitment and responsibility are essential and have an impact on sales success.

Adaptability

Interviewees were familiar with the skill of adaptability and considered this skill important in relation to the customer. Only one had a slightly different opinion. He preferred not to step too much beyond the framework he had chosen for himself. All interviews had their own way to provide adaptability skills. The interviewee said that closing sales is not a priority and maintaining relationships with customers was of equal significance. So being a creative salesperson helped her keep a sustainable relationship with customers. Another interviewee said that at the exhausting moment, he gives the customer has a chance to share their emotions. It helps him to understand emotional situations better. Thus, he could find the best way to solve the problem. In the table below, the author wrote some highlight points of interviewees' view about adaptability skill.

Table 7. Adaptability from the perspective of the interviewees.

Adaptability	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
<p>Closing sales is not a priority.</p> <p>Creative salesperson.</p> <p>Giving the customer a chance to share their emotions.</p>	<p>Can do anything and be a creative salesperson to keep a sustainable relationship with customers.</p>

Optimism as part of the achievement drive

All interviewees showed optimism about succeeding in selling and developing their business. The Interviewee answered that she wants to build her business and become an influential brand in her respective market. Another interviewee said that he does hard-working for his own goals, and his performance is affected by the opinions of customers and other stakeholders. All interviewees had achievement drives. The one thought that if a show that salesperson has adaptability skill in emotional situations, which can help her to be more successful. Another interviewee was committed to the company and knew that it demands his best performance to grow it.

Table 8. Optimism from the perspective of the interviewees.

Optimism	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
<p>Hard-working.</p> <p>Be an influential brand.</p> <p>Show adaptability skill.</p>	<p>Optimism is a one key ingredient of achievement.</p>

Motivation

All interviewees had their own reason for motivation. And every interviewee mentioned that self-motivation was critical for success in sales. One interviewee answered that she was self-motivated and she wished to develop her business. Other Interviewees were self-motivated too, and they wanted to have a job promotion. They try to be professional and follow strict work standards. Another interviewee believed that being a partner of and shareholder in his own company was one of the best drivers for his progress. In the importance of self-motivation, they believe that self-motivation keeps their hope up for a prolonged period and helps them continue trying without getting tired. In addition, one of the interviewees mentioned that personal motivation has helped her become more realistic and realize that not everything is always under her control. In the table below, the author wrote some highlight points of interviewees' view about motivation skill. They agreed that when a salesperson enjoys their work, it would affect their ability to take on further responsibilities and develop their creativity.

Table 9. Motivation from the perspective of the interviewees.

Motivation	
The self-motivation reasons provided by the interviewees & Its effect	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
Self-motivation reasons: develop your own business. Job promotion. Be a professional. Being a partner or shareholder.	Motivation and success go hand to hand. Eenjoy work and motivation go hand to hand.
Importance of self-motivation: I believe in self-motivation.	

Initiative

All interviewees had an initiative way to keep control of their own emotions. One interviewee said that he would take a moment to organize his mind and remain silent for a few seconds. This helped him in maintaining composure and to find the best way to help customers. Another interviewee replied that she would drink chilly water to control and to reduce the amount of emotional pressure she felt. One of the interviewees mentioned that he asks customers questions to

show salesperson can discuss issues. Yet another interviewee mentioned that he would leave the conversation to give time to himself and the customer. He believed that if he always managed his emotions, then customers would think that they can do anything. Some highlighted points from the interviewees' answers regarding initiative skill are presented on table 10.

Table 10. Initiative from the perspective of the interviewees.

Initiative	
Ways provided by the interviewees	The highlighting thing, of interviewees point of view
take a moment and be silent. drink chilly water. ask questions of customers. leaves the conversation.	propose unique solutions to problems and keep control of oneself and quickly identify critical subjects.

3.2 Self-management competency and sales success

When asked about their definition of sales success and whether they had measured sales success in the same way as their boss, the interviewees replied that they believed to be successful in sales. However, one of them said that her success was conditional based on various aspects.

They had objective and subjective criteria of successful sales for themselves but, they were sure of their success in maintaining a high-quality customer experience; furthermore, they believed that their relationships with old

customers were a criterion to achieve new customers. One interviewee answered that she has loyal customers, with whom she maintains a good relationship. She also mentioned that customer feedback was significant to her business, and her customers believe her to be an honest person committed to her work. All interviewees have pointed out that customer relationship is one and essential key to successful sales.

Customer satisfaction was of paramount significance to one of the interviewees' bosses, and relationships with the customers were of paramount significance to another interviewee's bosses. One interviewee explained that a salesperson's knowledge of products and understanding of which products best suit customers are essential to her boss. Another interviewee mentioned that the sales rate was significant for her boss. Although one interviewee did not agree with her boss's definition of success. She said that her boss define is more suitable for small shops. The rest of the interviewees agreed with their boss' definitions of successful sales. All interviewees believed that sales success, in the opinions of their bosses, depends on customer satisfaction and customer communication.

In addition, when asked on interviewees about their achieving sales awards or bonuses, and does it motivate them, they referred that; They all had earned sales bonuses and rewards as the result of being a successful salesperson. They achieved some awards and bonuses likes, educational travels (abroad), earned internal type bonuses (gift cards and a discount percentage on some store products), and made a monetary bonus for each new contract (after reaching their initial sales target).

Except for one interviewee, others were satisfied with their rewards. They were satisfied with their success and were proud of themselves. One Interviewee clearly stated that he was happy with his rewards because his superior understood his passion and work commitment level. The interviewee who was not satisfied with her rewards said that her rewards were not matching to her work level. She believed that the company should care more about its

salesperson. But all interviewees believed that sales awards and bonuses motivate them to succeed.

3.3 Limitation

It was difficult to find volunteers to participate in the interview and study, in parts due to the personal nature of the questionnaire and aim of the study. Most of the essential literature on this topic exists in a combination of different books which proved difficult to access, this difficulty was in part due to the financial costs and the limited availability of relevant chapters online. Furthermore, every EI competency is interconnected and relevant to the other EI competencies, which made separating and highlighting critical information on self-management competency more challenging. The interviewees' group for this study was limited. Everyone was active at the same job level, although within different industries. They worked in B2B and B2C markets.

This study attempted to examine the concepts of emotional intelligence and self-management competency, as well as their importance in sales, from the perspective of the salespersons. However, the result could yield more value if I was able to measure each interviewee's EI level and evaluate the salesperson's sales performance through quantitative measurements. There are many different tools and models that researchers can use to evaluate the emotional intelligence level of salespersons. I suggest the Bar-On model (1988) or the Daniel Goleman's Evaluation model (2000) as adequate tools for this such evaluations. The Bar-on model (1998) can provide a thorough and accurate analysis of each EI competency. The Evaluation model by Goleman (2000), designed for colleges and graduate schools, can provide practical information for the purposes of training and problem solving.

A quantitative study with a large sample would allow for a more thorough comparison of the results through statistical models to examine potential

correlation among emotional intelligence competencies, for which, more data is required from a larger study sample. Therefore, while this study puts forward evidence to suggest that the self-management competency can improve salespersons' success and impact their relationship to customers, future research should explore the applicability of these findings to other markets and in quantitative format.

4 Conclusions

In this chapter, the author compared the results obtained from interviews with salespersons with the previous literature and research, to show whether the results were in line with the literature or not. All data in this study were collected by interview. Through the interviews, each interviewee separately shared their own points of view about self-management skills. The qualitative data was collected, and the highlight points of answers were found.

On the ability to self-control, the findings supported the literature and previous studies which suggest that dealing with an angry person without doing retaliating is a sign of adequate self-control. The method of maintaining emotional self-control may not be as significantly important as maintaining emotional self-control. Therefore, their method of doing so was not the focal point; rather it was of importance whether they understood the essentiality of emotional self-control in order to maintain a relationship with a customer. Whenever tension transpires or is instigated between a customer and a seller, those who exercise self-control and keep their emotions in check triumph (Goleman 1998). By listening to customers at the tense moment and asking questions to understand the situation better, the interviewees showed that they could be winners of the fight situation.

On trustworthiness, the findings supported the literature and previous studies which suggest that a salesperson who speaks with honesty and has control over themselves, help customers feel safer and to engage more readily in conversation. In a complicated situation with the customer, interviewees showed high ethical behavior and assured customers that they were part of the solution; additionally, the interviewees mentioned that trustworthiness was like a moral guideline to them. As Goleman (1998) stated, the salesperson with trustworthiness skill breeds trust through proper behavior. They accept their mistakes; oppose the malevolence and immoral acts of others, and maintain a moralistic stance (Goleman, 1998).

Regarding conscientiousness, the concept of this skill proved to be close to the commitment concept. But as the author mentions in the literature review, conscientiousness in the absence of empathy or social skills could be problematic (Goleman, 1998). The study showed that interviewees clearly understood this concept and empathized and accompanied customers, sharing their insight. In addition, they agreed that commitment and responsibility to customers and company goals impacted their sales success.

It was noted that one of the interviewees were not extremely interested in adaptability, but all were familiar with the concept of adaptability, and agreed that adaptability helped them maintain a sustainable relationship with customers. A good and long relationship with customers shows a successful salesperson who knows how to act and work in different situations (Goleman, 1998). Furthermore, interviewees understood what and where the priority was, and they incorporated creative ways to understand customers' emotions in stressful situations (Ambile, 1988). Therefore, the study's findings regarding adaptability also aligned with the pre-existing literature and studies.

Optimism is a crucial ingredient in achievement drive, and it requires a background in motivation skill. Thus, the decision was made to summarize both skills and compare their results with previous literature and research. As mentioned before, "those with high achievement are proactive and persistent, have an optimistic attitude toward setbacks, and operate from the hope of success" (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001, p. 7). The interviewees each pointed out challenging work in achieving their goals. Each had their own goal and were optimistic about achieving those goals. Those with high achievement have an optimistic attitude toward setbacks (Schulman, 1995); however, none of the interviewees mentioned this point directly. One of the hallmarks of a skilled salesperson is an optimistic attitude towards failures (Schulman, 1995).

In the literature, the definition of motivation points to the emotion that compels a person to follow their goals (Goleman, 1998). Substantial endeavors to achieve personal goals and strive to achieve ambitious standards best define this competency (Goleman, 1998). Each interviewee possessed their own distinct

motivation and believed that motivation and success went hand in hand; for example, one of the interviewees viewed job promotions as a source of motivator. Based on Goleman's (1998) research, success and progress are aligned with one another. Interviewees mentioned that progress needs motivation. They stated that motivation and optimism kept their hopes up and helped them continue their journey to success. To achieve this a salesperson must be a committed person. Those who value organizational responsibilities and honestly believe in them, put their full effort into their fulfillment (Goleman, 1998). Regarding achievement drive and motivation, findings proved supportive of the literature, and motivation and optimism both have had positive effects on individual success of each interviewee.

Regarding initiative skill, the findings supported literature and previous studies which suggest that a salesperson who does something before being forced to do it has the initiative skill (Chermiss & Goleman, 2001). The interviewees clearly stated that in tense situations with customers, they controlled their emotions and tried to seek unique ideas from available sources to solve the problem. They had their own creative way of controlling emotions, and understood that when taking preventive actions, being initiative allowed them to change the discussion path between salesperson and customers. Methods of preventing problems vary from person to person. The key is to understand the importance of this skill (Chermiss & Goleman, 2001).

Customer satisfaction and future recommendations, as indicators of sales success, are based on an emotional connection with the salesperson (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Additionally, the customers who like their salesperson are twelve times more likely to continue to repurchase and become loyal customers (Smith & Rutigliano, 2003). The interview questionnaire revealed that all participants had good and sustainable relationships with their customers; they also agreed that customer relationship was an essential key to successful sales.

Motivation, originating from their superiors as well as self-motivation can impact achievement drive and improve work commitment. According to Zia et al., (2016), when a salesperson shows high work commitment, customers and the

organization will put more trust in their salespersons. Therefore, a salespersons' direct actions can increase the amount of trust that customers put in an organization and its salespersons (Zia et al., 2016). The results on achieving rewards and bonuses showed that interviewees were satisfied with their rewards. They were happy with their success and were proud of themselves. Motivation, whether financial or nonfinancial impacts salesperson performance.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the importance of self-management competency and understanding the role of the six skill subdivisions of self-management. And how do salespersons describe the role of self-management competency in sales success?

"Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize our own feelings and those of others and manage emotions effectively in ourselves and our relationships" (Key step media, 2017, para. 2). This is based on the premise that one's ability to be emotional intelligent affects social interactions and behavior (Lopez et al., 2004). Hence, the researcher was interested in investigating, based on Daniel Goleman's competency model (2000), whether a successful salesperson knows about the importance of self-management competency and how to use it in the sales process. Self-management competency is one of the important categories of Goleman's competencies model of EI (2000).

After reviewing this study's results which were gathered through experienced salespersons' points of view, the author found that self-management competency significantly influenced the success of a salesperson. The interviewees' answers clearly displayed that their insights about salesperson success were aligned with the relevant pre-existing literature, the aim of this study therefore supports and builds on the existing knowledge of EI and emotional intelligence competency. Although, the result of this study does not include all the competencies of emotional intelligence. Yet even investigation of the self-management competency category can display that it is an effective ability/tool for salespeople.

The findings of this study suggest that the EI ability affects how people relate to others, and a salesperson can use self-management competency as a valuable skill towards success.

Future research ideas

There is a considerable need for further research on the importance of EI and EI competencies in sales and their potential impacts. The author is interested in conducting a similar study on a bigger number of salespersons who work in larger organizations, as well as conducting research on other emotional intelligence competencies.

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Appendix 1

Informed Consent Form

My name is Shima Pourazami. I am currently a graduate student in the master's degree Programme in Sales Management at Turku University of applied sciences. The research project is a requirement for the completion of my master's degree. This research project was conducted under Sirpa Hänti, Principal Lecturer, Ph.D. (Econ. & Bus. Adm.), BA (Educ.). You can reach her at sirpa.hanti@turkuamk.fi.

Project Summary: the proposed study will focus on the relationship between emotional intelligence and salesforce (sales) performance. This research will conduct individual interviews with successful sales professionals; each interview is expected to be 60 minutes. Interviewees will be free to describe their own experience with emotional intelligence and whether it has influenced their sales success. All data from the interviews will be analyzed and interpreted to understand that Emotional intelligence impacts on salesperson success.

Voluntary Participation: Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants are free to change their minds at any time and choose not to continue even after signing this consent form.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: All information given by study participants is confidential and individual contributions are anonymous. All data will be stored in a secure, confidential location accessible only by me.

Availability of Results: A summary of this study's results will be available to participants upon request after completing the study.

Consent:

I now consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind or refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence. I may refuse to answer any questions, or I may stop the interview. I understand that some of the things I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final report and subsequent publications, but that my name will not be associated with this study.

Interviewee Signature Date Name (Please Print)

Witness Signature Date Name: (Please Print)

Appendix 2

Interview questions

Sales Performance

Defining the salesperson's role

Do you consider yourself a successful salesperson? How do you define success? How does your boss define success?

Is success measured the same way (between you and your boss) If not, how is it different?

Accomplishments

What sales awards, bonuses or rewards have you earned? How did it feel to achieve these accomplishments?

Does it motivate you to achieve more success?

Emotional Dimension

Empathy

When dealing with a customer, do you feel like you know what that customer is thinking/feeling?

If yes, what cues do you use or how do you do that?

How important is it for a successful sales representative to be able to empathize with his or her customers?

Perceiving Others' Emotions

Can you read your customers' moods? If so, how?

How does understanding your customer's mood influence your sales call?

How important is it for a successful sales representative to be able to perceive his or her customers?

Self-Awareness

Do you think you need to present your desired image to customers?

How do you know you are projecting your desired image?

How important is it for a successful sales representative to be aware of the image he or she projects?

Self-Regulation

What do you do when a customer says something that makes you angry? How do you control your emotions during a sales call?

How important is it for successful representatives to control their emotions during a sales call?

Self-Motivation

Do you consider yourself to be self-motivated?

What motivates you to do an excellent job?

How important is self-motivation for a sales representative?

(MacCann, Roberts, Matthews & Zeidner, 2003)

