Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

by

ANNA SUSANNA JANSEN VAN RENSBURG

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR E M CRONJÉ

JUNE 2023

i

DECLARATION

Name: Anna Susanna Jansen Van Rensburg

Student Number: 3248 784 3

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   <u>30 June 2023</u>

Signature   Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Summary

Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

Rated among the top ten most desirable skills, emotional intelligence (EI) forms an integral part of our intellectual makeup. EI is complex, broad, integrated and requires conscious focus. Developing EI skills is beneficial and possible through training. Competence in EI significantly impacts one's emotional well-being, influencing our immediate and extended social environments as we constantly migrate across the boundaries of different contexts. This study explored the practical application of EI skills learned from the Neuro-Link EI Program in the Association, Localisation, Life phase, and Methodical Contexts.

A sample of six highly qualified professionals, diverse in nationality, gender, age, culture, and profession, participated in a qualitative ethnographic research, which revealed the meaning they attach to their EI experiences in various contexts. Participants shared their life narratives via in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews. They unanimously agreed that EI training stimulated an ongoing soul-searching process and that acquiring EI is not a one-time event but develops systematically and requires constant practice to master and become a lifestyle. It starts with oneself and escalates to others during interactions with immediate family members, colleagues, peers and the general public.

Findings from interpretative data analysis revealed that participants understand the EI concept equally and apply it similarly. There was no distinction between South African and international participants, nor between diverse genders, ages, ethnic backgrounds, cultures, or professions. Furthermore, specific settings do not encourage EI more than others, although some circumstances are more demanding than others, which necessarily challenge and test the successful application of EI skills. The degree to which people experience the nature of the event and their EI maturity level, instead, determines how they will apply EI. EI should be a constant and continuous occurrence applied with every daily interaction regardless of scene or circumstance. Finally, EI skills are not used more intensively or differently in specific contexts than others. Thus, definite

boundaries do not limit people from acting emotionally intelligently across contexts.

In conclusion, more contexts, a contextual approach from alternative angles, and expanding to a broader geographical variety of participants not represented in this study may ultimately generate a more complete research and representation of the contextualisation of EI.

Key Terms:

Emotional intelligence; Emotional Well-being; Contextualisation/Contextualising; Association Context; Localisation Context; Life Phase Context; Methodical Context; Self-awareness; Self-Management; Social Awareness; Social Skills; Emotional Intelligence Skills; Emotional Intelligence Maturity Level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

Context: A Theoretical Discussion

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Emotional Intelligence in Context

Chapter 4

Method: Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

Chapter 5

Applying Emotional Intelligence Across Contexts – Interviews Discussion

CHAPTER 6

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Tables

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1   Research Study Background

By the end of the twentieth-, and the beginning of the present century, research on emotional intelligence (EI) intensified. A leadership corps, each helping to build EI as a significant field of study, brought forth a variety of EI theories, models, and assessments. These include theorists such as Bar-On (1997, 2000, 2006); Beasley (1987); Beldoch (1964); Boyatzis (2006, 2008); Cherniss (2000, 2010); H. Gardner (1983, 1993, 1999), L. Gardner (2005); Goleman (1996, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2013); Mayer et al. (1999); Mayer et al. (2004), Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008); Payne (1985); Petrides (2010); and R. J. Sternberg (1985). In addition, many research studies have expanded knowledge in this area over the past three decades. Among others, Mitchell et al. (2010) emphasised the importance and value of emotional development, also known as *soft skills*, equal to cognitive development or *hard skills*. It is thus undoubtedly so that, when acquired and developed, EI forms an integral part of our intellectual makeup.

EI is rated as among the most desirable skills, as indicated by the World Economic Forum (Schwab & Samans, 2016). As essential skills, Schwab and Samans, on behalf of the Forum, mentioned skills such as emotional intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, judgment and decision making, cognitive flexibility, complex problem solving, negotiation and coordination with others, persuasion, service orientation, and people management. From this, it is clear that EI and social skills are in high demand across industries and that strong social and collaborative skills must complement technical and cognitive skills.

Cherniss (2010) noted that people need to be able to respond spontaneously to situations without clearly defined options. In my recent Master's study on the impact of EI training in the workplace, I noted that developing EI skills is beneficial and indeed possible through teaching. Therefore, equipping people with these necessary intra- and interpersonal skills reduces pathological thinking in a culture filled with negative input via the media and everyday circumstances. Competence in this area,

thus, significantly affects individuals' emotional well-being, which enormously influences their extended environment (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018).

Behaviour varies depending on the situation and environment – circumstances and context. Undoubtedly, no one is bound to a single environment but constantly migrates across the boundaries of different contexts such as home/family, school/college, and work/profession. Corey (2013) explains how the individual is an undividable whole, raised and living in specific familial, social and cultural contexts. In an interview with Rasmussen and Watkins (2012, p. 115) published in the *Journal of Individual Psychology*, Jane Griffith said: "The holistic character of thought is in Adler's choice of the term Individual Psychology. It's one word in German, *Individualpsychologie*: indivisible – not to be chopped into bits". Adler also believes individuals should not be divided or seen as detached from their context; you cannot examine an isolated individual (Rasmussen & Watkins, 2012).

Following the above comment, Cherniss (2010) suggests that future research focusing on EI and performance should pay more attention to the distinguishing effects of specific EI abilities and consider the context. He suggests we distinguish between EI and emotional and social competence (ESC). Cherniss further mentions that emotional perception may be more critical in some contexts than others but that emotional management may be more important than emotional perception in most contexts. He suggests that we focus more on how the social context navigates human EI functioning in the future. Context makes a difference as some contexts motivate emotionally intelligent behaviour more than others, Cherniss emphasises; for example, EI is likely to be more crucial during unusual stressful situations or tense social interactions. Situational factors play a prominent, if not more considerable, role and are sometimes more susceptible to change. Hence, we must study emotionally intelligent contexts as much as emotionally intelligent people (Cherniss, 2010).

This proposed study aims to explore the application of EI skills in a selection of contexts in which individuals find themselves. By combining a comprehensive literature review with various theories and approaches, I plan to systematically study EI's contextualisation to provide a broader understanding of the related phenomena.

By doing so, I hope to reach some findings which will enable me to make recommendations. Consequently, I will explore the role of EI in different contexts and compare EI behavioural skills in terms of similarities and differences in these contexts.

1.2 Concepts Defined

Rousseau and Fried (2001, p. 1) define contextualisation as the "linking of observations to a set of relevant facts, events, or point of view that make possible research and theory that form part of a larger whole". Winnie Gebhardt (2006) describes her contextualisation of health behaviour as the study of motives underlying health behaviour (e.g. behaviour initiated by EI) and how they influence behavioural choices within specific contexts. According to the online Cambridge dictionary (n.d.b), to contextualise is to consider something in its context: we need to contextualise the problem before we can understand its origin. The Merriam-Webster collegiate dictionary (n.d.b) describes contextualise as placing something, such as a word or activity, in a context. Generally, contextualising a concept, remark, or event is to place it within its context from which it derives its whole, accurate meaning, as described in What is contextualisation? (n.d.). Contextualisation aids comprehension and makes it more understandable. The noun *contextualisation* and the verb *contextualise/contextualising* imply that a linguistic element, or an action, is placed in context, terms appropriate for the purpose of this study. Synonyms for contextualise are inspect, investigate, review, scrutinise, consider, delve, examine, explore, inquire, research, and understand. An antonym for contextualise is isolate.

As for EI, several definitions and views to describe EI already exist. Bar-On (2006) views EI as emotionally and socially competent behaviours and attributes. He refers to emotional and social intelligence as a multifaceted set of interconnected emotional, personal, and social abilities – noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's overall ability to cope actively and effectively with environmental demands and pressures. Bar-On believes that being emotionally and socially intelligent means effectively understanding and expressing oneself, understanding and relating well with others, and successfully dealing with day-to-day

3

responsibilities, problems, and pressures. This aspect of human intelligence governs our ability to recognise, understand, control, and use emotions in solving problems of a personal and interpersonal nature (Bar-On, 2006). Goleman (1998, p. 317) defined EI as the "capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships". Mayer and Salovey define the dimensions of overall EI as: "accurately perceiving emotion, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotion, and managing emotion" (Mayer, Roberts, & Barasade, 2008, p. 513).

EI is considered a set of abilities. Despite the debates within the literature on whether EI follows from traits, abilities, or other origins, the literature suggests that an individual with high EI will demonstrate the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Boyatzis et al., 2000). While acknowledging definitions from various sources of existing literature, I consider Neuro-Link's four-dimensionally structured account of the composition of EI (High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program, 2002) to be very comprehensive and descriptive. From this website's explanation and the definitions mentioned above, I compiled the following definition, which will suffice for this study: EI competence requires accurate development of both intrapersonal (personal) skills, namely self-awareness and self-management, as well as interpersonal (social) skills, namely social awareness and social management (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018).

1.3 Historical Background

The study of emotional expression and social intelligence has existed for over a century. Although not initially considered as such, the input of theorists such as Darwin already in 1872, then Thorndike (1920) and later Maslow (1943) and Wechsler (1943) have made an essential contribution to the establishment of the EI concept, as it is currently known. From there on, the development of the concept of EI escalated. Various approaches have emerged to establish EI theories, models, and assessments – subsequently, a brief discussion with more information.

The mentioning of the term EI first appeared in educational work in a paper written by Michael Beldoch in 1964 (Beldoch, 1964). In 1983, Howard Gardner developed the

Howard Gardner Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which challenged the original understanding of a single general ability of intelligence. He published a book called *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligence*, to explain eight distinct intelligences in his theory (H. Gardner, 1983).

The term emotional intelligence was officially acknowledged in the academic world when, for the first time, used in 1985 by USA graduate Wayne Payne in his doctoral thesis (Payne, 1985). Interest in EI expanded, and specific models started to arise. That includes the Ability Model, developed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer et al., 2004), the Trait Model by Konstantin Petrides (Petrides & Furnham, 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2001), the Bar-On Model of Social and Emotional Intelligence (Bar-On, 2006), and the Mixed EI Model of Daniel Goleman, a combination of the trait- and ability-EI models (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

Complementing these models, theorists developed several different EI training programs and tests. Examples of assessment instruments are EQ-I – the Reuven Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On, 1997); the MSCEIT – Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (Brackett & Salovey, 2006); and the MSCEIT V2.0 (Mayer et al., 2003). Boyatzis and Goleman's measuring instruments, based on the Goleman model, are available, namely the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), and the Emotional and Social Competency – University Edition (ESCI-U). These tools provide a behavioural measure of emotional and social competencies (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

In South Africa, interest in the EI concept has also developed. It has brought a need for the measurement and training of EI skills. Among others, the local Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achiever Development Training Program (from now on referred to as the Neuro-Link EI Program) is quite popular and used globally (High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program, n.d.) (A detailed description of the Neuro-Link EI Program follows in Chapter 4, see 4.3). The 12 EI competencies profile, designed by André Vermeulen, is a 360-degree practical self-reporting assessment to determine a person's EI skills. This profile illustrates six intrapersonal- and six interpersonal competencies of EI. Used in conjunction with their Neuro Agility Profile Assessment (NAP) and based on the neuroscience of

learning, these assessments form the basis of the Neuro-Link EI Program.

In my recently completed Master's degree study, I based my research on participants' experiences regarding learnt EI skills. This study examined participants who attended training in the Neuro-Link EI Program. In the research report (dissertation), I reflected on the impact of EI training in the workplace. I emphasised the increasing importance of EI training to ensure successful daily functioning in the social and work context (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018). Although the study on the impact of the Neuro-Link EI Training Program in the workplace has yielded valuable feedback, it is still unclear whether applying EI skills is more important in specific contexts than in others.

Consequently, no scientific evidence is available on (a) the value of learnt Neuro-Link EI behavioural skills in the various contexts individuals find themselves in or (b) the comparability of similarities and differences thereof for the South African or international context. It is thus uncertain whether specific contexts encourage emotionally intelligent behaviour more than others and to what extent the social context makes a difference to the relationship between EI and human functioning. Expanding research, as Cherniss suggested, this study shall investigate how people apply acquired EI skills in context (Cherniss, 2010).

1.4   An Amalgam of Psychological Branches and Approaches

A person's particular context influences their learning profoundly: the different biological and situational contexts of everyday life. Therefore, understanding the contexts in which their knowledge can be useful and how to apply it is essential (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). The social environment, social context, socio-cultural context, or milieu is the immediate physical and social setting where people live, or where something happens or develops. That includes their cultural background and the people and institutions they interact with (Barnett & Casper, 2001). Studying human behavioural skills in context, EI in this instance, will require the amalgam of different theoretical approaches.

Although context theories can develop from any discipline (e.g. anthropology, political science, history), I will focus on the different branches of psychology to identify potentially fruitful sources of contextualisation theory. Theoretical and Applied Psychology study human behaviour and experience in complex systems. Thus, bringing together expertise on individual behaviour requires bringing together aspects of psychological approaches. To better understand EI in various contexts, I will study different approaches to gain insight and challenge assumptions. In support, I now briefly discuss some of these approaches that can assist in promoting research on individuals and their external context.

1.4.1 Cognitive Psychology

In my review of EI, I found some common touchpoints and corresponding criteria stemming from the cognitive approach. Psychology usually uses the term *cognition* within an information-processing view of an individual's psychological functions. Therefore, in social cognition, a branch of Social Psychology (see 1.4.3), cognition explains attitudes, attribution, and group dynamics (R. J. Sternberg & Sternberg, 2009). Traditionally, emotion was not considered a cognitive process, but now much research focuses on examining the cognitive psychology of emotion. As the American Psychological Association describes, Cognitive Psychology is the scientific study of mental processes such as attention, creativity, language use, memory, perception, problem-solving, and thinking (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2002), some of which include EI skills. Cognition refers to all processes which transform, reduce, elaborate, store, recover, and use sensory input (Oxford, n.d.). Given this explanation, it is evident that cognition plays a role in everything a human being may do, which means that every psychological activity is a cognitive phenomenon (Neisser, 1967). It is thus clear that the application of EI skills requires extensive cognitive action.

1.4.2 Environmental Psychology

Given contextualising EI, I found connections with the Environmental Psychological approach. Cassidy quotes Burroughs and Gifford, who define Environmental Psychology respectively as "the study of the interrelationships between the physical environment and human behaviour and experience" and "the study of transactions

between individuals and their physical settings" (Cassidy, 2013, p. 2). That indicates a reciprocal process of influence between the environment and the individual.

Considering some basic ideas about the person in the environment, we can view how the environment impacts the person in several ways. Cassidy highlights two categories: the environment as a setting for behaviour, which reflects the ecological perspective, and the environment as a source of demand on the person (Cassidy, 2013). Thus, "the main effect of the physical setting on behaviour is through the meaning it has acquired from social interaction", Cassidy (2013, p. 3) explains. This view represents "an interactional (person-in-context) perspective: Behaviour is a function of a person, the environment, and the interaction between the two" (Cassidy, 2013, p. 5).

Cassidy further explains three areas of research describing how people interact with the world around them: (a) Environmental perception is how we interpret our surroundings, including the interaction of social and physical aspects. (How we see and understand our context/environment. How we become aware of information from the milieu surrounding us, how we process and give meaning, and respond to it); (b) Environmental appreciation refers to the emotional or evaluative component of how we feel about our surroundings; and (c) Environmental personality refers to the idea that there may be stable features exhibited in our reaction to different environments (Cassidy, 2013). The interdependence of physical and social settings unavoidably proves its influence on an individual's behaviour. The impact of the physical environment on behaviour forms an inseparable part of the social aspects of the environment. It consequently involves Social and Community Psychology in contextualising EI, which I subsequently discuss.

1.4.3 Social Psychology

Individuals are embedded in societies and therefore shaped by social institutions. Social Psychology is the scientific study of how the actual, imagined or implied presence of others influences people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Allport, 1985, as cited in Social psychology, n.d.). Social Psychology is the branch of psychology that studies the impact of social variables on individual behaviour,

attitudes, perceptions, and motives; it also studies intergroup processes (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2002). Social psychologists, therefore, commonly explain human behaviour resulting from the conjunction of mental states and social factors. As humans are susceptible to social influences, I expect constructs and theories from Social Psychology to be helpful in context theorising.

Two aspects of Social Psychology play a dominant part in EI, namely the intrapersonal and the interpersonal phenomena:

- The intrapersonal phenomenon:

  Also considered an essential component of the Neuro-Link EI skills set, the self-schema (the cognitive part) and self-esteem (the evaluative component), commonly known as behaviour and affect, summarise a person's self-concept. It refers to self-understanding and is central in the field of Social Psychology (Kassin et al., 2014). According to Kassin et al., persuasion is an active method of influence that attempts to guide people toward the adoption of an attitude, idea, or behaviour by rational or emotive means, presented in five major categories: the communicator, the message, the audience, the medium or channel, and the context. Attitudes develop as a result of the fundamental process of learning. Our most treasured attitudes often develop from exposure to, among others, our lived social and cultural contexts (Kassin et al., 2014).

- The interpersonal phenomenon:

  Interpersonal skills are equally essential components of the Neuro-Link EI skills system – the ability to communicate or interact well with others. Social Psychology studies human behaviour in the social context, how other people's actual or implied presence influences one's thoughts, feelings, and actions (McLeod, 2007). In this way, Social Psychology plays a crucial role in understanding individuals' relationships in the different developmental stages. During adolescence, for example, teens are confronted with many issues and decisions that can impact their social development, such as self-esteem issues, peer pressure, the influence of social media or even the application of EI skills. Furthermore, norms, culture, power, and status are key Social Psychology constructs. According to Hackman (1992), norms can arise formally; however, social norms are much more likely to develop informally, emerging gradually due to the repeated use of discretionary stimuli to control behaviour. Once firmly

established, social norms become a part of the group's operational structure (Hackman, 1992). Much more may be discovered about this, for example, if EI can become the social norm in a context.

1.4.4   Community Psychology

Another branch of psychology that can contribute to studying the contextualisation of EI is Community Psychology. This discipline examines the contexts of individuals within their communities and broader society (Orford, 2008) and their relationships with their communities and society. Therefore, people's views in context are at the core of a community psychologist's study. They strive to gain insight into individuals' quality of life within groups, communities, and society. They aim to enhance the quality of life through cooperative research and engagement methods to increase individual wellness (Kloos et al., 2012). In various contexts, EI training and acquiring EI skills can be constructive tools to improve such wellness.

James Kelly devised an ecological analogy to explicate how contexts and individuals are interrelated. Ecological context refers to the physical (e.g., school) and social (e.g., team) aspects of the environment that influence individuals and communities. Kelly's Ecological Theory focuses on how people become effective and adaptive in different social settings, as Jason et al. (2016) and Kloos et al. (2012) describe and explain it: Kelly examines environments and behaviour according to four ecological theoretical principles, namely interdependence, cycle of resources, adaptation and succession:

a. Interdependence implies that change in one component of an ecosystem can affect the other components of the same system. In a sports context, the interdependent parts include, among others, athletes, referees, judges, and spectators.

b. The resource cycle principle explains how ecosystems develop and consume untapped resources. It allows us to discover how to efficiently employ existing resources and develop additional ones in an environment.

c. Adaptation refers to how environments constrain and affect people's behaviour and how environments change due to the individuals that inhabit them. It implies that adapted behaviour in one context does not always equate to adaptive

behaviour in another. For example, employees will adapt to the demands of a new employer by learning or acquiring any necessary skills to perform their tasks well.

d. Finally, the principle of succession points to constantly changing communities, and the demand for adaptive capacities change over time.

Community psychologists have used Kelly's Ecological Theory to understand behaviour in the interaction with social and cultural contexts. Every environment has an established set of structures, norms, beliefs, and principles, and any intervention in such an environment should respect that history and understand why the current system exists as it does. This principle applies to individuals, groups, and communities (Jason et al., 2016; Kloos et al., 2012). The work of Kloos et al. provides a wealth of helpful information that can serve as a guideline when studying individuals' EI skills in various contexts. That implies that Ecological Psychology is an essential and appropriate approach when examining the contextualisation of EI.

1.4.5   Concluding: A Theoretical Perspective

Since EI training firstly aims to promote self-development in all respects of behaviour and all contexts, Gebhardt (2006) describes self-regulation as a process based on the ability of people to influence, change, and control their behaviour. That involves conscious effort over time. It is generally a systematic process to achieve a goal in a changing environment. The ultimate goal of self-regulation is to confirm, sustain, or improve oneself (Gebhardt, 2006).

EI training secondly aims to promote the social development of individuals. The social influence processes deployed in groups depend mainly on the group's history, the specific set of relationships within the group, and the specific context in which people find themselves. In this research study, there will be an interest in understanding how group dynamics influence individual behaviour, attitudes, and opinions and vice versa – the reciprocal influence.

The various psychological approaches mentioned above provide an amalgam of perspectives I can use to explore behavioural change and the impact of EI training in

multiple contexts. Furthermore, theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2012), Kelly's Ecological Theory (Kloos et al., 2012), and the Person-Context Interaction Theory (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998) designed to predict and explain human behaviour in specific contexts, will be compared to the findings of this study. A comprehensive discussion of these applicable theories follows in Chapter 3.

1.5   Literature Review

Thus far, research provides essential information in the study and descriptions of EI but lacks two critical aspects. In a study that made valuable ground-breaking work ahead of my proposed research, Ybarra et al. (2012) highlight these aspects. Firstly, the significance of the social context in which people implement their EI skills is not fully presented in research studies up until now. Secondly, Ybarra et al. claim that current research offers only a narrow view of EI because feedback comes from laboratory research settings or hypothetical depictions of social events frequently used to report on people's ideas and feelings. Instead, people should be able to self-report their actual daily experiences, ideas and feelings, as this study plans to do through the qualitative narrative reflections of participants.

Ybarra et al. (2012) raised questions about how the social context influences EI and what dangers in the social world are slumbering, sometimes rendering the most emotionally intelligent person ineffective. They argue that when including the social context explicitly in EI analysis, it will become apparent how the social environment is navigating, forming, directing, and constraining a person's EI, regardless of the emotional degree of intelligence they believe they have. Ybarra and colleagues propose that a useful EI model needs to carefully, deliberately, and explicitly consider a "fuzzy" social world that navigates people's EI. The social world consists of negotiable facts where subjective structures and the meaning they attach to social events drive people's perceptions. Truth and accuracy are, therefore, difficult to establish when dealing with social events whose purpose is flexible and interpretable (Ybarra et al., 2012).

The general assumption is that people apply their EI skills, at whatever level, consistently over time. Still, Ybarra et al. (2012) noted that these characteristics and

abilities are not always expressed across situations because the EI process can be unpredictable and sometimes ineffective. This proposed study will explore whether my participants' effectiveness in applying these skills pertains to all contexts. Complementary to my proposed research, in Chapter 3, I will refer in more detail to the research of Ybarra et al. (2012) (see 3.5.1).

When studying the literature, we see that although many studies focus on the impact of EI on an individual level, some researchers have already begun to consider the broader social implications of EI to determine the contextual nature of human behaviour. I give an example of the concept of EI against the background of Indian culture, where the Indian context encompasses highly valued social concerns, values, religious traditions, and customs of culture (Behera, 2016). Indians establish a compassionate ethic based on conditional interpersonal commitment. Behera described this as characteristic of a familial view of interpersonal ties and contextual awareness. He refers to Dalip Singh, who indicated that EI forms three psychological dimensions: emotional sensitivity, -maturity, and -competence. These dimensions motivate an individual to acknowledge the truth, interpret it honestly, and tactfully deal with the dynamics of human behaviour (Behera, 2016).

According to Behera, most of the problems we experience in our lives, be they childhood, adolescence, home, family, or work-related problems, are due to the mishandling of feelings and emotions of an individual or group of individuals. He states that, although EI cannot guarantee an ultimate advantage in life, we cannot deny that our emotional makeup plays a significant role in our ability to deal effectively with our own and others' feelings. Behera emphasises that although people may practice EI in the home, school, work, and other settings, they should consider how to enhance it effectively. While we often regard the parental home where we grow up as the ideal starting point for learning emotional skills, the school is often seen as the best environment to encourage and further teach EI (Behera, 2016).

Given the preceding, a study by Ghanawat et al. (2016) further elaborates on the concept of EI development in the family context. Their research on families in India assessed the association connecting family functioning with EI in adolescents, and

their sample consisted of 16 to 18-year-old school-going adolescents. The findings revealed a substantial positive connection between family functioning and EI, implying that healthy family functioning is critical in establishing greater EI. They claim that EI development starts from birth, with the mother providing for the child's needs. After that, the growing child's EI-related behaviour develops or weakens during interaction with people in his environment, such as parents, siblings, friends and teachers. Ghanawat et al., however, emphasise that children learn their emotional knowledge base and competence in emotion identification and regulation from their parents in the family context (Ghanawat et al., 2016).

They believe that a child whose parents demonstrate constructive EI-related behaviour in normal daily activities would most likely adopt it as part of their behavioural repertoire. As a result, parental socialisation practises significantly influence children's EI development. They confirm that adolescents who can regulate their emotional responses to the emotions of others are more likely to have strong interpersonal abilities when engaging in pro-social activities. They hope this could lead to the design of school-based intervention programs as a tool for students with disturbed family functioning and poor EI (Ghanawat et al., 2016).

Since some researchers such as Behera, Ghanawat et al., and Ybarra et al. consider the broader social impact of EI to determine the contextual nature of human behaviour, the study by Gao et al. (2013) from China also contributes to this understanding. They note the following in their research: Work-family conflict (WFC) is the reason for stress for many individuals. They define it as an inter-role conflict that occurs when workplace and family roles are incompatible in certain instances. According to WFC theories, conflict develops when the demands of participation in one environment conflict with the demands of engagement in the other. When there is a threat or actual loss of resources, or when gained resources fail to meet the effort invested, stress arises. Gao et al. categorise four types of resources, namely objects, conditions, energies, and personal characteristics. Personal qualities, such as emotional regulation skills, are resources that help guard against stress. As a type of human characteristic, they propose that EI is crucial in alleviating the stress caused by work-family difficulties. They describe four interconnected components of

EI: the perception, understanding, facilitation, and regulation of emotion (Gao et al., 2013).

Similarly, Gao and colleagues observed that when individuals experience resource risks, they may assess these dangers differently based on their available emotional regulation capacity. They found that EI is necessary to regulate family-work interference (FWI) and work-family interference (WFI). Characterised as inter-role conflicts, FWI/WFI causes stress in the family and work domains because from juggling between them, they lose resources from both of these roles. Since EI serves as a buffer against resource threats, the study of Gao et al. suggests that EI is thus a valuable resource to shield against the negative impact of FWI/WFI and, ultimately, WFC (Gao et al., 2013). Given the inter-contextual trend (constantly moving back and forth between contexts), there can also be problems in balancing the requirements of the different contexts, for example, work-family balance or school-family balance. That involves proper prioritisation between other obligations and family life and includes issues related to how career/school and family influence each other, which this study will explore.

Peer interactions also pose a threat, including aggression, harassment, and violence. Bullying is a good example and typical behaviour amongst peer groups in schooling. Those in control of their victim repeatedly perform it. A growing body of research illustrates a reversed relationship between being a bully and EI (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012; Lamb et al., 2009; Lomas et al., 2012). Lower EI seems to play a vital role in bringing about both bullying and victimisation, Kokkinos and Kipritsi claim. As EI skills are learnable, EI education can significantly promote bullying prevention and intervention initiatives (McKenna & Webb, 2013). A study by Rey et al. (2018) further showed that EI is an essential factor in the analysis of cyber victimisation cases since EI has an impressive impact on health and social adjustment.

Humans give meaning to their behaviours within specific contexts (Gebhardt, 2006). Habermas and Hatiboğlu (2014) claim that it needs to be embedded in a story to understand any action. In life narratives, persons draw upon earlier or present experiences to understand past actions. A way to contextualise a life is to embed it in a family constellation, a family history, a socio-economic and socio-cultural

situation, and a historical situation. Life narratives are an excellent cultural tool for contextualising and understanding human action and are always situated in, influenced by, and geared towards multiple contexts: historical-, personal-, and communicative context (Habermas & Hatiboğlu, 2014).

The abovementioned literature reflects the importance of studying EI in different contexts. Since my proposed study will be qualitative, narratives will apply to illustrate EI experiences in specific contexts. In other words, the perspective of participants in their different contexts relates. Although a few research studies, such as those by Behera (2016), Gao et al. (2013), Ghanawat et al. (2016), and Ybarra et al. (2012), examined EI in contexts, I could not find a study comparing the application of EI skills across different contexts thus far. Therefore, this study will focus on such a comparison. The emphasis will mainly be on the contexts where the Neuro-Link EI Program skills apply.

1.6   Contexts Applicable to This Study

No person functions in isolation. Together, people form part of groups and fulfil roles in different social contexts. Group influence on individual behaviour has positive and negative implications (Crano, 2000). Individuals belong to multiple groups, and as the presence of others influences behaviour, one's social identity can have several qualitatively distinct parts. For this study, I will study individuals from the following social contexts: the primary/family context and the broader/extended context. These contexts are now briefly discussed.

a. The primary/family context: characterised by individuals who share meaningful personal relationships. Members know each other well and regard affiliation as vital to their lives. Consequently, members are united and strongly identify with each other. The relationship of members forms the foundation on which they build future relationships. Members include family and good friends (Forsyth, 2014). A family is a group of people related by birth, marriage, or other relationships. In the culture I am familiar with, immediate family members may include spouses, parents, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters. Members of the wider family are grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, and siblings-in-law. Although societies show some variance in the actual composition

16

of families and whether the family members are living together or apart, their common primary responsibility is to share and care. Close friends are not necessarily always relatives but usually include those with whom one has a special, intimate/emotional bond and who form part of one's primary support network. I will consider these relationships when studying the impact of EI in the primary/family context.

b. The broader/extended social context refers to the school, university or work contexts. Individuals connected in extended social contexts are not as emotionally involved with each other as in the immediate context, considering that these contexts are mainly formally organised. Although people spend much time in social contexts, their goals are often task-oriented in the immediate context rather than relationship-oriented. Examples of members in the social context include co-workers, schoolmates, clubs, and sports teams (Forsyth, 2014).

EI is a set of abilities that relate to understanding, using, and managing emotions in both yourself and others in the immediate and extended context. The concept combines emotional and intellectual processes (Tolegenova et al., 2012). EI is a skill that can increase one's own and the well-being of others. In other words, individuals who are conscious of their own emotions and those of others have the advantage of enhancing relationships. It also allows people to see the multiple perspectives of a given situation and acknowledge others' feelings about a specific event.

1.7   Research Problem and Objectives

Research on EI focussing on a particular context per study is reasonably available. However, literature on the comparability of EI behavioural skills regarding similarities and differences across various contexts is lacking. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate EI across multiple contexts: to explore the role and effectiveness of applying skills learnt from the Neuro-Link EI Program. The broad objective gives rise to the following specific research questions:

•   Do individuals understand their truths, emotions, motives, strengths, weaknesses, and talents accurately?

•   Can individuals manage and control what they understand about themselves?

- Do individuals know and understand the truths of others?
- How did individuals develop through the EI training process, and were these changes sustainable?
- Do the participants interact with and influence people constructively, especially in different contexts?
- Do participants find that they apply EI skills consistently in different contexts? If not, in what ways does it differ?
- How did the learnt skills gained from the Neuro-Link EI Training Program affect their well-being and relationships with family members, peers, friends, and colleagues: with individuals separately or within groups?

1.8   Research Design

1.8.1   Paradigm

This study will follow an interpretive approach (Wagner et al., 2012). Within each participant's perspective, their honest truths lie in their culture and history, which may be influenced by context. Epistemologically speaking, the knowledge gained from this investigation will describe their subjective perspectives. Interviews will consist of open-ended but quite specific questioning techniques. The *grand tour* (central question) questioning technique, as described by J. Spradley (2003), will suit this study quite well. (A detailed explanation follows in Chapter 4, see 4.2.3.2).

1.8.2   Research Method and Design

I will apply the qualitative research method to produce rich evidence of the meaning people attach to their own experiences and reality (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Experience has meaning in context, and people acknowledge the contexts or frameworks within which these experiences make sense. The context will, therefore, play a significant role, and I will endeavour to understand and describe the experiences and realities of participants in their different positions in various contexts.

An ethnographic research method is holistic and naturalistic, allowing me to interview participants meaningfully (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The sample will consist of available and willing individuals, working adults operating in various contexts, who

completed the Neuro-Link EI Program and applying learnt skills actively. Through purposive sampling, I will endeavour to find suitable individuals who could deepen my understanding of the research topic. To determine when the sample size is adequate, I will work repetitively between data collection and analysis and continue with data collection until saturation (Wagner et al., 2012). This method allows participants to tell coherent stories that may enable exploring possible growth in EI areas addressed explicitly in the program, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. I furthermore need to uncover how they apply these skills in their different contexts of operation and how it compares across contexts. Therefore, I will compare their EI experiences in the different contexts against context theories and see how the experiences and its effects relate to the theories.

Data collection will be through in-depth interviewing in a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews with some predetermined open-ended questions. A triangulation data-gathering technique will increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the conclusion drawn from analysed data. I will record and transcribe all interviews and use all data to ensure that no conversational information is lost.

Data interpretation will focus on how participants perceive their lived experiences and how I interpret the data as a researcher. The bracketing technique will assist in improving while maintaining an open and compassionate attitude towards the participants. Data collection and thematic analysis will be a continuous process. I will follow the different steps of familiarisation, immersion, coding, elaboration, and interpretation (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012). Silverman (2013) outlines three concurrent data analysis activity flows that can be used: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting and verification. I aim to recognise connections in the data that will enable me to identify themes to explain my findings in a coherent narrative.

1.9   Ethical Considerations

I obtained written consent from the participating company, Neuro-Link, whose intellectual property in the EI training program I will base the research on during this

proposed study (Appendix A). A specifically designated gatekeeper from Neuro-Link will lead me to suitable candidates.

An informed consent document will be presented to the proposed participants for approval. The requirement is that they have an adequate understanding of the Neuro-Link EI Program, and I will further brief them on the scope of the proposed research study (Appendix B). The consent documents, which willing participants will sign, will include information notifying participants that they may withdraw from the research process at any time, that participating is voluntary, and that they must be aware that the research may have an emotional impact on them. The informed consent conditions will apply throughout the research project (Appendix C).

I will establish and maintain trust with all participants, provide them with information for an understanding of the purpose of the study, and explain the methodology I will use. Additionally, I will allow participants to share their truths (how they experience their world) without being judged or criticised. I undertake not to argue or disagree with them and endeavour not to harm them regarding time commitments, stressful topic discussions, and disclosure of information. Attention will continuously focus on the well-being of the participants.

I further undertake not to deceive participants but to convey the study's true purpose, the research's potential uses, how results will be dealt with, and any risks and benefits that may arise during the research process. As the researcher, I will present myself as such without exerting positional power over any participant. I intend to enter the study by maintaining a neutral stance in data collection and analysis without preconceived ideas of bias. I strive to maintain an attitude of fairness and justice throughout the research process and to protect vulnerable participants. That includes the process of recruitment of participants, development of questions, and interpretation and conveying of results. I will assure participants of the privacy and confidentiality of their responses throughout observations and individual interviews and refrain from disclosing any information that will identify, embarrass or harm them. I will not disclose any information discussed in confidentiality without their consent and will do it anonymously where necessary.

1.10 Conclusion

Human behaviour can vary enormously depending on the situation and setting – circumstances and context. By adopting multiple roles, people give meaning to their behaviour within specific contexts. Consequently, no one is bound to a single environment but is constantly migrating back and forth across the boundaries of different contexts, such as the primary/family context and the broader/extended social contexts, as well as the various facets of each of these contexts.

Competence in EI has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of individuals, which further has an enormous influence on the extended environment in which they find themselves. Furthermore, as EI seems more crucial in certain situations, the context makes a difference. Therefore, the question is: Will specific settings encourage EI more than others and to what extent?

Consequently, this proposed study will explore how EI influences participants' coping in the contexts mentioned earlier. The purpose is to identify similarities and differences in their ability to deal with their situation in various contexts. Combining results with a comprehensive literature review and multiple theories and approaches, I plan to systematically study EI's contextualisation to provide a broader understanding of the phenomena related to EI and contexts.

1.11 Presentation

This study will unfold as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the research study.

Chapter 2 – A theoretical discussion of context, followed by a description and corresponding analysis of each relevant context.

Chapter 3 – An EI literature review – definitions, theories, models, approaches, and applications of EI.

Chapter 4 – An explanation of the qualitative research methodology, paradigm, and design I will follow during this study. It will include a description of sampling methods, interviews, data-gathering techniques, and data analysis. This chapter also briefly explains and discusses the Neuro-Link EI Program involving participants' experiences in this study across

relevant contexts.

Chapter 5 – Application of EI in various contexts by presenting data from the interviews of participants in narrative format.

Chapter 6 – The research findings, emerging themes, a summary of conclusions drawn from the data analysis and recommendations for future research.

.

CHAPTER 2

Context: A Theoretical Discussion

2.1   Introduction

The situation surrounding an action is called its context and can be external or internal. That individual behaviour and decision-making always develop in some context or situation is undoubtedly so. However, understanding this interaction between people and context requires much more than just a version of individual behaviour – it requires a theory of how and why humans are embedded in space and time (G. L. Clark, 2018). Although each individual has their traits, ideals, and goals, they all form part of groups whom they attach to and who strongly influence them, depending on the nature of the relationships. The context or environment of the person can be quite complex and multidimensional. It may include the family with related members, the workplace where colleagues and teams connect through task-related interdependence or membership, the community, and others. The nature of the relationship, social bond, history, and mutual influence between various group members determine the sustainability of these relationships. Spontaneously people form relationships with others already part of a network, naturally resulting in a social network of groups. Contextual perspectives focus on studying these relationships between individuals and their physical, cognitive, and social worlds – their contexts.

Where people are, there is context; where there is context, there is behaviour. As reflected in the literature of disciplines such as Sociology and Psychology, environmental variables are essential in studying human behaviour because they share an interest in the context in which behaviour occurs. In his book *Group Dynamics,* Forsyth (2014) discusses the relationship between environment and groups, focusing on the multi-level analysis of human behaviour where individuals hierarchically sort themselves in social aggregates such as groups, organisations, and communities. These social aggregates, furthermore, exist in physically geographically situated environments that influence their dynamics. Forsyth explains that mutual influence, roles, and norms set standards for what is permissible within a specific context, shape the behaviour and interaction of such group members and create structures that form the core of the group's most dynamic processes.

While the shift from isolation to group context may significantly reduce our sense of uniqueness, it can nonetheless increase integrated performance, attitudes, and values that can result in overall consensus within the group, Forsyth further believes. This consensus happens because people become proficient in attitudes, values, identities, skills, and principles acquired in a group context and thus adapt their behaviour to these social norms and requirements. He refers to Lewin's law of interaction, which states that reactions from group members are a function of their characteristics and the social and physical environments in which groups exist, and these contexts are indeed meaningful. Forsyth thus describes it as individuals who embed themselves in groups, groups that embed in physical environments, and the interaction in these contexts influences the dynamics of the entire group (Forsyth, 2014).

2.2   Defining Context and Contextualise

To proceed with research requires definitional clarity. However, *context* or *contextualise* are rich concepts and hence challenging to define. Therefore, addressing this issue will require consulting a range of disciplines or perspectives. Academics in various fields, including psychologists and even computer analysts, have already studied the contextual concept. Within each research community, they interpret the term in such a way to fit their specific objectives (Wan, 2009).

As per Merriam-Webster (n.d.a), the word context has evolved logically from the Latin word *contexere,* meaning "to weave or join together", and refers to the environment in which something (either words or events) exists. To contextualise something, signifies placing it in an appropriate setting to consider it properly (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b). Cambridge (n.d.a) describes the noun, context, similarly, as a setting, situation, environment or circumstance in which something exists or happens, and such a circumstance is the interweaving of many kinds of entities.

Thus, when describing a context, Wan (2009, p. 33) refers to a "finite set of entities, a finite set of properties for each entity, and the interweaving of these properties" and uses the following example to explain this statement: "A seminar event is the weaving together of entities *speaker, topic, audience, time, and location* and their properties

such as *name* and *affiliation* for the speaker, *title* and *abstract* for the topic, *size* and *status* for the audience, *clock-time* for time, and *address* and *room-number* for the locality. We need to associate a value from its domain with each property and bind each entity with the instantiated properties to describe the context of the seminar" (Wan, 2009, p. 33).

Barnett and Casper (2001) describe the human social environment as the immediate physical, socio-cultural, and relational environment in which defined groups of people function and interact. Therefore, understanding human behaviour is necessary to contextualise it, that is, to observe and describe behaviour in the different situations, environments, or circumstances where it occurs. Cambridge (n.d.b) defines contextualising as considering something in a particular situation or context to understand and explain it. According to Rousseau and Fried (2001), contextualisation links observations to relevant facts, events, or viewpoints that enable research and theory to form part of a larger whole.

This current study focuses on contextualising EI. Therefore, when considering the EI of the research participants, attention will focus on the individual and the situation. The latter will include what Theresa Chai (2015) mentioned, for instance, that contextualisation extends significantly beyond one construct. It involves contemporary life, deep-seated cultural patterns, and cultural overlays such as postmodernity, humanism, and other trends. Although she refers primarily to Christianity, it may also apply to EI. Hiebert (1984) bases contextualisation on a critical-realist epistemology that views all human knowledge as a combination of objective and subjective elements that considers historical and cultural contexts.

Another helpful definition of contextualising found in the literature leans more towards the direction of this current study. Mazzeo et al. (2003, pp. 3-4) describe contextualisation as a "diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context that is of interest to the student". This definition suggests the contextualisation of a pedagogical approach that makes curriculum content meaningful and valuable for students in everyday life, an essential educational trait

for successful learning. It specifically applies to this current study because it aims to determine to what extent individuals use their acquired EI skills in everyday life across the boundaries of different contexts – to discover if they can transfer these skills effectively and effortlessly from one context to another. This study's contextual learning approach links to Mazzeo et al.'s view, as it suggests that constructive learning occurs when teachers deliver knowledge in such a manner that students can generate meaning based on their own experiences. Internships and in-service training are other examples of contextual learning experiences (Shumer & Rolloff, 2013). Contextualisation of learning thus indicates the acquisition of specific skills and their application in everyday circumstances (the context).

For this study, contextualisation of EI involves analysing, interpreting, and describing the application of learnt foundational EI skills by the research participants in their different historical and cultural contexts and discovering whether they can transfer these skills effectively from one context to another.

2.3   A Theoretical Reflection on Context

A theoretical base is imperative in an academic research study since theories serve a threefold purpose: to describe, explain and predict phenomena. According to Jason et al. (2016), researchers use theories to describe a phenomenon. They implement these descriptive processes to explain why this phenomenon occurs and then employ this explanatory framework to create inferential forecasts. A well-formulated theory should be able to describe the phenomenon of interest thoroughly. It should be able to state further under what circumstances and conditions to apply a given set of proposals. Such a comprehensive theory provides a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of interest and thus enables an in-depth critical analysis, Jason et al. (2016) explain.

By consulting theories in this research, I will attempt to assess the applicability of these theories within a variety of contexts to determine whether or not these theoretical predictions hold. It will, therefore, require a thorough reflection on the multidisciplinary psychological field of study with its different approaches to determine what may be appropriate in contextualising EI. Developmental Psychology, for

example, aims to understand and document the changes in people over their lifetime (Kohlberg, 1982; Piaget, 1972), though more applicable to this chapter are context and social action theories, which form part of the Community Psychology field of study. Community Psychology aims specifically to understand human contexts and the relationship between people and their contexts. It, therefore, makes a significant theoretical contribution to describing the impact of context and the environment with valid and reliable measures to capture these complex phenomena (Jason et al., 2016).

Since each ecological environment is unique, with its history and varying influences, no generalised principles should apply across settings. Therefore, understanding the situations in which people's perspectives arise and how and why these perspectives differ will get attention in this study (see Jason et al., 2016). Hence, this research will investigate contextual approaches that evaluate the connection between persons, their physical, cognitive, and social surroundings, and socio-cultural and environmental consequences on development. Following is a discussion of significant contextual theories that pioneered these perspectives (Contextual Perspectives, n.d.).

2.3.1 Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, best known for his Socio-cultural Theory, has highlighted the importance of social interactions and culture in developing higher-order thinking skills. His Socio-cultural Theory is noteworthy for its insights into the dynamic "interdependence between individual and social processes in the construction of knowledge" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192). Vygotsky argued that social interactions play a critical role, and only by considering the social and historical contexts within which they arise can we fully understand cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, each function in the child's cultural development happens twofold: on a social level between people (inter-psychological) and an individual level within the child (intra-psychological). He believed that with the proper guidance from others, each person's abilities, or even potential abilities, can develop. So learning takes place to the level they can potentially reach. A more skilled person helps the learner during social interaction in reachable steps, referred

to as scaffolding. This contextual psychology perspective thus approaches the connection between persons in their physical, cognitive, personality, and social contexts (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

The socio-cultural paradigm believes that the context in which learning occurs is critical to the learning process. One example of this social constructivist view is situated education, such as an apprenticeship or in-service training, where students participate in activities directly applicable to the intended environment where they will apply these skills. The knowledge thus forms an integrated whole with the training context (Brown et al., 1989). This world (context) within which the learner must function is a complicated mixture of facts, challenges, dimensions, and perceptions (Ackerman, 1996). Circumstances constantly challenge learners to master tasks that exceed their skill and knowledge level, motivating them to build on past successes and increase learner confidence (Brownstein, 2001). This statement coincides with Vygotsky's area of proximal development, which refers to individuals who can reach their full potential under the guidance of a skilled person.

2.3.2   Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bioecological Model

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the Ecological Systems Theory to explain levels of social contexts. In these social contexts, proximal systems exist in even broader, more distal systems. Individuals, societies, and the levels between them are interdependent. Bronfenbrenner describes contexts as the comprehensive environments within which individuals live, contexts that form the operational forces to shape the lives of individuals. These include family and friendship networks, peer groups, neighbourhoods, the workplace, school, religious and community organisations, cultural heritage, norms, gender roles, and social and economic influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Community Psychology is about the relationships of people in their contexts. Much research studies the interdependence between individuals and their comprehensive social environments, which Bronfenbrenner refers to as their contexts. People and contexts mutually impact one another (Kloos et al., 2012). Thus, contexts influence people's personal lives, while persons, primarily when associating with others,

influence and change contexts. From this, we can deduce that contexts affect our lives as much as our characteristics. People need skills that enable them to adapt to challenging contexts and ecological inter-contextual transitions. Repeatedly, individuals find themselves in systems at different ecological levels, such as family, friends, the workplace and other environmental institutions (Kloos et al., 2012).

In his Ecological Systems Theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposes that human development is a long transformation process. The way one perceives and handles the environment influences how the process develops. The theory explains that the inherent characteristics of a child and the natural environment (ecology) constantly interact, affecting growth and development. This model, accordingly, emphasises the significance of studying people in multiple environmental contexts because people usually coexist in diverse ecosystems simultaneously. Each system inevitably interacts with the other, affecting all aspects and levels of a person's life. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory organises the social environment into different systems: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems (as illustrated in Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1

Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (Härkönen, 2007, p. 15).
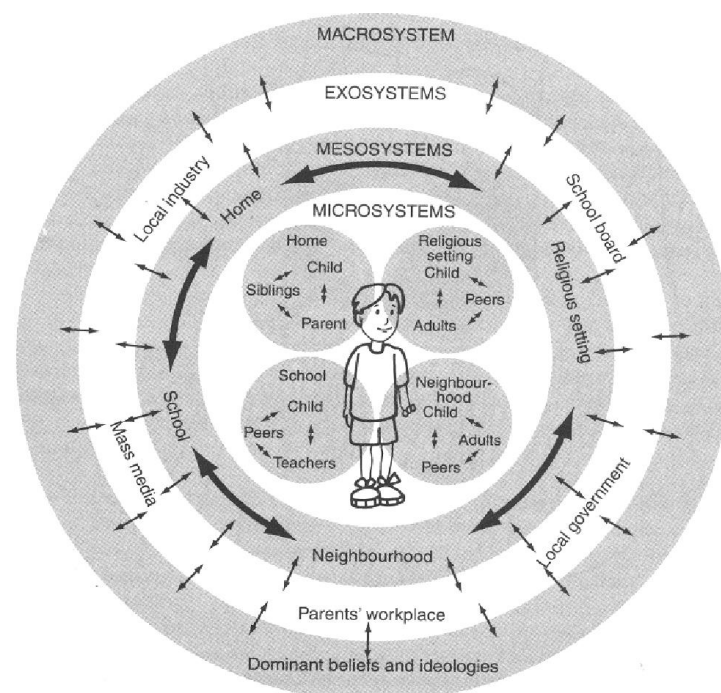
Microsystems

The main characteristics of the microsystem are the interpersonal relationships that individuals form, the social roles they assume, and the activities they share. These are environments where direct, repeated personal interaction with others takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Unlike just the sum of individual members, microsystems are social units in one place or more, with unique dynamics of lasting relationships between individuals. Physical institutions such as playgrounds, local parks, pubs, or coffee shops only serve as meeting places for microsystems. Their contact and interrelationships in these microsystems cause family members, colleagues, or friendship networks to influence each other mutually.

In microsystems, there are differences concerning the roles members play, their power in making decisions, their reactions to the actions of other members, and the like. Furthermore, microsystems influence individuals who use these systems in different contexts inversely, where each individual's cognitive and biological condition determines their actions and inputs, accordingly influencing the system (Härkönen, 2007).

Mesosystems

The mesosystem comprises larger organisational structures, including the school system, the extended family, and religious organisations. These settings affect microsystems to a great extent. The nature of these types of systems can affect the individual's self-esteem, growth, and sense of accomplishment to consequently have a physical, cognitive and emotional impact on the individual. Further, these mesosystems and the larger contexts of the community, the ecosystem, influence one another mutually (Härkönen, 2007).

Exosystems

According to Bronfenbrenner's model, the exosystem concentrates primarily on the concurrent surroundings of significant others impacting the developing individual even though the child is not directly involved in it, such as the workplace of a parent, social welfare organisations, or extended family members (Härkönen, 2007). Environmental elements common to these exosystems profoundly affect a child's

development. Let us consider the parent's work environment. The following example may apply: Due to retrenchments, one of the parents becomes unemployed. A loss of income brings about financial constraints in the household, which unintentionally leads to tension and changes in the parents' interaction patterns with the child. Similarly, transitions across the adult lives of significant others can influence any member who forms part of this system. This occurrence demonstrates that the values, history, and economy of a relevant community, consequently, impact the organisational structures it houses (Härkönen, 2007).

Macrosystems

Macrosystems are broad societies, cultural groups, political parties, social movements, international institutions, economics, and belief systems that affect an entire community. "The macrosystem can be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context" (Härkönen, 2007, p. 12).

Chronosystems

The chronosystem of Bronfenbrenner's theory encompasses a person's life experiences and the roles and regulations of all concerned that can significantly impact development (Härkönen, 2007). To understand the interactions between individuals and their environments, community psychologists typically focus on specific contexts where people find themselves with others in everyday life. These significant interactive influences, such as family, education, religion, and culture, shape a person's experiences and development. So do environmental events and transitions, including any socio-historical events that occur within a relevant historical context and time frame. These occurrences appear throughout a child's development.

2.3.3   Psychological Sense of Community Theory

The connection between the individual and the context produces a psychological sense of community. Individuals feel part of the community and benefit from their association with their community (McMillan & Charvis, 1986). Sarason summarised this theory as follows: "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged

31

interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (Sarason, 1974, as cited in Jason et al., 2016, p. 12). This definition encompasses the four interrelated dimensions of this theory: membership, mutual influence, shared emotional connection, and integration and fulfilment of needs (McMillan & Charvis, 1986). It further incorporates many vital aspects of Community Psychology, which believe individuals exist in a more extensive structural network, are interdependent (Jason et al., 2016), and can nurture different psychological feelings of attachment to their communities.

The above theories and models apply solely to context. A more detailed discussion of theories which apply to EI behaviour in different contexts will resume in Chapter 3.

2.4   A Conceptual Exposition of Context

Psychology is the science of understanding and explaining why individuals think, feel, act and react as they do in real-life contexts. Fundamental, however, are the different perceptions identified about the concept of context. Magnusson and Stattin (1998) mention that an individual's development and continuous functioning are not isolated from the environment in which they live. For Heidegger, the essence of human life is primarily embedded *in the world* and imbued with the world in which it lives, just as human meanings and goals infuse the inhabited world (Heidegger, 1927, as cited in Stolorow, 2002). As a result, the individual is an engaged, meaningful member of an integrated, complex, and dynamic person-environment system. There is interdependence between the components of a relationship which functions as a whole. Such a relationship forms a system (Reis et al., 2000).

Vetere further explains that the aim of general system theory is "to classify systems according to the way the parts are organised or interrelated, and, to describe typical patterns of behaviour for the different classes of systems as defined" (Vetere, 1987, as cited in Reis et al., 2000, p. 847). Systems research, therefore, focuses on the organised complexity of behaviour within a hierarchy of organisational levels. Relationships are open systems and involve many other systems with which they exchange information and energy. Reis et al. (2000) explain how the systems

perspective recognises the study of relationships:

a. The social relationships individuals belong to cherish them from the moment of conception.

b. Each relationship lies in social and physical environmental systems that together represent the ecological niche of the relationship. Relationships influence the nature and functioning of these hierarchically organised biological and behavioural systems in which individuals nestle.

c. Each relationship's specialised ecological niche, in turn, resides in larger social and cultural systems.

d. There is constant mutual development and influence between all these systems.

According to this system approach, we can only understand the properties of the parts from the organisation of the whole. Suppose then the relationship is a system, it is essential to understand the principles of the organisation of the system, such as the sustainability of the relationship and what the likely impact of the connection on the current and future behaviour of the individual may be (Reis et al., 2000). Magnusson and Stattin (1998) explain that physical environments usually function in a structured and consistent manner, and members have the opportunity and the necessary perceptual-cognitive and intellectual resources to perceive it and to be able to handle and understand its pattern. They further state that Adler mentions the immediate context and the community in which it originates, not just the family but beyond the family and the world.

Rasmussen and Watkins (2012) explain that the individual develops and functions within this person-environment system as an integrated, complex and dynamic whole. This holistic character of thought that Adler called Individual Psychology compares with the German term *Individualpsychologie* which implies that the individual is undividable – they are not to be divided or set apart from their context. The emphasis is that one cannot examine an isolated individual. Before there was the individual, there was already a community where they could arise. One can only explain a person's movement in terms of how they perceive the community in which they move – the social embeddedness of that person (Rasmussen & Watkins, 2012), which precisely explains the holistic view of the modern systems perspective.

Individuals and their environment consequently have a close bond known as living space. During this process of psychological development into an integrated organism, the individual shapes to maturity with the help of experiential and cultural contributions. Each component does not develop and operate in isolation; neither should the analysis process separate them from each other (Tinajero & Páramo, 2012). As a result of this viewpoint, understanding how social systems function is impossible without knowledge of individual functioning, and understanding personal functioning and development is difficult without knowledge of their surroundings. Most important, therefore, is to thoroughly understand the close dependence between individual functioning and development and their environment's social, cultural and physical characteristics (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

Magnusson and Stattin (1998) further state that although theorists have different perspectives, two characteristics recognise their position on the vital role that the incidental situation plays concerning behaviour, namely a focus on the person's current behaviour and a focus on proximal contexts or situations. At the metatheoretical level, Magnusson and Stattin distinguish three general models for the role that environmental contexts play in individual functioning and development:

a. Unidirectional causality: Traditionally, theorists recognised, treated and debated man and his environment as independent entities and considered the interaction between them as a one-sided causality. This division implied that individuals fell victim to contextual influences: The family exerts a one-way influence on the child during socialization, from childhood to youth.

b. Classical interactionism: Unlike the usual uni-directional viewpoint, classical interactionist formulations emphasise that the individual, as an active, purposeful entity, forms a total system with the environment of functioning, characterised by a reciprocal causal relationship between the individual and environment. Bronfenbrenner discussed the process character of the person-environment relation in terms of his process-person-context models. Endler and Magnusson (1976, as cited in Magnusson & Stattin, 1998) briefly summarised it as follows: (i) Actual behaviour is a function of an ongoing process of multidirectional interaction between individuals and the situations they encounter; (ii) The individual is a deliberately active agent in this interaction process; (iii) Although emotional factors do play a role on the personal side of the process, the cognitive

factors are the essential determinants of behaviour; (iv) The psychological relevance of the circumstance for the individual is the most crucial determining factor on the situational side of the process.

c. Modern holistic interactionism: Formulations of this view build on the central formulations of classical interactionism, where individuals and their environment form an integrated, holistic, and dynamic system in which the individual and the environment are inseparable elements. According to this interactionist model, individuals evaluate external information that directs thoughts and actions, stimulating the biochemical processes that impact psychological events, thoughts, and emotions. The physical and social environments are structured and organised in the form of systems, at the individual's disposal, such as the school system, the labour market, and the like (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

Viewed in modern systemic terms, Tinajero and Páramo (2012) describe individual development as a process in which new characteristics emerge due to the dynamic interactions between the various levels of the person-environment system whose outcome is uncertain but possible. This person-environment system consists of several organisational levels with elements we should not analyse separately. These levels are fundamentally different yet interconnected by dynamic interactions between the various levels, depending on the properties of the interactive elements and when this interaction occurs. Development, therefore, does not follow an inflexible rate. Although it responds to particular laws, it remains unpredictable (Tinajero & Páramo, 2012).

From a sociological perspective, examining the person in context will provide a valuable overview of the nature of self and identity (Tinajero & Páramo, 2012). Taking social-psychological views into account, Gecas and Burke (1995, as cited in G. R. Adams & Marshall, 1996) describe the characteristics of self and identity as (a) Situational: emphasising the development and maintenance of the self in person-in-context interactions; (b) Social structural: focusing on role relationships and other characteristics of social groups; (c) Biographical-historical: studying the self as a cultural and historical entity; and (d) Intrapersonal: which describes the social-cognitive processes within the self as well as the nature of personality as it influences behaviour. By considering these aspects, we will realise that we must see people in

their context, or as mentioned by G. R. Adams and Marshall (1996), we will find the person in context.

Interpersonal relationships form the basis of one's life, resulting in human behaviour mainly occurring in the context of the individual's relationship with others. The evidence shows that people do not always react similarly in their relationships (Reis et al., 2000). The meaning they attach to stimuli can change dramatically during changes in the relationship context. It is essential to appreciate and understand the relationship context in which individuals find themselves to understand and predict their behaviour.

In this regard, Clark-Polner and Clark (2014) likewise recommend that studying social behaviour using any methodology should consider the relational context. These authors warn that failing to do so will prevent researchers from improving their knowledge of social behaviour, likely producing confusing literature and risk concluding with limited generalisability.

When considering an individual, the relationship context is not merely the immediate family. Consulting an individual's social and historical context enables us to define their identity and behaviour according to the four different foci of Gecas and Burke mentioned above (as cited in G. R. Adams & Marshall, 1996). Every person is born into the history of a world that was already populated when we arrived here. Therefore, we had to figure out how to fit in and stand out in our cohort. Accordingly, Rasmussen and Watkins (2012) explain that children should learn to fit in with the group, to get into the line of march at the point at which they arrive, and then to distinguish themselves in some way. They must establish themselves in a family constellation, family history, the socio-economic, socio-cultural and historical circumstances – thus, identify themselves in their specific context (Habermas & Hatiboğlu, 2014). An individual can express this information through life narratives. Contextualisation can serve as a tool for these life stories. Life stories are always located in, influenced by, and directed at multiple contexts. Furthermore, the historical, cultural and social context conditions shape the natural form of narrative (Habermas & Hatiboğlu, 2014).

Authors such as Imel (2000) regard context as meaningful situations, which are often typical everyday social situations. A study by this author shows how the meaning of what individuals learn connects their life experiences directly to context and that learning anchors consequently in the context of life situations and problems. Accordingly, the Gestalt theory believes that a situation's arrangement significantly impacts the cognitive and behavioural process (Van Oers, 1998). Indeed, meaningfulness does not primarily depend on the cognitive structure only but is relatively something that simultaneously stems from a situation and the person's involvement. A connection thus exists between an individual's knowledge base and the circumstances where the individual implements such knowledge. In this way, knowledge forms an integral part of the contexts and activities in which it develops. Individuals often participate in collaborative learning activities and utilise resources outside of themselves during the learning process (Imel, 2000). The development and functioning of individuals further depend on the development and functioning of other individuals with whom they associate.

The meaning that a situation holds for someone differs from person to person, which can lead to different types of actions and thus produce different meanings. In their so-called phenomenographic approach, Marton and Booth (1997) base learning on the experience of a situation, the distinction of the relevant phenomena and how it relates to the situation. They explain that "any learning situation or any situation at all has a structure of relevance for those who experience it, aspects of the situation that indicate what is aimed at, what it demands, and where it will lead" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 180). Thus, we can view contextualisation as considering all actions, operations, and objectives in a socio-cultural setting.

As a result, we can determine contextualisation by how we interpret a situation concerning an individual's activity. Every time an individual gets actively involved in an environment, they create a context. Creating such a context implies determining a specific goal, examining historical experiences, verifying which resources are available, and deciding what actions to perform to achieve the chosen goal. Thus, by combining this motive, purpose, object, means, and action, context becomes the product of an identified situation as a specific activity environment. This elementary process is what Marton and Booth call the process of context making (or

contextualising), which is a mental action interconnected with a current socio-cultural activity (Marton & Booth, 1997).

According to the preceding discussion, it is clear that social behaviour is interpersonal, and everything interpersonal occurs within the context of a relationship. Relational context is valid even when interacting with strangers who will probably never meet again and have no acquaintances in common (Clark-Polner & Clark, 2014). Behaviour, cognition and emotion determine the relationship context. Clark-Polner and Clark (2014) conceptually explain the characteristics of such a relationship context: (a) The type of relationship; (b) The character (or "personality") of the relationship (separate from the personalities of each individual involved in the relationship); (c) Unique individual differences in members' relationship orientation; (d) The history of the relationship; (e) The developmental stage of the relationship; and (f) The broader relationship network within which the specific relationship exists.

Over time, individuals belong to different social communities, called discourse communities (Imel, 2000). These communities provide them with cognitive tools such as ideas, theories and concepts to make sense of their experiences. Cognitive actions and behaviours thus spread across persons, symbolic and physical environments. Much focus is on the context-bound aspect of human behaviour, which includes thinking and learning (Imel, 2000).

In summary, we see the individual holistically integrated with a context that we cannot isolate from the social and communal system in which they function. An attempt to explain social systems requires a thorough understanding of the individuals operating within the system and the environment in which it operates. The interdependence of the physical and social environments forms an integrated, holistic system of inseparable elements – the person-environment system. Furthermore, the relationship contexts play an essential role in the behaviour, development and formation of the identity of its members. Through close relationships with others, individuals grow from experiential and cultural contributions. Therefore, the study of individuals in multiple contexts, such as the family constellation and historical, socio-economic, and cultural contexts, forms a sound basis for explaining how their lives anchor in the contexts of their everyday lives. A connection forms between the

knowledge gained from collaborative learning and the context in which it develops. Psychological research is ideal for analysing this interaction between thinking, learning and behaviour and the circumstances in which they occur.

2.5   Construal and Analysis of Relevant Contexts

People continually define themselves by being involved in different environments and contexts, such as their family, profession, circle of friends, and other religious groups and leisure activities (B. G. Adams & Crafford, 2012). During these self-defined processes, people consciously direct themselves to function efficiently between and within diverse environments through their own decisions. They, thus, form part of the various social contexts in which they operate. Different contexts require them to manage different expectations and demands; consequently, personal and social aspects shape the individual's identity. For example, the parent of a family may be a professional, a member of a specific community, one or more organisations, and more. This study does not involve one particular context but will focus on applying EI skills in all the contexts of the research participants. I will therefore explore the participants' EI in multiple contexts where their EI behaviour is activated and affected.

Therefore, contextualising EI requires a clear understanding of the relevant contexts of individuals, which emerged from my study of the literature. Four types of contexts appeared relevant, which I interpret as the "who", "where", "when", and "how" contexts. "Who" refers to whom people associate and socialise with, whilst "where" refers to their location when associating. The "when" context refers to where they are in their life span, whilst the "how" context refers to their manner of socialising. From here on referred to as the Four-Dimensional Context Model of *association-, localisation-, life phase-, and methodical contexts*. Although these four contexts differ significantly, interconnectivity is continuously possible through people's transboundary movement. One can simultaneously be in more than one of these contexts.

This Four-Dimensional Context Model corresponds with what Deci and Ryan (2012) noted in their study, that people are in numerous built-in contexts at any given time. For example, they can be in proximal interpersonal contexts (e.g., a family or

workgroup) and distal surroundings such as their society's cultural norms or economic structures. Their research emphasises that these proximal or distal social contexts within which people function direct their need satisfaction and type of motivation that consequently affect their well-being. Due to intrinsic or extrinsic life goals, social contexts also affect essential life outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

Proximal social contexts include the salient people, such as parents, teachers, coaches, friends, managers, and partners. However, it is not only these proximal contexts that influence an individual's development. Every proximal context is embedded in other more distal contexts (e.g. the culture or composition of cultures, belief systems, the constitution of the country, health and economic status of society, and the like) having a coercive influence on proximal contextual behaviours.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the Four-Dimensional Context Model (including proximal and distal contexts), and a discussion of these contexts follows in subsequent sections.

Figure 2.2

Four-Dimensional Context Model.

"WHO" ASSOCIATION CONTEXTS	"WHERE" LOCALISATION CONTEXTS
° Family & Peer Contexts ° Group Contexts ° Relational Contexts	° Recreational Contexts ° Educational Contexts ° Occupational Contexts
"WHEN" LIFE PHASE CONTEXTS	"HOW" METHODICAL CONTEXTS
° Personal Context ° Historical Context	° Face-to-face Contexts ° Virtual Contexts
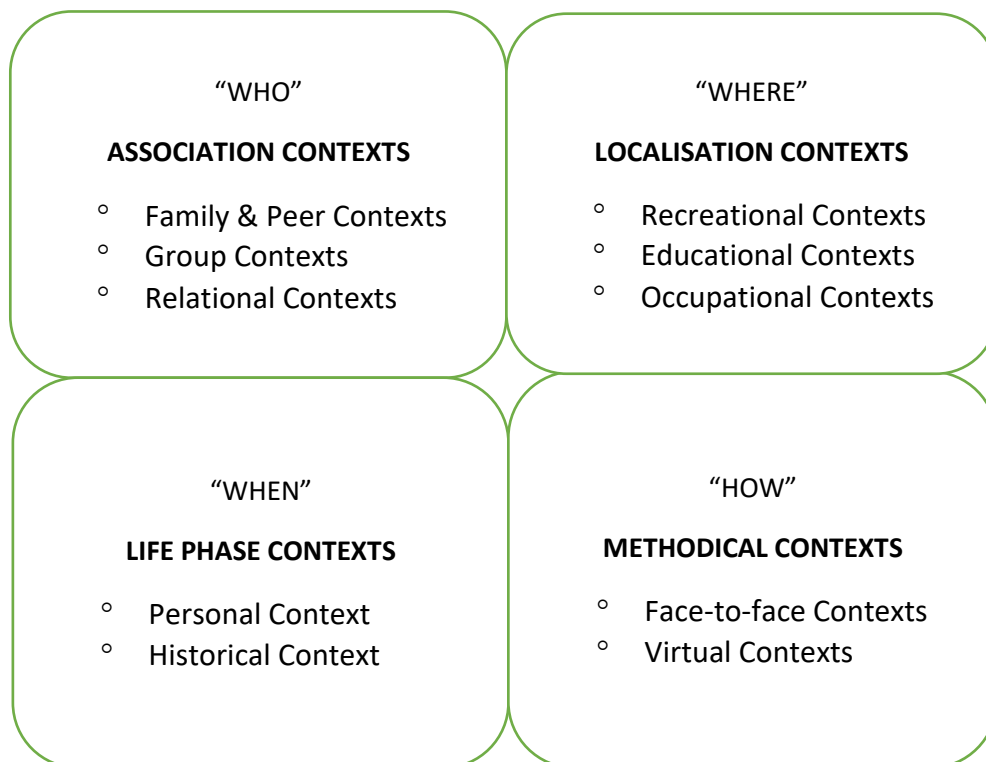
2.5.1 Association Contexts

The Association Context refers to whom people socialise with. Most people's self-concept contains characteristics that are similar to those of specific partners present. Depending on who they identify with, these similarities allow people to realise who they are. In this way, they can adjust their experiences of a working self-concept accordingly (M. S. Clark et al., 2017). The Association Context includes, amongst others, the family, peers, relations, and group contexts.

2.5.1.1 Family and Peer Contexts

The systemic perspective brought new views on families as an adapting and developing context in which children grow up (Kreppner, 2000). Emotional socialisation already begins in the context of parent-infant care (Debaryshe & Fryxell, 1998). The family, serving as the most significant context for the development of children, contains concepts of the family as an institution that contributes to the transfer of meaning. Kreppner (2000) likewise mentions that society considers the mother as the primary caregiver, and the child's survival depends on this care. Considering the whole relationship experience of children in their natural rearing habitat, the family relationship network seems to be the most tangible and reliable context (Kreppner, 2000). Emotional socialisation in the home influences children's physiological response, self-regulation, and processing of social information and behavioural strategies for any situation. With that, parents are, from the beginning, already involved in forming and socialising the child's life. Therefore, we can directly associate children's social skills and overall adjustment in other settings with family problem-solving interactions. The initial development of social interaction patterns of children in the relationship with their parents, thus, serves as the foundation for understanding and navigating their larger social environment (Debaryshe & Fryxell, 1998).

Considering the family perspective as the most crucial context, peer networks are regarded as the second social system of particular importance where children function and develop (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). During preschool and early elementary school, children increasingly spend more time and energy outside the home and family environment as they interact with peers. In these peer

environments, patterns of social information processing developed by young children in the family play an integral role in how they experience the environment and how it responds to them (Debaryshe & Fryxell, 1998). Debaryshe and Fryxell explain further that society considers children who often act competently in social situations with peers proficient in processing social information. In contrast, children with social information processing deficits will likely show socially inappropriate behaviour toward peers. Peer relationships and friendships are characteristic of the life situation of children and adolescents and therefore form the context where new behaviours emerge (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

Although most research on socialization is still non-contextual, researchers pay more attention to interpreting, understanding, and explaining the developmental characteristics of the reciprocal interactions between the socialising environment and the individual. Some models emphasise the commonality of behaviour in different contexts, while others systematically study the patterns of individual functioning in different contexts. Moreover, increasing attention focuses on the influence of factors in the socio-cultural environment, which is the context for families and peer groups, on development. Family and peer group systems are complex and dynamic, but a distinctive feature in both is the reciprocity in the relationship between person and context (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

Nevertheless, according to Kreppner (2000), the family still provides the best example of the inseparability of individuals in their context. The family is the institution where the transmission of culture and the creation of meaning occur for future generations. This meaning can provide valuable information for the development of social skills by children in the family and different peer groups. Communication and skill acquisition occurs in the family to establish and maintain relationships. Each member contributes to forming their social context as an active part of the family system (Kreppner, 2000).

Thus, as Magnussen and Stattin (1998) suggest, even though socialisation research has come a long way in understanding family processes, it can be helpful to study the attitudes and behaviours of family life simultaneously from multiple perspectives. Such a study could include (a) The family in context; (b) Peer networks; (c) Other

relational and group networks. It may be useful to study the application of EI skills from the perspective of the father, mother and children in the family. Factors to consider could include the reflection of individuals functioning in the family, parenting, the family in other institutional organisations, and the broader social and cultural context. It can further shed light on the mutual connection between family members, how they apply skills and react to each other in everyday life and how it relates to their experiences and behaviours in other contexts.

2.5.1.2   Group Context

The discipline of Social Psychology primarily involves the effect of the social situation or context on cognition and behaviour. With the emphasis on flexible processing in a social context, Social Psychologists agree with the situated cognitive approach that cognition is the basis of adaptive behaviour and that the interaction between the organism and its environment produces thinking (Smith & Conrey, 2009). The perspective of Social Psychology indicates that the most significant features of the cognitive context are certainly of a social nature.

Three levels of an interpersonal context where we will find cognition and action appear in a study by Smith and Conrey (2009). These are (a) Communicative context: Social connection is complex and essential to everyday existence. Therefore, the immediate interactive conversational context is often communicative; (b) Relationship context: The relationships that individuals have with each other hold important implications for how they process social information. Both the physical context in which it takes place and the specific individuals involved influence cognition and action; (c) Group context: The social context also consists of our broader membership in social groups we identify with (Smith & Conrey, 2009).

Norms and standards for suitable and appropriate views, opinions, and behaviours arise in these social groups (Smith & Conrey, 2009). People tend to meet the group's norms during social identity formation. A sense of connectedness to the group activates this. Due to the involvement of multiple individuals, it is difficult to determine how these ever-changing contexts may affect our thinking and behaviour. In groups, cognition continuously spreads across the members of the group. It does

not imply that this ordinary cognition is more accurate than individual cognition. However, rather than remembering information for ourselves, it is sufficient to remember who has the knowledge or skills of what we need to know. Wegner (1995) calls this phenomenon "transactive memory"; that is, we store much of our memories in the heads of others. This transactive memory has significant implications for group performance. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly understand individual thinking to understand the distributed cognition between people. The emphasis is on the social context of behaviour. That means general human behaviour adapts to the intricate network of group members, their relationships, social motives, and the socially formed self. This view adds value to the study of behaviour in the physical environment, according to Smith and Conrey (2009).

2.5.1.3   Relational Context

When is behaviour "social"? Clark-Polner and Clark (2014) argue that thought, feeling, or behaviour is social when individuals are interdependent. The nature of this interdependence between individuals shapes social actions that form relationship contexts, they explain. Of all the situational factors to consider in understanding psychological phenomena, the relationship context in which individuals find themselves is likely the most crucial (M. S. Clark et al., 2017). Individual differences manifest when people associate with more than one relationship or all social relationships within a category of relationships. The duration of relationships depends on their functions and goals; all relationships transform over time. The specific stage of a relationship is indicative of the social and emotional processes within it (Clark-Polner & Clark, 2014).

The conceptual analysis of relationship contexts can determine how the relationship forms psychological processes (Clark-Polner & Clark, 2014). The context distinguishes relationships such as friendships, parent-child relationships, and professional connections. Although, in lay terms, we acknowledge the essence of these relationship varieties, it does not conceptually explain what it means. Within the social-psychological literature, which deals specifically with the study and characterisation of kinds of interactions, academics define each relationship type differently. Clark-Polner and Clark state that the type of relationship probably

determines to a large extent, how people perceive and express emotions, how they give support and empathy, and how they deal with others in economic or strategic situations. Nevertheless, they believe the relational context consists of more than just these distinctions.

To expand, Reis et al. (2000) explain that the placement of a specific relationship of each person within an extended set of relationships, namely their social network, forms a fundamental aspect of the relationship context. Just as interpersonal interactions occur within a specific relationship, relationships also function within an expanded social network. In this, social and emotional behaviour, as well as the sustainability of relationships, are influenced. As people's abilities, needs and activities change over time, so does their involvement in relationships during their lifetime, explain Reis et al. Some of these changes are voluntary and deliberate, especially as you approach adolescence and adulthood. They will maintain and terminate these relationships according to their social demands, psychological goals, and cognitive abilities. Changes in the networks of relationships in which individuals become involved throughout their lives imply that the context of the other relationships in which the ties lie further influences changes within the relationship (Reis et al., 2000).

In summary, we can conclude that the relational context is intricate as it consists of various facets. These include the type of relationship, the nature of each relationship, individual differences in orientations that each member nurtures regarding the relationship, the history of the relationship, the placement of a given relationship in the larger context of a person's network of relationships, the phase in which the relationship currently is, and the future expectation of each relationship (Clark-Polner & Clark, 2014).

2.5.2 Localisation Contexts

The "where" context refers to the location of people when they socialise. The person-environment interaction plays a vital role in the evaluation of behaviour. A person does not behave similarly in the kitchen, at church, on a sporting ground, in a committee meeting, or at a party (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). That behaviour varies

with the character of the situation is what one would expect. Regarding the location where people socialise, the recreational, professional and educational contexts seem to be the most prominent.

2.5.2.1   Recreational Context

The role of recreational or leisure-like activities as a context or space for creating meaning is typical among almost all cultures. As an essential part of life, recreational contexts vary from informal, casual activities to highly organised, long-lasting recreational activities. Activities such as traditional cultural events, sports, entertainment, religious gatherings, the constructive use of free time, and any form of leisure in a domain that people regard as valuable establish socialisation in the recreational context. Social relaxation involves free-choice activities in social settings, such as outdoor activities, and varies by leisure occasion. Conversely, recreation is a planned event incorporating leisure time in engagement. Leisure and recreation can promote meaning, facilitating optimal human development and enhancing the quality of life in different cultural contexts (Iwasaki, 2007).

Recreational contexts can thus be essential for developing emotional closeness and building strong family ties. A large-scale survey by Sivan et al. (2004, as cited in Iwasaki, 2007) reported that dining and tea gatherings in restaurants with family or friends are still one of the most popular leisure activities in Hong Kong. Equally important, for example, are outdoor adventures or nature-oriented recreation for our South African people who, primarily due to a favourable climate, spend a large portion of their leisure activities outside.

2.5.2.2   Educational Context

According to Vygotsky's theory, "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his/her environment and in cooperation with peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Haenen et al., 2003, p. 246). However, this development of the person's higher mental processes depends on mediators in the individual's interaction with the environment in certain sociocultural activities, of which formal education is most likely the most important (Kozulin, 2003). The educational context, thus, provides this form

of academic learning at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. The Queensland Studies Authority defines the educational context as the source from which various learning experiences teach students to transfer their understanding of key concepts to real-life situations: to apply them practically (King et al., 2008). This belief refers to learning specific skills and abilities gained through various learning situations they can apply in real life. Besides formal institutional education as the standard form of education, home-schooling is not a new approach to education. There is currently a significant revival in this form of education.

Therefore, for teachers to assist secondary education students in understanding concepts better, Oakes (1989) advises that they create influential learning environments. As Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation Model (Praslova, 2010) describes, teachers can use contextual indicators to monitor school resources and processes that provide information on the specific outcomes achieved in contextual training. The Neuro-Link EI assessment is such an evaluation (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018).

2.5.2.3   Occupational Context

The importance of considering the work context when attempting to understand behaviour in work and career development is evident. The occupational context is a significant social context in developing identity (B. G. Adams & Crafford, 2012). Relationships and connections with others are fundamental drivers of individuals' judgment and behaviour. People create social and emotional bonds and generally emerge in work- and task-related contexts. Classic examples of this appear in the organisational literature dealing with groups. The research by Ybarra et al. (2012) precisely discusses this phenomenon. When formal groups have to perform tasks related to organisational goals, informal groups arise spontaneously due to people's need for social contact, for example, when employees of different units meet during lunch, brainstorming sessions, etcetera. Such positive connections at work can benefit the organisation, and their absence can lead to detrimental outcomes (Ybarra et al., 2012). The predictive validity of abilities on work outcomes depends a lot on contextual characteristics, and these characteristics may enhance or weaken the influence of abilities on work outcomes (Farh et al., 2012).

2.5.3　Life Phase Context

The "when" context indicates the lifespan of the individual. People draw from past and present experiences to understand past behaviours and personal development throughout life (Habermas & Hatiboğlu, 2014). Personal memories emerge from specific and elaborate events that settle into a structure of life phases to create the self-concept that forms an integrated, coherent life story. The argument prevails that lasting defining characteristics of the personality may reflect what we learnt from specific experiences. According to Habermas and Hatiboğlu, individuals' social and historical contexts can define their identity. Likewise, we can base our outlook on our future on life experiences.

Thus, argue Habermas and Hatiboğlu (2014), life stories are always located in, influenced by and focused on multiple contexts. Consequently, the personal and historical contexts prominently emerge when we want to study people's life stories: (a) Personal Contexts: Habermas and Hatiboğlu explain how narrators' current situation in life defines their perspective on their past. This perspective evolves as life goes on, and concerns, values, and identities change as a result of both normative developmental milestones and non-normative eventual transformations; (b) Historical Contexts: Cognitive growth develops an understanding of personal and collective history, thus creating a connection between current concerns and collective worldview, past experiences, and future aspirations, as a participant in Habermas and Hatiboğlu's research study testifies. The Life Phase Context, thus, encompasses important historical life events that contribute to past and personal development. The stringent water-saving measures implemented during the recent severe drought in certain parts of our country, for example, have impacted our awareness of water consumption. Similarly, the current Coronavirus disease (Covid-19), a global pandemic event, necessitated measures of movement restriction and enforced social and health behaviour adjustments, which could have a lasting effect on the cognitive perceptions of those who lived through it.

2.5.4　Methical Contexts

The "how" context refers to the method by which people socialise. Here two specific

contexts emerged, namely the face-to-face and virtual contexts.

2.5.4.1 Face-to-face Context

Face-to-face interaction is social interaction performed without any form of mediating technology and suggests encounters where people are physically present. Goffman (1959, as cited in J. Sternberg, 2012, p.50) defines face-to-face interaction as "the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence". People still consider this interaction a vital part of individual socialisation because it involves all the sensory organs during an interaction. It is also necessary to remember that all forms of communication contain non-verbal messages that include gestures, eye contact, touch and body movement, leading to this form of interaction remaining popular and widely used. Face-to-face interaction furthermore delivers better outcomes in many different areas despite the advent of many new information and communication technologies. A study by Van der Zwaard and Bannink (2014) found that face-to-face interaction still yields more positive outcomes in the transfer of meaning than the virtual means of communication, such as a video call.

Nevertheless, face-to-face communication has declined in popularity compared to mediated communication, especially where time and geographical distance are an issue (Thompson, 2011). It is especially true where mediated communication becomes the only form of communication during unprecedented circumstances due to measures of movement restriction, such as during the recent global pandemic event, the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

2.5.4.2 Virtual Context

An additional context has emerged in the literature, namely the virtual context. In a study, Schiller and Mandviwalla (2007) explain that members in the virtual context, geographically dispersed from each other, use mainly computer-mediated communication (CMC) or telecommunication media instead of face-to-face communication to communicate during interdependent tasks with common goals. The virtual context has physical properties and characteristics and has its particular geography, factual or conceptual, that can qualify as a place or space. In this

context, the partakers belong to an associated virtual community related to their role in the scenario with rules and a division of labour (Cornelius & Marston, 2009). According to Kral (2005), the virtual context is a complex zone of impact influenced by different forces, where global mechanisms yield new frameworks and settings, and which both open up new possibilities and disrupt established patterns. Virtual contexts are not real places or actual locations but unsubstantial virtual spheres and communities, often transnational and generated by technology-mediated communication (Kral, 2005).

Once members establish such a virtual context, it will continue for the chosen mobile activity, explain Cornelius and Marston (2009). For the duration of such a selected simulation activity, the members of the specific activity take the virtual context with them. That means the physical area where they find themselves may change as they move around, and it differs for each attendee (work, home, university, etcetera) even though the virtual context persists. A significant feature of such virtual contexts is their tendency to disrupt any face-to-face social interactive context in which one may be by temporarily transporting one to the virtual context: When receiving mobile messages or calls, people tend to consider it a priority and give it immediate attention by temporarily leaving (mentally, not physically) the face-to-face conversation for the duration of the call. It can happen unexpectedly or at inconvenient times. Nevertheless, according to Cornelius and Marston, repeated return to virtual contexts provide participants with the opportunity for microlearning and prolongs their involvement in the task over an extended period.

Although technology has been around for years, its use thereof in different dimensions prominently emerged during 2020 with the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The global enforcement of physical distancing, and the closing of schools, businesses, and industries, resulted in social seclusion. What was previously used to a lesser degree by particular audiences for specific purposes has inevitably spread to the general public to develop into the most elementary form of communication. These unusual circumstances encouraged the widespread use of technological means for people to communicate and socialise, reshaping human social behaviour. Groups seldom meet in face-to-face situations but rather in multi-user online forums. Many groups, therefore, now exist partially or entirely in a virtual

environment – the remote zone, as Forsyth (2014) calls it. Those who interact this way are not physically with each other but communicate via technology-based means, such as chat rooms, e-mail, social networks, and other multi-user support interfaces. They receive and send information via the Internet. Such online groups connect different individuals by forming social relationships through criteria that meet the group's basic needs (Forsyth, 2014).

2.6   Conclusion

The preceding discussion explains how individuals embed themselves in a network of connections and roles (contexts). While people from individualistic cultures tend to rely on dispositional interpretations for explaining behaviour, people from collectivist cultures tend to emphasise the social context in which behaviour occurs, which includes their norms, role-based expectations, and interpersonal influences (Reis et al., 2000). Thus, distal contexts may increasingly influence individuals through mediation via intervening social contexts. That is especially true of education, work organizations, sports teams, health care practices, and many other domains that cultivate cultural context values, regardless of whether people's views are individualistically or collectively oriented. Much of the effect of the culture ripples through different embedded contexts at both distal and proximal levels (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Hutchison (2018) refers to place attachment, a process where people form bonds with their physical surroundings. It is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the individual, the environment and psychological attachment processes (Scannell & Gifford, as cited in Hutchinson, 2018) and creates opportunities and obstacles that shape their behaviour. She mentions how these contexts, such as the workplace, at home and all places in between, influence one's world and determine the relationship between one's environment and behaviour.

This chapter discussed the relevant literature concerning the social context wherein people exist, particularly a theoretical reflection and a conceptual analysis. As much as the person matters, so does the social context. By delving deeper into the social context and the psychology of EI, during the process of contextualising EI, I will attempt to gain more knowledge regarding the application of EI skills in these social contexts. Although the contexts are not limited to those highlighted in this chapter,

this study will suffice in the above contexts exclusively.

CHAPTER 3

Literature Review: Emotional Intelligence in Context

3.1   Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a psychological concept that has, since the 1980s, pertinently come under scrutiny. Although, it has already been mentioned generally in much older social and psychological theories, such as the research of Thorndike in the 1920s and 1930s, Stein in 1937, Wechsler in the 1940s, and Howard Gardner in the 1970s (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018; Punia et al., 2015; Samad, 2014).

With the emergence of the notion of EI, there were different opinions about the concept. In the development thereof, there was initially no consensus among theorists on what EI is. Several researchers added their interpretations of what EI comprises to this concept. Some consider it a trait, others assume it is an ability or abilities, and others describe it as a competency. They, nevertheless, acknowledged each other's work and expanded on it. Thus, different theories have emerged from which models have evolved based on these theories.

This chapter brings EI and the consolidation of the application of EI in given contexts under scrutiny. It further discusses the development of EI theories and provides a literature review of already conducted research that may enlighten the application of EI in different contexts.

3.2   Construing EI

There is a historical basis for our understanding of intelligence, including the emergence of the concept of EI, which provides a link between intelligence and emotion (Punia et al., 2015). Nevertheless, it is necessary to differentiate between intelligence, emotion, and EI when examining the dimensions of EI. There are many descriptions of these concepts, subsequently only briefly explained.

3.2.1   Intelligence

People generally consider intelligence an innate trait distinguishing one individual from another and humans from animals. Although no standard concept definition

exists, Legg and Hutter (2007) present a collection of descriptions. They infer that experts' wording to define intelligence differs significantly, although its meaning still appears to be the same. Collectively, theorists view intelligence as the ability of individuals to acquire new knowledge, understand and reason about it, form opinions and apply such knowledge, solve problems, form judgment, and adapt to unique circumstances in any context (Legg & Hutter, 2007).

Theorists choose specific ways to measure and analyse human intelligence. The intelligence quotient (IQ) is the value derived as a measure of intelligence obtained from a completed intelligence test. Although initially computed as the ratio between mental and chronological age, R. J. Sternberg (2020) explains that people lately calculate scores based on statistical distributions and then assign them based on the percentage of people from a given group expected to have a certain IQ. They then interpret these scores individually, considering the variety of variables such as culture, heritability, socioeconomic class, and the specific abilities assessed per test, to name but a few. These can predict performance or professional success (R. J. Sternberg, 2020).

3.2.2   Emotion

As with the above, defining the concept of emotion causes equal controversy among experts. There is, nevertheless, the agreement that emotions originate from activity in distinct brain regions. Some authors distinguish emotions from feelings, which is informative and helpful when the discussion lends itself to it. One example of such a division between emotion and feelings is by neurologist Antonio Damasio who considers emotion and feelings as a unit yet distinguishes between them due to their nature and origin in different brain areas (Damasio, 2004; Lenzen, 2005). Still, in most literature, authors do not make this distinction and use emotion and feelings mostly interchangeably. To coincide with the theme of this study, which focuses on contextualising EI and not these separate aspects, I will not make this distinction and primarily use the term *emotion*.

Some definitions of emotion are as follows: Peggy Thoits (1989) describes emotions as physiological components, cultural or emotional labels (such as anger and

surprise), which involve expressive body actions and the assessment of situations and contexts, as opposed to Bratianu (2015) who believes that emotions do not occur in the public, physical world, but in our secret spiritual worlds. American Psychological Association (n.d.) summarises the above definitions nicely by describing emotion as "a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which an individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event". Emphasising that the event's meaning dictates the specific quality of emotion, for example, fear or humiliation (American Psychological Association, n.d.), Faltas (2017) likewise explains that emotion is a natural, spontaneous state of mind triggered by current and past experiences and events. Nevertheless, I concur with Collins (n.d.) in describing emotion, as opposed to our thoughts, as a part of a person's character, consisting of feelings such as happiness, fear, anger or love. The situation you are in, or the people you are with, affect these feelings.

3.2.3 Emotional Intelligence

Combining intelligence and emotion, Faltas (2017) describes EI as the awareness of and ability and skill to recognise, acknowledge, understand and use our emotions positively. EI teaches us to manage emotions and use the information to guide our behaviour by making decisions to solve problems and guide others. For Sparrow and Knight (2006, p.29), "emotional intelligence integrates feeling, thinking, and doing. It is the habitual practice of thinking about feeling and feeling about thinking when choosing what to do". This definition, however, does not explain how to operate with EI. It would, therefore, appear that EI requires active emotional thinking and emotional knowledge. A workable definition of EI by these authors indicates that emotional information (or emotional knowledge), originating from both ourselves and others, integrates with our emotional thinking to assist us in making decisions in order to obtain what we require from the present circumstances and life in general (Sparrow & Knight, 2006).

Experiencing emotions or observing the emotions of others through their behaviour or facial expressions leads to the acquisition of emotional knowledge, which is a dominant variable in decision-making, negotiations, sharing of knowledge, and

achievement of goals (Bratianu, 2015). The dynamic interplay of emotions (emotional knowledge) and cognition (cognitive knowledge) requires emotional thought, a functional interphase covering learning, memory, decision-making, and creativity processes, explains Bratianu. Emotional thinking, thus, produces emotional knowledge. Then how does this process involve EI? Bratianu (2015, p. 65) explains:

> Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso conceive emotional intelligence explicitly as the capacity of processing emotional information and knowledge. … each emotion conveys a series of energy signals that aggregate into messages that generate emotional information. Processing this information with emotional intelligence, one gets emotional knowledge that can be further processed and integrated with cognitive knowledge in the judgement and decision making. EI enhance thinking through the content of emotional knowledge and participation in decision making.

As Bratianu (2015) notes, emotional thinking is the functional link between emotion and cognition, allowing thinking to activate emotions. Emotional thinking is a platform for learning, decision-making, and memory processes in social and non-social contexts. Thus, by applying it interdependently, it seems that emotional thinking and emotional knowledge are essential concepts for understanding EI.

Given the discussion above, it is clear that EI includes emotional knowledge and thought. Emotion and cognition are constantly interacting with each other in generating emotional thoughts. Emotional thinking is vital in developing EI and its use in decision making. EI reflects an emotional reasoning capability to improve thinking by understanding emotions and applying this emotional knowledge during decision making rather than cognitive knowledge and intelligence alone. EI is thus a potent determinant of personal and professional success (Bratianu, 2015). By referring to what Daniel Goleman initially said, Samad (2014) mentions that everyone has a certain degree of EI, but in many cases can improve to enable people to monitor their emotional state better.

Considering that emotions, intelligence, cognitive and spiritual knowledge, and emotional thinking and knowledge are embedded in us being humans, we can confidently conclude that EI touches and influences every aspect of our lives. Therefore, dimensions of the EI concept include behaviour management, which influences decision-making, conflict resolution, how we feel about ourselves, and how we communicate with others. EI also affects how we manage stress daily and how we perform and manage ourselves in the different contexts in which we find ourselves. EI further influences all areas of our personal and professional development by assisting us in maturing, advancing in life, and achieving our goals (Faltas, 2017). Researchers who have developed and researched EI claim that EQ tests for EI are essential predictors of educational and professional skills and extend far beyond cognitive ability (IQ) tests (Matthews et al., 2004, as cited in Samad, 2014).

3.3   Theories, Definitions, Models, and Approaches of EI

Several theories, models, definitions, and views exist that describe the concept of EI. Despite growing interest in this new intelligence, scholars have studied the construct's various facets for most of the twentieth century. Its historical roots date back to the nineteenth century, and early definitions of social intelligence significantly influenced how academics later conceptualised EI. The work of Bar-On (2006) provides a detailed description thereof. Therefore, many researchers who contributed and finally established the concept as we understand it today deserve recognition.

To eliminate confusion and controversy arising from this research tangle on the best approach, definition, and measurement of the EI construct, the Encyclopaedia of Applied Psychology (Spielberger, 2004, as cited in Bar-On, 2006) proposed three main conceptual models to describe EI best. These are the Mayer and Salovey, Bar-On, and Goleman models (Bar-On, 2006). However, we cannot omit other equally imperative models when discussing a complete exposition of the theoretical construction of EI, especially those that gave rise to the development of the concept.

This section, therefore, discusses theories that, according to the literature, form the

foundation of EI. A brief discussion of the theories of Gardner; Bar-On; Mayer and Salovey; Goleman; and Petridis follows. I will also discuss their appropriate definitions, describe their theories, refer to distinct approaches to testing, and give other relevant information regarding their views.

3.3.1   The Howard Gardner Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Theoretical Perspective

Howard Gardner is a developmental psychologist at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a professor of cognition and education. Considering that the conventional concept of intelligence was too narrow and restrictive and that IQ measures often miss other kinds of "intelligence" that an individual may possess, Gardner expanded this limited perspective. He believed that individuals have multiple ways of thinking and learning. Due to this point of view, his most famous publication, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences,* in 1983, outlined his Theory of Multiple Intelligences (H. Gardner, 2003), paving a critical path for the later development of the EI concept. Gardner's multidisciplinary and multiple intelligence concept expands on Thorndike's social intelligence construction. The fact that Gardner identified multiple intelligences changed the minds of fellow psychologists about the nature of intelligence and prompted their subsequent recognition of EI. This new theory criticised the standard view that intelligence is a single entity, statistically measured and interpreted by psychological test results (Bratianu, 2015; H. Gardner, 2006).

Definition of Intelligence

H. Gardner (2006, p.29) describes intelligence in this new paradigm of multiple intelligences as:

> A biopsychological potential to process specific forms of information in certain kinds of ways. Human beings have evolved diverse information-processing capacities – I term these 'intelligences' – that allow them to solve problems or to fashion products. To be considered 'intelligent', these products and solutions must be valued in at least one culture or community.

Theory Structure

Gardner identified nine fundamental intelligences, each containing a specific form of knowledge. Divided into three groups, these nine intelligences are (H. Gardner, 2006):

a. Symbols-based intelligences

- Linguistic intelligence represents the ability to process and convey information and knowledge used in all aspects of life through concepts and ideas in a formal spoken and written language.

- Logical-mathematical intelligence processes information and knowledge regarding numbers, functions, equations and logical inferences. Mathematical intelligence requires the ability to calculate and estimate numerical values comfortably. It applies primarily to financial and monetary scenarios.

- Musical intelligence refers to the understanding and processing of musical works expressed through sounds, melodies, harmony, and rhythms.

b. Object-based intelligences

- Spatial intelligence refers to an ability to apply the principles of a spatial organisation through the formation, planning, or creation of spatial representations or images in one's mind and working effectively on such representations in physically inaccessible areas.

- Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence involves information and knowledge derived from the biological systems of human body parts, such as solving problems or creating products using the whole body or parts thereof. People with high body-kinaesthetic intelligence have great control over their bodies. It, therefore, represents spiritual representations of skills through practice. The development of these skills quite often becomes automated and internalised through exercise.

- Naturalist intelligence involves understanding and explaining the natural environment's elements, such as plants, birds, animals, weather, rocks, etcetera. It requires the sensory input of our body to appreciate and protect our natural environment.

c. Human-based intelligences

- Intrapersonal intelligence processes information and knowledge internally and helps us understand and manage our emotions, feelings, needs, desires, motivations, attitudes, behaviours, goals, fears, strengths and weaknesses.
- Interpersonal intelligence involves knowledge and information about others. These skills help us distinguish between people, understand, interact, and communicate with them effectively.
- Existential intelligence involves formulating questions about our existence, the meaning of life, destiny, happiness, and faith. Initially, Gardner defined only the first eight fundamental intelligences and added existential intelligence later.

According to H. Gardner, none of these fundamental intelligences is fixed at birth but can develop over long periods during the lifespan. Some may even remain undeveloped if the necessity for the development thereof is perceived to be of little use (H. Gardner, 2006). It is exciting to see how the framework of the contemporary EI concept includes Gardner's different fundamental intelligences, especially the inter- and intra-personal intelligences of the last group. These are strongly intertwined, as H. Gardner (2006, p.39) explains: "We come to know ourselves by making use of the distinctions involved in coming to know others; by the same token, discriminations that we make in the course of self-reflection help us penetrate the psyches of others".

Evaluative Approach

As EI theory became more recognised and established, theorists developed EI assessment tools. Although no evidence shows that Gardner tested EI, he did pave the way with creative alternatives to traditional intelligence measures. He suggested that the conventional linguistic or logic-based intelligence quotient (IQ) should not be the exclusive basis for assessing human potential. He argued that there is no "right" way to employ many intelligences in testing and evaluation. That corresponds with Narayanan's (2011) comment that multiple intelligences influence how students comprehend, process, and apply knowledge. Since students must rely on their sensory modes to obtain the information they need to process, they must realise that not everyone learns similarly. Some are more dependent on their sense of sight,

while others prefer to rely on their sense of hearing, and then there are those more drawn to their kinaesthetic senses to understand life better (Narayanan, 2011).

Although the Howard Gardner Theory of Multiple Intelligences is nearly four decades old, researchers constantly strive to find the best way to apply this theory to evaluate students with diverse learning styles and academic strengths. H. Gardner and Hatch (1989, p. 6) warn that "intelligences must always be conceptualized and assessed in terms of their cultural manifestation in specific domains of endeavor". Nevertheless, it is essential to focus on and address each student's strengths and weaknesses using "intelligence-fair" instruments to assess their intellectual capacity appropriate for each domain (H. Gardner & Hatch, 1989). We cannot distance knowledge from the situations in which we learn and use it, as knowledge is part of a particular activity, context, and culture. Assessment is a process by which an academic community obtains rich, valuable, credible information on students. Therefore, Gardner and colleagues developed a set of assessment activities and observation guidelines covering eight domains. These include language, mathematics, mechanics and construction, science, movement, music, visual art, and social understanding. The last six domains, ignored by traditional assessment tools, form part of their project spectrum, linking the student's assessment to their curricular development and bridging their identified strengths with other learning areas (H. Gardner et al., 1998).

3.3.2   The Bar-On Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI-based) Theory of Competency

Theoretical Perspective

Based on the pioneering work of various theorists, Bar-On (2006) defines intelligence as the cross-section of interrelated emotional and social skills, abilities, and facilitators that impact intelligent behaviour. That refers to the emotional and social skills and competencies to assess our ability to understand and express ourselves, understand and associate with people, and successfully deal with our daily demands, difficulties, and stresses (Bar-On, 2006).

Being emotionally and socially intelligent relies first on intrapersonal ability. Be aware

61

of yourself, understand your talents and shortcomings, and constructively express feelings and thoughts. Secondly, Bar-On (2006) explains that emotional and social intelligence entails being aware of others' emotions, feelings, and needs at an interpersonal level and establishing and maintaining cooperative, constructive, and mutually rewarding relationships. As a result, an emotionally and socially intelligent person can manage personal, social, and environmental change efficiently by confronting the situation realistically and flexibly, resolving problems and making decisions. It further requires that we manage our emotions well to work for us and not against us by being optimistic, positive and self-motivated. That aspect of human intelligence, thus, oversees our ability to recognise, understand, control, and use emotions to address personal and interpersonal problems (Bar-On, 2006).

The findings from studies on ESI by several researchers, which Bar-On refers to, conducted on scholars, adults, and executives in clinical settings, proved that emotionally and socially intelligent behaviours could improve, making these skills learnable and thus teachable. Tolerance to stress – the ability to manage emotions – improves primarily through training. That demonstrates the Bar-On ESI Theory's usefulness, reliability, and validity (Bar-On, 2006).

Definition of EI

Bar-On's 1997 Theory of Emotional-Social Intelligence defines EI as a set of noncognitive abilities, skills, and competencies that influence our ability to successfully deal with environmental demands and stresses (Bar-On, 2006).

Theory Structure

Bar-On developed the Theory of Emotional-Social Intelligence in six key stages over 17 years and completed it in 1997 (Bar-On, 2006). The development process consisted of measuring and identifying essential competencies and skills, a review of the literature and research studies, obtaining peer reviews, getting input from health care practitioners, and norming and validating final clusters of abilities. The theory ultimately contains five key components: (a) The ability to identify, comprehend, and express emotions and feelings; (b) Understanding how others feel and how they might associate; (c) The ability to regulate and control one's emotions; (d) The ability

to adjust to change and manage and solve personal and interpersonal problems; and (e) The ability to be self-motivated and generate positive affect (Bar-On, 2006).

Bar-On's theory explains why people with EI are likelier to work harder and be more successful. It indicates characteristic personality traits such as intra- and interpersonal skills, flexibility, stress management and overall disposition directly related to life success. This theory, therefore, predicts what will influence success at home, school and work (Bar-On, 1997).

Evaluative Approach

The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) operationalises and provides the theoretical basis for the Bar-On model. He initially developed it to assess various aspects of emotional and social intelligence to examine its conceptualisation. It, therefore, played a significant role in developing this model. The EQ-I is an instrument that measures emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour through self-report, is available in thirty languages, estimates emotional-social intelligence and is suitable for individuals aged 17 and older. It yields a total EQ score of five composite scales according to the model's key components mentioned above: (a) Intrapersonal scale – consisting of self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualisation; (b) Interpersonal scale – containing empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship; (c) Stress Management scale – covering stress tolerance and impulse control; (d) Adaptability scale – comprising reality-testing, flexibility, and problem-solving; and (e) General Mood scale – incorporating optimism and happiness. Mean to above-average EQ scores on the EQ-I suggest that the respondent is effective in emotional and social functioning. The higher the scores, the higher the possibility of effective functioning and meeting daily demands and challenges. On the other hand, low EQ scores indicate possible ineffective functioning and emotional and/or social behaviour problems (Bar-On, 2006).

3.3.3   The Mayer and Salovey EI-based Theory of Ability

Theoretical Perspective

An intensive investigation by Mayer and colleagues into the EI constructs showed that theorists considered important psychological factors such as intelligence, temperament, personality, information processing and emotional self-regulation when conceptualising EI. As a result, Mayer et al. (1999) agreed that EI might be multidimensional, and one can study it from different perspectives. According to Mayer et al., emotions are "internal events that coordinate many psychological subsystems including physiological responses, cognition and conscious awareness" (Mayer et al. 1999, p. 267). Their ability approach views EI as a cognitive ability based on emotional information processing. The ability approach theorists are distinguished by their regard for EI as a type of intelligence utilised for addressing emotional problems. It states that cognitive processing involves emotions which are related to general intelligence. We can evaluate it using performance measures requiring respondents to complete discrete tasks to resolve specific challenges (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). According to this approach, EI, consequently, is a classification of intelligence focused on processing emotional information, and as such, it must be a component of other conventional and well-established intelligences (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006).

Mayer and Salovey developed the EI Theory of Ability and subdivided EI into four ability areas or branches: the observation of emotions, the facilitation of thinking through the use of emotions, and the understanding and management of emotions. These four branches continue to serve as the basis for newly improved ability EI models. Their descriptions help with a theoretical understanding of the content described by ability-based perspectives on EI (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). Mayer et al. (2016) proposed seven principles that guided their thinking about EI:

a. EI is a mental ability; therefore, intelligence is a system of cognitive abilities. Intelligence is the ability to reason abstractly and understand meanings, identify the similarities and differences between concepts, formulate generalisations, and distinguish when such generalisations do not apply to the context.

b. EI is best measured as an ability.

c. Intellectual problem-solving ability does not necessarily resemble intelligent behaviour, distinguishing intelligence from behaviour. People's behaviour expresses their personality in a particular social context.

d. The content of a test regarding the problem-solving area concerned must specify

the conditions for assessing human cognitive abilities.

e. Valid tests contain a well-defined topic that demonstrates applicable human mental abilities. People display their reasoning ability when solving problems within a particular subject area.

f. EI is a wide-ranging intelligence containing a hierarchy of different intelligences with subclasses.

g. EI is part of a class of comprehensive intelligences focusing on reasoning and processing relevant information of interest to the individual.

Definition of EI

Originally Salovey and Mayer described EI as: "The ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and actions" (Mayer & Salovey 1997, p. 10). They explained further: "Emotional intelligence includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10).

Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 201) mention that they view people with EI as individuals who are "aware of their own feelings and those of others". Feelings, one aspect of H. Gardner's formulation of personal intelligence, are what Mayer and Salovey conceptualize as EI. EI differs from personal intelligence in that it perceives and uses emotional states in self and others to solve issues and govern behaviour rather than focusing on a general sense of self and the appraisal of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Theory Structure

The mainstream model of EI as a capability introduced by Mayer and Salovey in 1997 has gained wide recognition and use and is fundamental in developing other EI models and measurements (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

This model distinguishes four ability areas hierarchically arranged:

a. Perceiving emotions: At the most fundamental level, the ability to recognize your

own emotions from your physical and psychological states, and then also to recognise, perceive and interpret the emotions of others accurately and with sensitivity by paying attention to emotional signals such as non-verbal cues.

b. Facilitating thought using emotions: Consulting emotions to facilitate thinking occurs through the analysis of and reflection on emotional information that includes higher-order cognitive activities such as reasoning, problem-solving, and decision making, as well as considering the perspectives of others.

c. Understanding emotions: Understanding the relationships between emotions and how they vary through time and in response to situations. It involves knowing the emotional language, identifying minor emotional changes, and describing several feelings.

d. Managing emotions: The primary and most complex level in the hierarchy, dependent on competencies in the other three branches, the ability to skilfully regulate one's own and other's emotions by maintaining a cheerful attitude in a complex scenario or suppressing elation during a critical decision-making period (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

Hierarchically organized, each branch reflects a set of talents that progress from simple to more challenging tasks. The final two skills (understanding and management), which require complicated strategic cognitive processes, build on the first two abilities (perception and facilitation), which involve quick and experienced emotional information processing (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

Evaluative Approach

Researchers use newly developed tests, such as The Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU) and the Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM), to measure EI abilities. However, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is the most commonly used (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). The MSCEIT is a performance-based design to measure the four-branch model of EI abilities (perception, use, understanding and regulation of emotions). It provides comprehensive coverage of these EI abilities by evaluating how people perform emotional tasks and solve emotional problems. The test consists of 141 items divided into eight tasks – two for each branch (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

A study by Mayer et al. (2003) indicates that the MSCEIT (measuring emotional abilities) meets the classical criteria for intelligence tests for the following reasons (Brackett & Salovey, 2006):

a. The MSCEIT has a factor structure corresponding to the four branches of the theoretical model;

b. The four abilities show unique variance but are significantly related to other mental abilities, such as verbal intelligence;

c. EI develops with age and experience; and

d. The abilities can be measured objectively.

3.3.4 The Goleman EI-based Theory of Performance

Theoretical Perspective

Focusing on EI as a performance theory, Daniel Goleman views the construct as a wide range of skills and competencies driving management performance. He mentions two types of intelligence: emotional and rational (Punia et al., 2015). He defines emotional competence as "a learnt capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work" (Goleman, 2001b, p. 27). Goleman believes that emotional competence is the ability to understand the emotions of others and manage them within a given context. It requires learning and developing the EI fundamentals of social awareness and relationship management (Goleman, 2001b). He says EI skills are innate and acquired and can develop through formal and informal life experiences. He found that EI skills develop through nature and nurturing, which simultaneously play a role in EI. He mainly referred to EI in the work context and said that emotional competencies are job skills; we should translate EI into on-the-job capabilities by mastering these skills and developing potential (Goleman, 2001b).

Goleman (1996) argues that rational and emotional thinking must collaborate for a person to have EI. As he explains in his EI performance theory, we can see the connection between brain function and behaviour (Punia et al., 2015). According to Goleman, EI implies abilities different from, but complementary to, the cognitive abilities represented by the intelligence quotient (IQ) value. Therefore, predicting job

success solely based on IQ and academic performance is no longer sufficient. In addition to specific intellectual abilities and technical knowledge to perform a given task, people can understand and manage their emotions and those of others. His view was that emotional knowledge and EI thus become an essential measure by which organisations will hire people, reward them for achievements, or retrench them when downsizing the company (Bratianu, 2015). Goleman believes that balancing emotions with reason generates more thoughtful responses – an essential asset for performance.

Given the vital light shed on acquiring EI skills, Goleman argues that society, whether in the public or private sectors, needs to devote more effort and resources to new programs and research to help people develop this capacity. Goleman argues that schools and government agencies should provide essential EI skills classes to students even before they go to university, as the ability to learn and develop such skills becomes harder during adulthood (Samad, 2014). Bratianu (2015) found that personal characteristics related to EI, such as initiative, creativity, optimism, empathy, agility, resilience, team spirit, and persuasiveness, enhance students' academic abilities, which can be seen in their results.

Definition of EI

As earlier mentioned in Chapter 1, Goleman defined EI as the "capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 317).

Theory Structure

This competency-based EI theory originated from Goleman's (1998) and Boyatzis's (2008) research. It describes emotional competence as the ability to recognise our and other people's emotions and use this knowledge to manage ourselves successfully in our interactions with others. For example, Goleman's personality model sees EI as emotional competencies: "abilities such as self-control, zeal and persistence, 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 emphasise and to hope" (Goleman, 1996, p.

34).

Goleman developed the competency model, also known as the mixed model, in 1998, initiated initially by his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, published in 1996. In the book, he explains the EI model and presents a list of EI skills. Goleman discussed the importance of leadership and displayed the required EI skills for leadership (Punia et al., 2015). From the initial five-dimensional theory (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills), Goleman has refined this theory which is now entitled the EI-based Theory of Performance. As illustrated in Table 3.1, the current version of his theory consists of a framework of twenty skills sorted into four domains of general EI competencies (Goleman, 2001b). A complete explanation of Goleman's theory appears in *An EI-Based Theory of Performance* by Goleman (2001b).

Table 3.1

General EI Competencies, According to Goleman (Goleman, 2001b, p.28)

	Self Personal Competence	**Other** Social Competence
Recognition	**Self-Awareness** -Emotional self-awareness -Accurate self-assessment -Self-confidence	**Social Awareness** -Empathy -Service orientation -Organisational awareness
Regulation	**Self-Management** -Self-control -Trustworthiness -Conscientiousness -Adaptability -Achievement drive -Initiative	**Relationship Management** -Developing others -Influence -Communication -Conflict management -Leadership -Change catalyst -Building bonds -Teamwork collaboration

Evaluative Approach

Goleman created two measurement tools for his model: The Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) in 1999 and the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI)

in 2007. Both are self-report and emotional and social interaction assessment tools (Punia et al., 2015).

3.3.5   The Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory of Petrides

Theoretical Perspective

In psychology, trait theory identifies distinctions between individuals based on the strength and intensity of their basic characteristics, such as consistency, stability and how they differ from others (Worthy et al., 2020). In 2001 Petrides introduced the Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory, which describes certain dispositions or traits that affect individuals' perceptions of their emotional world. The Trait EI Theory describes EI as a personality trait involving emotion-related dispositions and self-perception.

According to Petrides (2010), considering EI as a personality feature implies a construct outside human cognitive capabilities: Emotions tend to cloud human judgement, decision-making, and basic reasoning. Emotion-based thinking, thus, tends to be intuitive and automatic, with little scientific precision and judgement detail, instead of the more consciously analytical, low emotionally loaded thinking. Petrides believes that particular emotion profiles are more beneficial in some contexts than others. For example, being timid and unsupportive in a research context rather than sociable and emotionally expressive is not a sign of emotional dampening but rather a personality trait of adaptability. Petrides did not seem to regard EI as an essential trait to pursue, but he did acknowledge it as part of a person's personality.

Definition of Trait EI

Broadly defined, the Theory of Trait EI refers to an integrated theoretical framework of personality traits, emotions and intelligence. Petrides et al. (2007, p. 287) define Trait EI as: "a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies".

Theory Structure

Trait EI Theory focuses on aspects of personality traits instead of competencies, mental abilities, or facilitators, as proposed by other theories. Trait EI Theory studies

behavioural consistency in different situations and proposes that EI manifests in specific traits or behaviour such as empathy, assertiveness and optimism. In their operational definition of EI, Petrides et al. (2007) recognise the subjectivity of emotional experiences. The domain of Trait EI Theory includes fifteen facets of trait which Petrides (2010) lists: adaptability, assertiveness, emotional expression, emotional perceptions (of self and others), management of others' emotions, regulation of emotions, impulsiveness, relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, trait empathy, trait happiness, and trait optimism.

Evaluative Approach

Trait theorists primarily measure common behavioural patterns, thought, and emotional traits. Numerous self-report measures of EI are available; however, none assess intelligence, abilities, or skills as sometimes claimed; instead, they are limited measures of trait EI (Petrides et al., 2007).

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) operationalises Petrides and colleagues' theory of EI regarding personality. The TEIQue instrument thus measures Trait EI (Petrides, 2010). The test contains 15 subscales (according to the facets of traits mentioned above) under four factors: wellness, self-control, emotionality, and sociability.

3.3.6 Conclusion and Integrating the Vermeulen Neuro-Link Model of EI

The abovementioned theories address many EI construct factors, some of which this current research study will investigate. All perspectives and approaches have merit. Although different in their approaches, most theoretical frameworks discussed above share a similar understanding of EI as a separate construct from traditional IQ and personality, allowing for the possibility of predicting and influencing many actual-life outcomes (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

As deduced from the literature thus far, individuals with high EI demonstrate advanced self and social awareness and management abilities (Boyatzis et al., 2000). As mentioned in Chapter 1 the Neuro-Link's four-dimensionally constructed

explanation of the make-up of EI is complete and informative (see High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program, 2002). It adds value to existing models, including most dimensions and levels regarded as EI qualities and the necessary skills that fully represent the construct. Aspects of most existing theories, models and approaches were gathered, combined and united into one mixed model called the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achievers Development Program – also commonly called the Neuro-Link EI Program. The need to include a discussion of the Neuro-Link Program of EI in this research study stems directly from the fact that all the participants in this study have already completed this EI training program, and conclusions or inferences from this study will, therefore, also relate to this model of EI. A more detailed description of the Neuro-Link EI Program follows in Chapter 4.

3.4   Theories and Approaches: EI in Context

Different disciplines such as Cognitive-, Community-, Developmental-, Environmental-, and Social Psychology involve the study of human behaviour. Since theories form part of a process where observations prove that generalisable knowledge has practical applicability, applying some constructions and theories from these disciplines in contextualising EI is essential.

Three theories to apply in this study emerged from a literature search: The Person-Context Interaction Theory of Magnusson and Stattin, Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, and Kelly's Ecological Theory. Herewith, an exposition of these theories and an explanation of how it applies to this study's theme.

3.4.1   Person-Context Interaction Theory – Magnusson and Stattin

Individuals' development and ongoing functioning are not isolated from the environment in which they live. Their Person-Context Interaction Theory portrays Magnusson and Stattin's (1998) view.

According to these theories, individuals are active, intentional parts of their integrated, complex, and dynamic person-environment system, which evolves and functions within this system to form an integrated, complex, and dynamic whole. This interaction process, involving mental, biological, behavioural, and social factors,

explains this perspective. Behaviour thus varies according to the nature of the situation, and it is impossible to comprehend and explain it apart from the context in which it occurs. There is an ongoing reciprocal interaction process between people and their environments and between the individual's mental, biological, and behavioural factors (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). The essential role that the individual's interpretation of the environment plays is a fundamental concept in the interaction theory. The assessment of external information guides the individual's actions by activating physiological systems that influence thoughts and emotions.

Furthermore, this fully integrated and organised system of which an individual is a part consists of a hierarchical system of elements, from the individual cellular level to the macro level of their active environments. The individual serves as an active agent in this process of human-environment interaction. Through age requirements for behaviour, society forms a specific direction and a set of milestones for individual behaviour. However, by choosing between alternative paths, the young person discovers certain developing environments besides the stereotypes that lead to the individual's unique development. Thus, individuals organise their own development (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

According to the Person-Context Interaction Theory, all behaviour manifestations, including EI skills, play a significant part in interactions between people and their situations. Furthermore, the extent of cognitive, emotional and other facets of the mental system activates this process. An individual's interpretation varies depending on the situation and the nature of the available information. Thus, the organised pattern of an individual's manifested behaviour will vary from one situation to another, as the individual interprets situational states differently through the exact total, flexible operating system. In the theoretical framework of modern interactionism, the operational factors in the individual and the environment in the overall person-environment system vary with time, which is a crucial feature of an individual's developmental process. Maintaining a balance between inherent resistance to change of the sub- and whole systems and sensitivity to individual and environmental factors that drive change, continuous adaptive states arise in the whole person-environment system during its lifetime. Individuals and environments evolve and interact as totalities during this transitory period: An individual changes due to

biological growth and myelination of the brain and cognitive and emotional experiences during interaction with the environment. There is also change because of environmental changes due to society's direct and indirect actions at different levels. As emphasized above, an individual develops within the integrated person-environment system framework as an entirely integrated organism (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). Where applicable, this theory will be applied when analysing the data of this study in which I explore the contextualisation of EI.

3.4.2   Theory of Planned Behaviour – Ajzen

Extended from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) in 1980, Ajzen (2012) explains the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as predicting the intention of an individual to engage in all behaviours over which one can exercise self-control over a given time and location. The central component of this theory is potential behaviour, meaning that they look at what to expect from an individual or what the individual's intention is. Certain aspects influence behavioural intention, such as the benefits of the outcome, a subjective evaluation of the risks and the probability that the behaviour will have the expected outcome.

The TPB assumes that behaviour in the social interest is mostly voluntarily controlled and that the intention to perform a behaviour is the primary determining factor and the best predictor of that behaviour. It regards the intention as a function of two fundamental determinants: the individual's attitude towards the behaviour (an overall evaluation of the execution of the behaviour) and the subjective norm (a perceived expectation of significant others towards the person performing the behaviour). Therefore, people generally have strong intentions to perform a given action if they consider such behaviour positive enough and believe that significant others expect them to perform it.

We do not perform most behaviours randomly. To behave successfully with intent requires skills, opportunities, resources and cooperation. Ajzen added the perceived behavioural control variable to the TRA to accommodate behaviour (Ajzen, 2012). The TRA and TPB models both use the premise that individuals evaluate available information to make logical, reasoned decisions to choose specific behaviours.

The TPB consists of six constructs representing a person's actual control over projected actions (Ajzen, 2012):

a. Attitudes: It refers to the degree to which a person evaluates anticipated behaviour favourably or unfavourably. Outcomes expected from executing the specific behaviour serve as motivation.

b. Behavioural intention refers to the factors that influence and motivate specific behaviours – the more substantial the intention, the greater the likelihood of the intended behaviour.

c. Subjective norms signify that most individuals agree or disagree with the intended behaviour. It relates to a person's conviction that peers and people of interest think they should get involved in the behaviour.

d. Social norms indicate customary codes of conduct of a people's society or their larger cultural framework, which see social norms as normative or standard.

e. Perceived power: This refers to the apparent presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder behavioural performance and significantly contribute to the perceived behavioural control that the person has over each of those factors.

f. Perceived behaviour control: This refers to the ease or difficulty with which people perform behaviours of interest according to their perception, and it varies according to situations. Depending on the situation, people may have different perceptions of behavioural control.

Since this theory implies a strong link between intentions and behaviour, I plan to investigate whether these essential components emerge in applying EI skills.

3.4.3 Kelly's Ecological Theory

Kelly's Ecological Theory, designed in 1966 to predict and explain human behaviour in specific contexts, focuses on how people become effective and adaptable in different social environments. This theory explains the vital role of the environment and the community in how people interact and relate. Kelly proposes four ecological principles in his theory (Jason et al., 2016):

a. Interdependence implies that any change in one system component can also cause changes in other components, creating a ripple effect that indicates their

interconnectedness.

b. Adaptation – refers to a modification process. What is adaptable in a particular environment is not necessarily in another, which explains why specific contexts are more effective than others in bringing about adjustment, adaptation or change.

c. Exchange of resources – is a process where people discover, absorb, and employ various resources in their community. These resources include expertise and abilities. Applying this principle can reveal existing skills in an environment or connect individuals with institutions that provide the necessary resources to acquire such skills.

d. Succession – communities are engaged in constant change processes, which require adaptation. Over time, change and growth are unavoidable in communities, and communities have a need and a responsibility to assist individuals to meet and adapt to the demands of their changing circumstances. Thus, sharing experiences with younger generations is essential. In addition, traditional institutions such as school systems and community businesses should develop and adapt to satisfy the changing needs of its people.

People interact with their environment through these four principles. The framework assists with studying the dynamics between individuals, groups and entire communities as they relate to each other within specific contexts. It focuses on different aspects of the social context and behaviour and overlaps and complements each other.

3.4.4 Concluding: A Theoretical Perspective on EI in Context

Incorporating context in a theoretically meaningful way is thus essential for an explanation of the contextualisation of EI behaviour. The chosen theories deal collectively with human behaviour and the interaction between an individual and the contexts in which behaviour occurs. It provides perspectives from which we can explore the application of EI skills in various contexts. These three theories focus on individual functioning in the social, cultural or ecological environment and involve the behaviour and growth of individuals.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains how individuals choose their behaviour

and its intentions with their environment. The Ecological Theory determines the environment's influence on the individual and how the individual, in turn, influences the environment accordingly. The Person-context Interaction Theory explains how the individual and his environment form a whole and emphasises the close dependence of individual functioning and development on the environment's social, cultural, and physical characteristics. The Ecological Theory and Person-context Interaction Theory thus bring the environment and individual together, while the Theory of Planned Behavior focuses on the internal and intentional behaviour of the individual. Figure 3.1 gives a summary of the three chosen theories.

Figure 3.1

Supporting Theories for Contextualising EI.

Theoretical Relevance in Contextualising EI
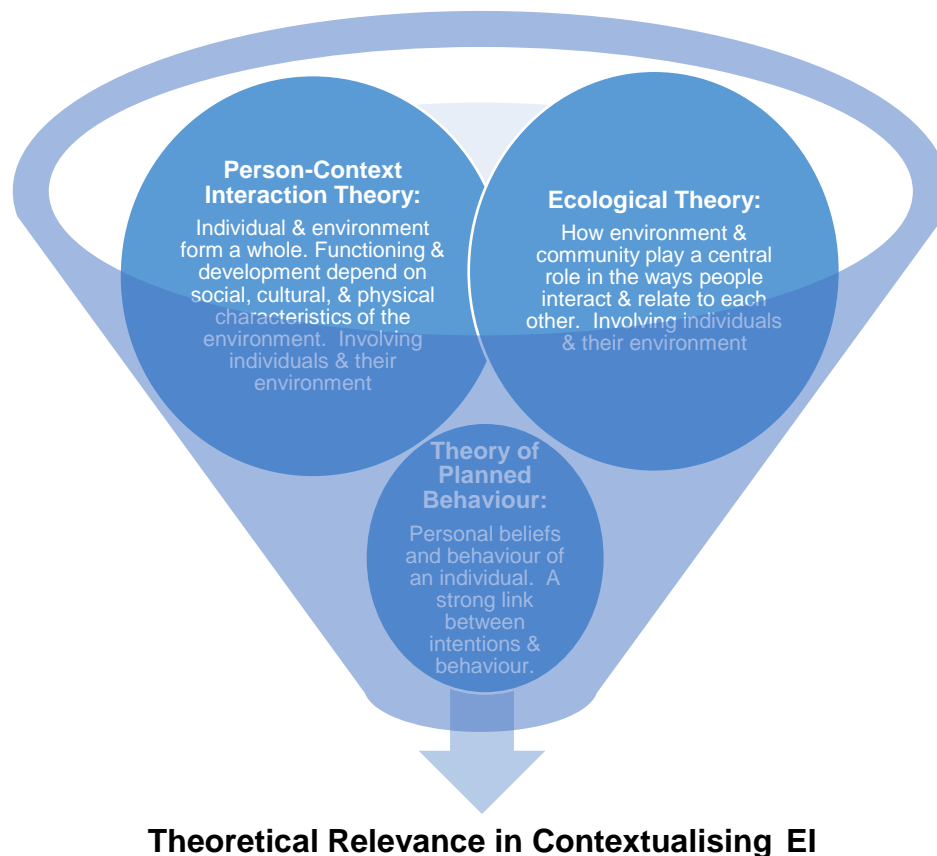
To determine and explain the contextualization of EI, the contextual environment and the individual cannot be separated from each other. Using Ecological Theory and Person-Context Interaction Theory related to dynamic systems presents an opportunity to systematically examine the EI behaviour of individuals via the Theory of Planned Behaviour in their bounded contexts. Hopefully, applying the mentioned

theories with the interpretation of data of this research study can contribute to a more explicit understanding and description of the EI behaviour of participants in their different contexts (see section 2.5 for the four contexts proposed for this study). Furthermore, the principles and constructs of these theories will form an integral part of generating questions used during interviews to stimulate discussions, as explained in the next chapter.

3.5   The Application of EI in Contexts: A Literature Review

Referring back to Cassidy (2013, p. 5) stating that "behaviour is a function of a person, the environment, and the interaction between the two", it is, thus, essential that "we need to study emotionally intelligent contexts as well as emotionally intelligent people", as Cherniss (2010, p. 123) additionally commented. In support of this, Brouwers and Van de Vijver (2015) state that intelligence models only focus on structure and processes and do not consider contextual factors. Their study notices how surprisingly popular decontextualised assessment is while all cognitive activities and processes occur in a cultural context. Furthermore, they emphasise that intelligence theory and assessment would not make significant progress in the future if we did not treat intelligence contextually. They suggested that we may make substantial progress by "letting context in" (p. 39).

The daily construction of reality determines personal activities. A person's involvement in ecological structures creates a form of *person in context*, G. Adams (2012) explains. While people respond to subjective interpretations, Adams further explains that one constantly rebuilds and deforms habits to adapt to change. The power of the situation and the psychological composition of our cultural worlds create a form of *context in person*. Ybarra et al. (2012) undeniably claim that once the social context is an explicit element in EI analysis, it will become clear that the social world is navigating, shaping, guiding, and constraining a person's EI, regardless of the emotional level of intelligence they think they hold.

There are rightly meaningful discussions about the *feeling-thinking duality* concept that makes us the people we are, but how do our emotions fit into the picture? Are these just as crucial in our intelligence? Acknowledging our emotions and thoughts

allows us to experience ourselves as a human whole. According to Chadha (2005, as cited in Behera, 2016), emotions are the basis of all intelligence and behaviour. Behera (2006, as cited in Behera, 2016) claims that EI uses emotions as an energy source to achieve self-defined goals. However, Lievens and Chan (2017) believe that knowledge of emotions and having EI skills are two separate things. It is not to say that if you know how to regulate your emotion amid problems, you will apply it in practice. Therefore, we can deduce that EI is related to understanding, using emotions and emotional knowledge to promote thinking and reasoning about them, and finally acting by applying them in the practical context.

3.5.1   Individual Differences

Research on EI often ignores the person-situation interaction, but many factors that influence the intelligence quotient also influence EI, especially in the social environment, reports Beasley (1987). Significant is that the expression of EI may vary radically depending on the surrounding environment and the individual's unique characteristics or traits in reaction to the environment. Matthews et al. (2007) noted that individual differences in EI are more noticeable in some contexts than others. They made a controversial statement, namely that EI may be adaptable in some contexts but harmful in others. They further stated that it is an essential skill for environmental challenges and demands, but a high EI can equally have a "dark side" (p. 14) when it leads to denial of problems, excessive self-improvement, or a bloated self-image manifesting as narcissism. However, that raises the question of whether this aspect might not be a lack of EI. (According to the general understanding of EI, narcissistic behaviour is not part of the characteristics of EI.)

In addition, studies such as the one by Ford and Tamir (2012) have researched the relationship between EI and emotional preferences across and in particular contexts. They assessed EI and preferences for pleasant and unpleasant emotions in situations when they are likely to be beneficial or not. They discovered that those with high EI are better skilled at using their emotions flexibly to achieve their goals. Such people will choose beneficial feelings, even if they are unpleasant to experience – such as anger in confrontation – over the experience of pleasant feelings that are ineffective in the relevant context. These people understand their

emotions and try to regulate them strategically. As a result, people who can execute emotional preferences are higher in EI. On the other hand, people who wish to be happy more than others have lower EI when pleasure is unlikely to be useful. As a result, their research reveals that, in appropriate circumstances, selecting unpleasant feelings and avoiding positive ones can be an emotionally beneficial option. They assert that people who prefer emotions useful in a given context, whether the experience is pleasant or not, are higher in EI. For example, facing confrontation to assert a strong point of view can cause fear and anxiety but can lead to satisfaction and contentment overall. Therefore, their findings support that choosing to feel less pleasant in specific contexts when such feelings can be beneficial is exhibited in some individuals with high EI (Ford & Tamir, 2012).

3.5.2   Application of EI

Research findings on applying EI in different life contexts are presently available primarily for occupational and educational settings (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Zins et al., 2004).

The occupational contexts circles tend to view EI as a valuable potential resource that may contribute to the improved prediction of organizational outcomes, especially when successful performance requires an apparent emotional skill. In addition, EI skills can be attractive for performing individual tasks, especially in institutions with leadership, teamwork, effective communication, and contextual or tacit performance requirements (Matthews et al., 2007).

Concerning the educational context, Matthews et al. (2007) state that emotional intelligence appears to be a poor predictor of academic success in education. However, Hawkins and others instead found that EI can indirectly mediate success by protecting students from learning barriers such as mental distress, substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and violence (Hawkins et al., 2004).

The expectation with this research is that studying EI in various contexts may shed more light on the application of EI in more contexts.

3.5.3　Enhancing EI

A common assumption among theorists (e.g., Cherniss & Adler, 2000, as cited in
Matthews et al., 2007; Goleman, 2001a; Zammuner, 2014; Zins et al., 2004) is that EI
is trainable in different life contexts, given that one has a minimal amount of
intelligence and EI on which to base the training. These authors say trainers should
tailor program goals and content to the specific context and target populations. For
example, in the educational or occupational context, the goal might be to train crucial
emotional and social competencies to support their academic learning or job
performance. According to Matthews et al. (2007), it is still uncertain if we can link
successful programs targeting specific skills to a particular context instead of global
intelligence. There is still a lack of theoretical grounding in programs to teach people
how to successfully transfer their EI skills to various other contexts and problems.
Matthews et al. (2007) propose that a comprehensive research study examining the
effect of EI training on a global scale can shed more light on this. In addition, Jordan
et al. (2010) emphasised the importance of context when arguing that EI can have
different effects depending on how we apply our EI ability. They suggest that
research in this area is still insufficient and should be given priority during future EI
research.

The purpose of education is to change an individual's behaviour in a desirable
direction, correct undesirable (social) behaviour, and thus develop our inner qualities
to the maximum so that it positively affects the development of the individual and
society, mentioned Behera (2016). EI should form a fundamental and
complementary part of the education process. Creating and promoting awareness of
this new and alternative perception of intelligence among peers, parents, and
community members is fundamental (Behera, 2016). For example, a study by
Zammuner (2014) tested an EI ability: the individuals' contextualized emotional
understanding and responding (CEUR), its relationship with personal variables, and
whether instruction can enhance CEUR. The participants completed several traits-
and well-being scales (e.g., job involvement, loneliness) and had to rate the
adequacy of behavioural responses in specific scenarios. The study confirmed that
CEUR could be associated with traits and well-being and that these EI skills are
trainable. The study further showed that a brief self-administered EI-training

procedure could enhance CEUR. These findings correspond with my previous study, namely that obtaining EI knowledge and abilities is achievable through training and, as a result, significantly impacts the emotional well-being of working individuals (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018).

Next, we look at what the literature has yielded thus far regarding applying EI in my Four-Dimensional Context Model described in Chapter 2 (see 2.5).

3.5.4 Association Contexts: Family and Peer-, Group-, and Relational Contexts

Behera (2016) emphasises that although people mainly use EI at home, school, work, and other contexts, practical improvement requires considerable attention. EI can be taught and learnt early and strengthened into adulthood, which has immediate benefits for education, health, relationships and employment. Children need to learn that all emotions are healthy and that emotion unites the heart, mind and body. The so-called negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and sadness, are just as important as positive emotions, such as peace, joy, and courage. One must develop the art of expressing one's feelings and emotions in a desirable, moderate, and suitable manner at an appropriate time.

Ghanawat et al. (2016) similarly emphasize the critical role of family functioning in the child's development. Family socialisation is the first social institution that shapes and directly influences the child's social and emotional competence. In addition, it indirectly affects socio-emotional competence through their comprehension of emotions and the acquisition of social knowledge. Thus, children acquire their emotional knowledge base and competence by identifying and regulating emotions in the familial context from their parents. Their study evaluated the association between family functioning and EI among adolescents, which may help design or plan school-based intervention programs for learners with disturbed family functioning and poor EI. The study sample consisted of adolescents aged between 16 and 18 in their 11th and 12th year at the Sarvodaya School in Kanke, India. The participants of their study – 52 individuals in total – represented both genders. Their findings reflect that family functioning is indispensable to EI development. Inadequate family functioning

adversely affects EI development and can lead to maladaptive behavioural and emotional problems in adolescence. It can also unfavourably affect the academic performance of an individual.

In contrast, average and good family functioning leads to adolescents' healthy development and emotional and social maturity. Therefore, Ghanawat et al. noted that focusing on family functioning during school-based intervention is crucial. Some correlating research suggests that contexts with enhanced parental warmth and better family relationships facilitate the development of and are associated with a higher EI (Schutte et al., 2013). Schutte examined social-network contexts of EI and found that individuals' EI was similar to that of close others and that, over time, it changed, even more to be similar to those in their social network.

Concerning peer contexts, Lomas et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between the EI of adolescents, bullying behaviour, and peer victimisation. To better understand bullying behaviour, 68 adolescents from a secondary college participated in the study and completed a self-report questionnaire to assess their EI. The goal was to establish how frequently they engaged in bullying behaviours and how frequently they were victims of group victimisation. The study's findings showed a strong possibility that adolescents who do not recognise others' emotions or understand their thoughts, beliefs or intentions will be victimised by their peers. In contrast, the EI dimension of understanding the emotions of others relates negatively to bullying behaviours. Results indicated that anti-bullying programs in schools could improve learners' EI: It can correct impairments in EI in teenagers who bully others and those at a higher risk of peer victimisation.

Hence, we can understand EI's development and the effect of its application better in light of the family-, peer-, and relational social contexts. Social contexts in which others display emotional skills can encourage the acquisition thereof. Therefore, experiences in the social context are crucial for EI development.

3.5.5 Localisation Contexts: Educational-, Occupational-, and Recreational Contexts

3.5.5.1 Educational Context (School and University)

While society often regards the home as where emotional skills learning begins, we generally consider the school the prime location for promoting and further teaching EI (Behera, 2016). Emotional literacy is the term that educators sometimes use to describe teachable EI skills. Teaching these skills has become essential in the educational context, and most parents and teachers consequently see mastering these skills as a priority in the socio-emotional and personal development of their children and students, Behera believes. He suggests that teaching depends more on prioritising practice, training, and improvement than oral teaching. Practising emotional skills to become automatic adaptable responses within a person's natural repertoire is a priority. Schools should add emotional literacy to the standard curriculum, thus creating a climate that promotes the development and application of emotional skills, Behera (2016) emphasises.

Considering the application of EI in the educational context, B. Kelly et al. (2004) mention the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum that addresses the stricter requirements of emotional education. PATHS, a curriculum worth mentioning and considering for implementation in our local school education, provides a model of emotional development that is both coherent and complex, a curriculum explicitly created for the development of emotional skills and not intelligence. The model was researched in a Scotland school context, and the findings indicated that it positively impacted emotional understanding, interpersonal skills, and behaviour. By marketing it as a preventative intervention program, trainers use it in different categories of mainstream and special needs contexts. The program facilitates positive change, such as improving self-awareness, developing a descriptive vocabulary for feelings and describing these feelings, regulating one's emotions, recognising emotion in others, empathising, and dealing with relationships. It further impacts other general areas, such as situations outside of school.

The findings of difficulties that emerged in the non-classroom school context, which are more easily solvable, indicate that considering contextual/ecological issues is

essential in introducing innovative intervention into the complex school system. Academics welcome the new and enthusiastic readiness to recognize the role of educators in acknowledging the prominence of emotion in various aspects of the education process. New holistic and child-centred legislation and regulations in Scotland support this movement and accentuate the value of children's perspectives and rights to self-expression. Thus, a growing interest exists in how youngsters perceive, describe, and manage their emotions. Therefore, valuing the child's needs, wishes, and developing personality is essential, as B. Kelly et al. (2004) explained. The results of the PATHS project of B. Kelly et al. should encourage its presentation to be considered in South Africa in addition to existing social skills teachings or school approaches.

However, Behera (2016) noted that schools are too slow to adopt emotional literacy as part of their structure. The reason may be that society still perceives schools as the place to teach academic disciplines rather than social and emotional skills. People generally regarded the latter as the responsibility of parents at home and that of the community. Behera suggests that although teaching these skills should begin at home, teachers and other emotionally intelligent personnel should be the role models who demonstrate EI competence. He firmly believes that we should invest sufficient time and effort to develop practical skills that will enable the children's EI, not cognitive skills only. This effort should be a publicly organised service experience that extends the walls of the home and school to include the community. Members of older generations should share their stories with younger generations. All students should experience the joy of doing arbitrary acts of kindness and be allowed to actively reflect and engage in conversation. Community life gives them opportunities to do so. EI may significantly affect children's development if established from a young age, converting them into better people by demonstrating respect for others' perspectives and exercising constructive interaction. They acquire prospective leadership, teamwork, and successful relations, Behera explains. While IQ ensures success in school and work, EI ensures success and happiness in all aspects of one's life. IQ determines a person's innate abilities, capacities, and intelligence, while EI determines whether one is a team player or how well one will respond to a crisis (Behera, 2016).

Fatum (2008) conducted a study to investigate the possibility of a link between EI skills and academic achievement in primary school pupils. The study aimed to determine what perceptions are involved in primary school pupils during the effective use and management of emotions. Fatum defines EI as mixing thought and feeling to make final decisions. She evaluated 77 fifth-grade learners trained in EI competencies from two San Francisco Bay area public elementary schools. Participants with EI competence in traditional and alternative public schools demonstrate a perception of more considerable success, inside and outside the school context. In addition, all these learners feel that EI skills brought them together, creating a feeling of connectedness. The findings show this optimism among participants towards the classroom, the school and their overall world due to the skills they acquired from these programs. Based on their responses, studying EI as part of their curriculum shows fluid abilities to process and use EI skills in everyday situations, which brings about positive changes in their entire world (Fatum, 2008).

Measured against the EQ-I (see 3.3.2), a study by Izaguirre (2008) similarly found a link between academic achievement and EI, the subscales of social responsibility and problem-solving. Problem-solving is a cognitive process for converting a particular situation into a resulting state when there is no apparent solution method for the problem solver. University students can cope with their problems more comfortably if they use their EI to show rational and appropriate approaches, Ergin et al. (2020) found in their study. It is especially significant for engineering students transitioning from education to business life (Ergin et al., 2020).

3.5.5.2   Occupational Context

Considering the occupational context, Johnson's (2017) findings confirm significant benefits for understanding and applying participants' EI competencies in their personal and professional lives. These include improved EI skills of self-awareness and self-management of emotions. Her study, conducted on ten employees at a medical centre in Florida, USA, indicated that improved EI competency also leads to enhanced relationships, teamwork, and the ability to manage stress and change.

Fer (2004) conducted a qualitative study to evaluate the experiences of 20 secondary teachers at a private school in Turkey who completed the EI in-service program. An interesting emerging pattern showed that most interviewed participants considered using EI activities essential in the classroom and their private and everyday lives. The participants testified that they gained practical EI skills due to the outcomes of the EI program. Using skills such as empathy made their lives easier and more satisfactory for their professional (classroom) and personal lives. Although unaware, one participant realised he had already used some of these skills daily. Without really noticing these EI skills, it better equipped him to apply them to his own life and that of his students. Based on the data from this study, it would appear that it successfully combined theory and practice related to EI skills in the program design, Fer (2004) concluded.

Brackett et al. (2011) consider academic and workplace environments and explain how emotionally intelligent people behave intra- and interpersonally. They included a brief discussion of the EI concept used in both settings. They aimed to provide a new overview of the research to explain how emotionally intelligent people's personal, social, academic, and occupational lives "appear". Brackett et al. hypothesised that EI affects the success of employees' overall work performance, the success rate of how they deal with colleagues, and the ways to deal with conflict and stress. Their findings showed that employees with higher EI obtained higher ratings from peers and supervisors for stress tolerance, interpersonal facilitation, and leadership potential than those with lower EI. Based on their supervisors' assessments, the EI level determines how managers will act in ways that support the organization's goals. According to Brackett et al., how teachers and students feel, use these feelings, and respond to them influence the school environment in ways that promote learning and development. They finally noted that the applications of EI theory, thus, extend beyond the classroom (Brackett et al., 2011).

Farh et al. (2012) hypothesise that when working in employment contexts with high management work demands, people with higher overall EI, perceptive, and emotional ability demonstrate more substantial collaborative effectiveness (and consequent job performance). It is because such circumstances contain salient emotion-based cues that stimulate employees' emotional capabilities. Their article aimed to enhance this

research field by underlining the job situation's moderating influence. A sample of 212 professionals from various organisations and industries agreed that EI has a positive effect independent of personality, cognitive capacity, emotional job demands, job complexity, and demographic control variables.

3.5.5.3   Adapting to Foreign Culture

With vast diversity in the workforce due to expatriation and international employment, especially socially and globally, cross-cultural interactions are frequent these days. Cross-cultural adaptation can be especially challenging because not everyone can adapt effectively to such an environment. Apart from changes in work and academic responsibilities, the intercultural adaptations of foreign professionals or students also include a general adaptation in various areas, such as interacting with host citizens on a social and professional level to increase their comfort when fulfilling their duties. Secondary adaptations include adjusting to a new environment, new cultures, language obstacles, local transportation and traffic, shopping, entertainment, other types of cuisine, health care, and various other general living conditions challenges, Lin et al. (2012) explained. They conducted a study to evaluate the impact of cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EI) on cross-cultural adaptation. After monitoring for gender, age, previous foreign experience, English proficiency, and host country language ability, the results showed that CQ had a beneficial influence on cross-cultural adaption. Furthermore, they discovered that EI enhanced the connection between CQ and cross-cultural adjustment (Lin et al., 2012).

According to empirical research, the greater the EI, the more significant the impact of CQ on cross-cultural adaption. According to Lin et al. (2012), the outcome is encouraging because it has substantial benefits for both the conceptual and theoretical development of CQ and EI and its practical implementation. It contributes uniquely to the mindfulness of CQ and EI, crucial intelligence types that will benefit expatriates and international students to maintain themselves in unfamiliar cultural environments. It enables them to understand and deal with these environments whilst going through awareness, motivation, action and response phases to become cross-culturally proficient. Those who succeed will undoubtedly gain an improved level of global adjustment, Lin et al. (2012) indicated. Dost et al. (2017) noted that EI

skills are beneficial when studying a foreign language because it allows learners to improve their ability to learn the language, and students can further enhance their use of English by applying their EI skills.

3.5.5.4   Recreational Contexts (Including Arts and Physical Exercise)

Changing realities requires new ways of thinking globally, an emotionally complex process. Ivcevic et al. (2014) are particularly interested in how creativity might contribute to a more inclusive society. These include creative individuals of various domains, from the arts to science to technology, such as innovator designers, scientists, managers, and the like; those open to new experiences, who are curious, unconventional, and who often have artistic and intellectual interests. People must generate a wide range of ideas to propose viable solutions for complex issues, Ivcevic et al. assert. That requires creative thought, often fraught with emotion, such as frustration which thus far led to life-changing innovations. Ivcevic and others further state that emotionally intelligent people who can distinctly recognise, understand and label emotions accurately realise that the creative process may be emotionally complex and accepting challenges. They further understand that EI abilities are significant throughout the creative process. These abilities can transform emotions into motivators for creativity. Whether it is a creation or even appreciation through visual arts, music, acting, or any other art form, art can be a channel for people to learn, use and manage their emotions while striving to develop everyday creativity and build EI skills. Ivcevic et al. (2014, p.17) give the following explanation of a workshop that they present intending to enhance EI and appreciation of individual differences: "Unlike a usual trip to the museum, where people might look at each artwork for just 30 seconds, the workshop participants will be asked to look at a single work of art for a minimum of 10 minutes. People will be challenged to examine details of content, structure, composition, and colour. They will be asked to explore the work of art from different perspectives, angles and distances. People will be encouraged to imagine themselves inside the work of art, thinking about the sights, sounds, smells and feelings that they would experience if they were literally inside it. Noticing details and creating a rich picture of the artwork will be then applied to learning about emotions and creative work". Ivcevic et al. found that sharing their various experiences of this exercise improves people's EI skills by allowing them to

see how others perceive things differently and that the same event evokes different feelings and emotions.

In an article posted on Psychology Today, Pringle (2019) explains that the arts may be the first to look for examples of how EI comes into play in creativity. A sample of artists, including painters, sculptors, composers, choreographers, and writers, described emotions as fuel and motivation in their creative process, yet it also has to be regulated, requiring EI. Pringle advises that emotions should be thought about and thought with, as they can become sources for ideas and passion. Leading a research team in Italy, Sergio Agnoli proposes that higher creativity is linked to emotional self-awareness, allowing artists and innovators to excel in the creative process (Jacobs, 2018). Baas (2019, p. 265) further claims that "people scoring high in EI maintained higher levels of excited and enthusiastic moods during situations in which creativity was required and used their moods to think flexibly and enhance their creativity". Furthermore, negative emotions may, for instance, benefit creativity in specific contexts. For example, sympathy responds to another's suffering, producing prosocial intrinsic motivation for help (Ivcevic & Hoffmann, 2019).

Although creativity and art, music, acting and activities such as those mentioned in the previous two paragraphs are still occupational activities, they can also form part of the recreational context. Concerning the recreational context, it is as broad as humanity itself, and research to explain the link between EI and recreation extends far and wide. Therefore, only a few examples follow. In the sport context, for example, a study by Barlow and Banks (2014) investigated the short-term effects of EI coaching on three performance-related characteristics in netball players: anxiety, self-efficacy, and team identification. They employed the Bar-On EQ-i, and the results show that solution-oriented coaching utilising EI is helpful, as coaching enhanced self-efficacy and reduced anxiety but had no change in team identification.

Another study in the sport context is that of Laborde et al. (2006), who conducted a study targeting EI in sports and physical activity contexts. The findings support the relationship between EI and stress-related physiological responses, optimal psychological skill usage, performance, and favourable attitudes towards physical activity. Physical exercises are usually part of people's recreation and can elevate

happiness, enhance positive and pleasant emotions, and modulate mood changes. This notion correlates with findings from previous studies. EI thus has a positive association with individual and team recreational performance and is better in physically active individuals, the amount of exercise done, and those who meet exercise recommendations (Acebes-Sánchez et al., 2019).

Concerning music and art, as an example of such a study, a research report by Nogaj (2020) on EI and stress-coping methods among Spanish music and visual art students described that music students differed considerably from art students in terms of EI in general. Amongst the participants of Nogai's study, the music students were more aware of their positive and negative emotions and could express them more easily. Furthermore, this group of music students had much more task-oriented coping methods. They were significantly less likely to engage in substitution behaviours than the art students due to their knowledge of the emotions they experience in stressful situations and their ability to use them successfully.

3.5.6   Life Phase Contexts: Personal- and Historical Contexts

The study of development throughout a lifetime explores patterns of growth and change, and consistency in behaviour during an individual's entire life. There are many beliefs about EI and age. Studies (e.g., Atkins & Stough, 2005) on the relationship between EI and age suggest that despite the additional emotional challenges we face as we age, affective processing across the lifespan leads to experiencing more subjective well-being, suggesting that particular aspects of EI may increase with age. According to the findings of their study, the extent to which people employ emotions in problem-solving rises over time, while the ability to control intense emotions may deteriorate. Fariselli et al. (2008) similarly found that although there is a slight increase in some elements of EI with age, it is a developing ability, and although it is likely that accumulated life experience contributes to EI, some competencies can only develop with training.

Concerning the Life Phase Context, the research studies on EI development are progressing. Possessing EI skills has already been declared a critical competency in the current world context. However, the traditional school system has habitually

placed a premium on academic performance. It has resulted in elitism and the expectation that our children should perform at the highest academic level possible, comparable to success, power, and money, Behera (2016) noted. We tend to assume that successful people are born with unique abilities. However, as time passes, innate talent emerges in some individuals while eluding others. Behera suggests that we must discover opportunities to showcase children's diverse talents and abilities to exceed the narrow traditional definitions and criteria of being gifted and talented. Creating awareness and educating the public should exceed verbal/linguistic and mathematical/logical intelligence constraints to incorporate a broader range of intelligence, such as EI. EI can influence children's development favourably if established at a young age, converting them into better people who respect others' ideas and engage in pleasant interactions, Behera (2016) claims. Education leaders, thus, ought to consider our youth as an essential source of human capital for the development of EI from an early age.

Emotional development takes place from childhood. The ability to respond emotionally already occurs in infancy in the most basic form of emotional behaviour. However, as we age, one's emotional responses become less extensive, Supriatna and Ervina (2020) found. Ghanawat et al. (2016) similarly noted that EI development begins as early as birth when the mother provides for the child's needs. Following that, growing children's EI may develop or deteriorate based on their interactions with others, such as parents, siblings, friends, and teachers. They further found that effective use of emotions can help children regulate their instinctual reactions under challenging circumstances. It also teaches learners and students how to effectively express their emotions and build strong bonds with family and friends to succeed in school, job, and life.

Frolova et al. (2019) similarly assert that human EI forms throughout a person's life. The developed EI provides a good insight into the understanding and management of emotions, an empathic attitude, and a flexible response to the emotional manifestations of those with whom they interact. Frolova et al.'s research was a theoretical and empirical study of the EI development of adolescents with different levels of psychological skills. Considering the emotional sphere of adolescents and analysing the peculiarities of the mental processes of adolescents, they concluded

that adolescence is the most sensitive stage and crucial in the development of EI. At this age, intellectualising all mental and cognitive processes transpire, enabling teenagers to consciously construct their value system, personal worldview, and identity, Frolova et al. explain. Due to the coordinated interaction between the right and left hemispheres of the brain, "intelligence can become emotional" and "emotions can become intelligent" (Frolova et al., 2019, p. 68). Thus, emotionality is critical to the formation of EI, and adolescence is characteristic of the complexity and instability of the emotional sphere of personality (Frolova et al., 2019).

Frolova et al. (2019) explain that adolescents can better recognise and identify their emotions in more parameters than younger children, and the list of emotions in them dramatically expands. The intensity of experiences increase, characteristic of positive and negative emotions. Any event in their lives causes a bright emotional surge in teens. Therefore, during adolescence, complicated instability of the emotional sphere arises due to the intensification and diversity of emotions. However, psychologically healthy adolescents are developing the ability to slow down these emotional surges through self-regulation and willpower. This development enables teenagers to construct their self-concept, value system, and personal outlook and ultimately consciously develop their EI (Frolova et al., 2019).

The experimental study by Frolova and others comparing teenagers in Ukraine confirmed these data. Two groups participated in their study: participants from a close-knit student group and members of the "psychological studies" circle who could increase their psychological/emotional capacity through self-discovery and development. The latter group showed a higher degree of development for most components of EI than the former adolescents who had no EI training. Frolova et al. (2019) conclude that adolescents' emotional intelligence can develop under the purposeful psycho-corrective influence through interactive training methods. As Dost et al. (2017) similarly noted, children who understand emotion's role will have a better foundation for building a successful future.

3.5.7   Methodical Contexts: Face-to-face- and Virtual Contexts

Until a few years ago, when referring to contact between people, it would primarily

mean a face-to-face situation, whether in recreational, cultural, familial, educational or professional contexts. Aside from face-to-face settings, however, various factors and the COVID-19 pandemic have brought even faster-unprecedented changes in how we communicate, channelling the focus now more prominently towards the virtual context that also needs consideration.

As the business expands worldwide, virtual teams are becoming increasingly more of an everyday phenomenon. In a competitive global environment, cross-functional teams form according to individuals' expertise. These teams work in remote environments globally and rely heavily on technology to communicate, manage and coordinate projects resulting in many challenges, such as limited communication because of poor network reception, a lack of knowledge sharing, and social loafing – a lack of accountability and taking responsibility (Quisenberry, 2018). Quisenberry performed a research study investigating if highly emotionally intelligent virtual team members can potentially improve project success, and his findings prove it to be the case. He suggests that organisations should decide whether the candidates they consider for their teams possess the necessary EI qualities to be successful in virtual teams.

A study by Pitts et al. (2012) found that not all effective communication needs to happen in a face-to-face environment. Their study aimed to investigate an unknown area, namely the EI of individuals in teams working remotely, and they found that EI drives team viability. Although other researchers have shown that EI undoubtedly plays a unique role in the management and effectiveness of various organisational outcomes in face-to-face team environments, they still need to investigate EI's implications on teams in the ever-increasing virtual environment of 21st-century organisations. As modern organisations use technological advances to improve their bottom line, Pitts et al. suggest that we should also consider using these modern technological means (computer-mediated communication such as e-mail and videoconferencing) for communication between individuals.

A more recent study by Mysirlaki and Paraskeva (2020) researched the virtual team effectiveness by examining the virtual world teams (VWTs) of massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) more deeply. The findings demonstrate a significant

predictive association between the observed leader's EI and virtual team success via mediating transformational leadership behaviours.

Over the past few years, individuals with a significant level of EI have made a substantial contribution in various areas, such as the work environment, leadership, and interpersonal interactions. However, the fact that young people in our fast-paced, high-tech society spend so much time behind computer screens and smartphones, having conversations with friends and strangers on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and the like, necessitates now more than ever that they develop EI skills already from a very young age. Moreover, this also applies to the broader society, Behera (2016) believes.

Hopefully, this current study will shed more light on the beneficial application of EI skills in face-to-face and virtual contexts. Furthermore, it will explore participants' experiences in face-to-face and virtual contexts.

3.6   Conclusion

Nearly forty years after the launch of the EI concept and after much evidence has been gathered and delivered, academics now acknowledge and accept EI's existence as a mental capacity in the general intelligence class. Research and conceptions described in relevant theories thus far provide essential information on the early steps in the study of EI, but they do not fully explicate the importance of the various contexts in which people apply their EI toolkit. To fully understand EI, we must consider its connection with the context in which people apply and demonstrate their cognitive and social-emotional intelligence – their world of inner experience and outer relationships.

Ybarra et al. (2012) claim that once we consider the social context and the volatility of circumstances, it will become more evident that the social world can shape, direct, and place constraints on a person's EI, which, at times, may leave even the most emotionally intelligent person less effective. This study, therefore, aims to present an explicit exposition of the contexts in which people apply their EI skills whilst attempting to navigate their interactions and relationships with others. I hope that it

can expand on current conceptions of EI.

The subsequent chapter will explain the methodological process this current study will follow in its quest to contextualise EI.

CHAPTER 4

Method: Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

4.1   Introduction

Contextualisation links observations with a particular context involving facts, events, or points of view. Rousseau and Fried (2001) emphasize that contextualisation is increasingly crucial in behavioural research because settings, perspectives, and relationships are constantly changing, and the research domain thus increases significantly if the research areas are extending across international borders. This research study aimed to investigate EI behavioural skills in various contexts. These are described in the Four-Dimensional Context Model (Figure 2.2), namely association, localisation, life phase, and methodical contexts. The research goal was to discover similarities and differences and pay direct attention to the impact that different contexts have on the participants and the impact of these contexts on the groups and norms of which the participants form a part. Since research studies typically explore participants' roles, relationships, and physical, social, and cultural characteristics, this study took geographical, cultural, and social factors into account in the study's design and implementation and the data interpretation. Therefore, I considered contextual factors during the research's planning phase. I aimed to explore the participants' perceptions of EI individually and what is important to them in this regard. I also tried to uncover the implications that the application of learned skills has for them and whether there are differences regarding their roles or cultural frames of reference (their context).

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study: a detailed discussion of the method used to enable the collection and processing of data to, ultimately, understand and describe the effects of EI behavioural skills in terms of similarities and differences in various contexts – thus, to explore the contextualisation of EI. Additionally, it provides a brief overview of the Neuro-Link EI Program, as all the participants in this study had completed this specific program by the time interviews took place.

4.2 Research Design and Methodology

This study aimed to determine how the acquisition and utilisation of EI skills affect an individual in various contexts and what influence the application of those skills has in these contexts. I wanted to discover if they think it is worthwhile to incorporate EI training into their lives and whether the skills they learnt have positively changed their lives and behaviour. Furthermore, I explored how they apply EI skills in the different contexts they find themselves in and whether or not it varies from one context to another.

The objectives of this study were:

a. To get detailed information from participants based on the proposed research outcomes as explained in section 4.4. More specifically objectives were to determine the following:

- The impact of the relevant EI skills on participants individually: Can they truly understand themselves and manage and control what they understand about themselves? Do they understand the truths of others, and how do they apply these skills in society? Do they have healthy, constructive interactions with and influence people in different contexts?

- Whether there are similarities or differences in the participants' understanding of EI skills.

- How do they apply these skills separately in selected contexts, and do they use them consistently?

- The implication of applying these skills for each participant: Did the learnt skills gained from the Neuro-Link EI Training Program affect their well-being and relationships with family members, peers, friends, and colleagues: separately and interdependently?

- The sustainability of the EI skills application; and

- Whether it is beneficial to encourage and expand the acquisition of EI skills in people in general.

b. To analyse collected data to give meaning to it.

c. To discover whether the participants developed through the EI training process: Did they change their perspectives, and did it enhance their coping under challenging situations?

d. To contribute to already available knowledge about using EI skills in diverse contexts.

e. To make suggestions through the feedback of this study to encourage the public to develop EI skills for general life improvement.

f. To draw a conclusion that will allow recommendations for future research investigations.

In order to implement an investigation, the following design (discussed below in more detail) served as a framework to generate answers to questions that arose from the research statement and objectives:

- Stating the paradigm that guides the methodology.
- Declaring the research approach.
- Describing the theoretical framework: It encompasses participant sampling, data gathering methods, and data analysis.
- Adopting credibility and dependability standards on which to base research findings.
- Maintaining ethical considerations.

4.2.1 Research Paradigm

The chosen paradigm guided the investigation into the contextualisation of EI and determined the methods I used and the conclusions drawn (Durrheim, 2002). An interpretive research paradigm combines exploratory knowledge with theoretical evidence and assumptions from the nature of participants' reality on this topic (Wagner et al., 2012). Using a qualitative research approach with an interpretative paradigm allowed me to investigate, comprehend, and depict the actual experiences of the research participants. The reality for each person is as unique to them as their individuality. Individual realities, derived from their ontology, revealed how each participant's assumptions fit into the study process (Wagner et al., 2012). The choice of participants, each with different values and truths, regardless of nationality, ethnic or cultural background, socio-economic class, gender, or age, provided various socially formed realities.

Epistemologically, knowledge gained from this research is the personal truths of each

participant based on their opinions and experience with EI and the context within which it is investigated and described. Aspects such as context, culture and history influence these perspectives. As a researcher, I am not exempt from prejudices regarding my values on this topic. Regarding the axiology of this qualitative research study, I am not entirely free from prejudices about the personal value that I attach to the subject in question (EI), which can influence my objectivity (Wagner et al., 2012). However, I kept this in mind during the investigation process and in the same way, I considered the value-laden nature of the information collected in the field to minimize biases as far as humanly possible. The fundamental goal remained to comprehend the individuals' experiences. I achieved this by approaching participants empathically. A trusting connection could foster comfortable communication to maximise meaning. As set out later in this chapter, I applied ethical principles throughout this study. This study followed a constructivist-interpretive approach (Wagner et al., 2012).

4.2.2   Research Approach

Social research studies are divided into quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Delport et al., 2011; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012). The qualitative research method is a process of naturalistic investigation to understand and explain people's experiences of their lives, and contextual meaning involves understanding the meaning of a phenomenon for persons who experience reality in all contexts of their lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). As this study seeks to deliver a detailed analysis of complex, dynamic, and meaningfully lived experiences across various social and cultural contexts, the qualitative approach was suitable for exploring the situations and processes of the participants.

Humans give meaning to their experiences as physical, emotional, and social factors influence them. We attach meaning to how we perceive our relationships with ourselves, others, and the world we inhabit. According to Marsen (2008), human cognition fulfils the meaning-generating role of classifying what we perceive and experience based on predetermined criteria, assessing it, and assigning aesthetic value to it to give meaning to our reality. People, therefore, distinguish phenomena based on their epistemology – an innate knowledge to understand what they know,

and their worldview – the rationality of what they believe and the collection of life beliefs they share with others. Epistemology is, thus, the knowledge or understanding of argument or reason, broadly explained as issues related to creating and disseminating knowledge in particular areas of inquiry, such as social- or moral epistemology (Steup & Neta, 2020).

The context or framework within which the experience makes sense is crucial to generate the participants' realities. My ethnographic interviewing of participants from different backgrounds, nationalities, races, and genders enabled me to report on their lived experiences of EI skills in the different contexts described in this study's Four-Dimensional Context Model. Although the subjective interpretation of qualitative researchers is inevitable in the research process, I have attempted to present mainly information shared by participants from their own experience and understanding. I obtained their feedback on my version of their interviews which contributed to a rich and comprehensive conclusion. Applying a holistic and natural ethnographic research method enabled me to observe the experiences and perceptions of participants meaningfully (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). A qualitative perspective, which explores their subjective experiences, allowed me to consider things from their perspective (Wagner et al., 2012).

Trinh and Scheurich assert that results reproduced from interviewed research only reflect the researcher's mindset and goals of the research project instead of the participants' reality (Trinh, 1989, as cited in Varga-Dobai, 2012; Scheurich, 1995, as cited in Varga-Dobai, 2012). However, as explained above, I tried to maintain a good balance by limiting my subjectivity regarding my participants' opinions to protect my study's credibility.

4.2.3   Theoretical Framework

Elements that form part of the theoretical framework of this study include the following: a sampling of participants; methods of data collection (including the selection of data and data gathering techniques); analysis of the data (Durrheim, 2002).

4.2.3.1   Sampling

The identification and tracking of participating candidates were based on experienced EI skill experts who apply these skills daily in the various predetermined contexts this study planned to investigate. As a practising member of Neuro-Link, I have been involved with the company since 2008. Therefore, as an ethnographic researcher, I am familiar with gatekeepers who have been able to give me access to suitable participant candidates.

I used a non-probability (non-random) sampling technique. Being a qualitative researcher, I purposely selected a sample by depending on my knowledge and judgement to identify qualified applicants who could contribute to deepening knowledge on the researched topic. The main objective was to select participants with experiential relevance (who had already completed the Neuro-Link EI Program) who could contribute to an evolving theory. Thus, individuals who were available and willing to participate were recruited as participants to make up the sample in the study.

Qualitative studies involve a relatively small number of ten or fewer participants for in-depth interviews. As the grounded theory approach recommended, the participants who reflect a homogeneous sampling were selected because all have the focus of interest in common (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Exploring a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and attitudes was essential. It would be difficult to achieve data adequacy with an insufficient sample size, while too large would complicate in-depth and meaningful data analysis. However, the sample size should allow for a complete exploration of concepts to ensure that the investigation is theoretically meaningful. The primary criterion for the sample size was, thus, theoretical relevance, which made any addition of participants conservatively selective. Data collection and analysis repeatedly alternated until data collection seemed saturated and further collection appeared unnecessary. That warranted an adequate sample size.

4.2.3.2   Data Collection: Methods, Techniques, and Selection

For this study, I used interviews as a data collection method, approached participants

individually and conducted one-on-one interviews via Zoom internet video conferencing. Participants provided data by reflecting on their own lives. I established a relationship with each participant to ensure a comfortable conversation where each was free to share ideas and feelings. I delved deep into their field of experience to explore different emotional and cognitive functioning facets to gain a holistic view of the participants' experiences. From a flexible approach based on qualitative principles, I conducted in-depth interviews on how participants apply EI skills in the relevant contexts. It produced sufficient data that enabled reliable conclusions from their experiences.

Since an interview and informal conversation research design is challenging to formulate and structure in advance, the emphasis shifted in response to what emerged from interviews as they developed and unfolded. As Wagner et al. (2012) predict, such a coherently applied strategy has yielded enough data to make a valid conclusion. An interview guide ideal for ethnographic research, as per Wagner et al., applied and consisted of the following:

- A written introduction preceded the interview process. It was emailed to willing candidates and explained the study's purpose and ethical issues. The aim was also to obtain the candidates' consent for interviews with me so that I may take notes and record the interviews for transcription purposes (see Appendix C).
- I applied a questioning strategy and presented formulated questions to participants during individual interviews; the participants allocated enough time to these interviews, and each interview was quite lengthy and not rushed. I made sure to cover the entire questionnaire program with each individual.
- A closing statement concluded each session.

As with most qualitative interviewers, this study started with a general research plan but not a formal set of questions. Because interviews can be relatively loosely structured and flexible, I used the open-ended questioning technique, which provided meaningful, relevant feedback. I specifically used the *grand tour* central questioning technique, as J. Spradley (2003) recommended. Pro-forma Grand Tour Questioning Technique is a method of getting the respondents focused on talking about their experiences on what they know well, in this case, EI skills. The overview phase typically provides enough information for the focused exploration phase. This

questioning technique covers a wide range of contexts, such as space, time, events, activities, objects, and people (J. P. Spradley, 2016) which consequently incorporates all the contexts on which this study focuses.

As an introduction, the interviews initially began with some predetermined non-invasive questions. Specific questions applicable to the theme of the study were sent to candidates in advance to prepare for the interviews. The questions schedule is available in Appendix E. The participants could give their opinion on EI skills acquisition and development. This initial question kicked off the journey of discovery to the contextualisation of EI – to identify the corresponding experiences of an aggregate of individuals. The following questions serve as tools to provoke individual participants to reflect on the meaning of EI skills and their implications in the different contexts of their lives. It included the following questions: What aspects of using EI skills stand out to you? How does it affect your daily life? How have EI skills changed your behaviour? What changes has the acquisition of EI skills made in your life? As the interview progressed, questions could change appropriately. Using the EI program structure and the predetermined contexts according to the Four-Dimensional Context Model as a guide, participants could give an oral tour by explaining their experiences. They are the experts who provide semi-structured input to the research. Encouraging respondents to comment on their experiences yielded a wealth of information. Thus, at least one opening question was included, with some detailed follow-up questions depending on the subsequent interview flow.

The triangulation data collection technique could increase the reliability and credibility of conclusions obtained from data analysis (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). I applied listening and interpretation skills to record and accurately compare data from these individuals. Data collection involved various individuals of different gender and nationalities to participate. Investigator triangulation allowed expert and informed feedback on my findings from my course leader in the Neuro-link Program and my research study supervisor. Through theory triangulation, different theories and approaches were consulted as a basis for the research to interpret data from different perspectives. Finally, methodological triangulation allowed interview evidence to study participants' input (Wagner et al., 2012). Since the grounded theoretical study is inductive, it was not possible or advisable to determine the exact sample size in

advance, but rather to adapt and expand it as the study developed (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

Comprehension with empathy (verstehen) is essential for accurate data transcription. We can only understand the meaning of human words, actions, and experiences in the context of their personal and social background. Context plays an essential role in data collection, especially in this study, where I examined the contextualisation of EI. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) emphasise that understanding human behaviour in context is central to qualitative and interpretive research. Therefore, I entered the data collection environment openly and empathetically during participant interaction.

I recorded the interviews and transcribed and analysed them. Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently and ended when no new information influenced or changed the analysis outcome (Wagner et al., 2012).

4.2.3.3   Analysis of Data

All collected data is stored in a secure location, as ethically required. This study's interpretive ethnographic analysis method focuses on how participants create meaning from their own experiences and how I comprehend the data as a researcher. Thematic analysis was an ongoing process of data collection that occurred concurrently with the various analytical steps from disclosure, immersion, induction, coding and elaboration to, ultimately, the interpretation of data as suggested by qualitative researchers, such as Wagner et al. (2012).

Silverman (2013) describes the simultaneous flow of data analysis from data reduction to data display, conclusions, and verification. The immersion into the data and reading the interview recording-transcriptions repeatedly enabled an empathic understanding and interpretation of participants' feedback. Participants could verify and corroborate my transcription accuracy when I presented it to them before the analysis began.

Data reduction was the next step in identifying the various opinions from the interviews. It involved coding, analysing, managing, simplifying, and transforming

"raw" data. I coded the data continuously per interview in a comparison model, whereafter I compared all new data to previously coded data, divided it, and then categorized it until all data capturing was complete. Compiling and displaying data information in an organised and understandably categorised way made it possible to heed meaning, recognise patterns, and draw conclusions. Connections from theme identification formed a coherent narrative that enabled me to explain my findings. Oates' (2006) guidelines for analysed results gave meaning to collected data:

- What do the results demonstrate and imply?

- What is essential in the results, and what is their relevance?

- How does this connect to previous studies reported in the literature?

4.2.4   Standards of Credibility and Trustworthiness

As a researcher, I bear the responsibility of convincing my audience that I based the findings of this study on critical inquiry. Whether the results are generalisable to a larger group or not, a well-founded and healthy research process is valid and reliable if we follow the standards of credibility. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 43) mention criteria, namely "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability", which affirm good naturalistically approached trustworthiness: A naturalist-trained interviewer systematically collects, transcribes, and encodes the raw data to enable another person to understand the themes and to come to similar conclusions. During validation, reported observations, interpretations, and generalisations are evaluated for the reliability and generalisability of the findings. During this qualitative study, I attempted to examine the experiences of a relatively small number of participants in sufficient detail within specific contexts to enable credibility and trustworthiness. However, I will not claim to generalise findings to a broader context.

My paradigmatic rhetoric that ensures the standards of credibility and reliability on which I base my research findings is as follows (K. Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012):

- Data collected were from a natural, safe, non-threatening and undisturbed environment.

- As a researcher, I have ensured a relaxed, unbiased relationship with my research participants to adhere to ethical principles and improve the reliability of my study.

- The application of triangulation in various data-collecting methods, such as interviews and observation, should increase the credibility of the findings.

- I applied the bracketing technique: setting aside (as far as possible) my subjective experiences, prejudices, preconceived ideas, and knowledge of prior research findings and theories on this research topic. It fostered an open and empathetic attitude towards my participants and ensured that preconceived ideas and prejudices did not affect the interviews.

- Nevertheless, as a researcher, I am so deeply involved in the study that I could not stand in isolation from the research process but had to become part of it by deepening myself to comprehend the participants' hearts and emotions.

- The extensively researched information at my disposal, coupled with an empathic, trusting relationship with my participants, contributed to a compassionate view of human experience that could improve my understanding and thus increase the reliability of my study.

- Iteration: I have repetitively moved between observation and interpretation to increase comprehension and prevent misinterpretation.

- Ground interpretations connected my interviews, observations and interpretations.

- Testimonial participant validation, where the transcripts were presented to participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretation.

- Finally, I applied the criteria of adequacy and appropriateness of data to increase the reliability of my study. I ensured enough data was obtained through adequacy to confirm and understand previously collected data. It guaranteed saturation. Furthermore, I ensured that I purposefully rather than randomly selected relevant information to meet the academic needs of the study.

4.2.5   Ethical Considerations

Since this study researched the contextualisation of EI, it was a prerequisite that all participants had already completed some form of EI training. I am already familiar with the Neuro-Link EI Program (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018), so I realised that competent candidates who completed this program were the most appropriate individuals to qualify for recruitment. Therefore, the cooperation and written consent of the Neuro-Link Company was obtained at the start of the study (Appendix A). In

order to adhere to the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), gatekeepers (as described by Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002) at Neuro-Link were approached. I explained how the study would unfold and requested to obtain suitable voluntary candidates to participate (Appendix B). I assured them that the participants' personal information would be protected.

Consent: Descriptive consent documents containing all prescribed ethically required information were compiled and submitted to all proposed participants to obtain their consent to participate in the study. The informed consent process was applied continuously throughout the research study (Appendix C).

Deception: I established and maintained a trusting relationship with all participants by providing them with information to understand the study's purpose and methodology. Participants were requested to give only their ideas and not feel judged or criticised. As a researcher, I strived to remain as objective as possible.

Non-maliciousness: I protected participants from time constraints, stressful topic discussions, and disclosure of sensitive information, thus considering their well-being constantly.

Reciprocity: To prevent deception, the study's true purpose and results and the research's potential uses, as well as any risks and benefits that may arise during the research process, were presented to participants.

Benefit: Ethical principles were strictly adhered to for maximum participant benefits. As a researcher, I have treated all participants fairly and equally with care and support.

Power and social justice: Throughout the research process, I tried to maintain an attitude of fairness and justice regarding social class, race, and gender, including sample selection, question preparation, and interpretation and transfer of outcomes. As the researcher, I presented myself without asserting any positional control over the participants but considered them equals. Thus, I entered the data collection process and its analysis from a neutral position without bias and preconceived ideas

to the best of my ability.

Participant autonomy and dignity: I guaranteed the participants' privacy and confidentiality of their replies during individual interviews. They were not required to provide information that would embarrass them or create prejudice, and I assured them that any information they provided would not be called injudicious. I undertook to disclose the information anonymously in my research report/s.

The University of South Africa issued an ethical clearance certificate to permit the study (Appendix F). As Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002) explained, considering all of these ethical standards, I implemented them throughout the study and presented them to participants regularly in this manner. As a researcher, I knew I would be guilty of misconduct if I did not meet the above ethical requirements. Although the state of emergency regarding the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic no longer applied at the time of interviewing, I conducted no in-person interviews and followed the protocol. Most study participants are geographically widespread and necessitated virtual interviews. This measure thus eliminated the risk of health safety issues.

4.3   The Neuro-Link EI Program

The Neuro-Link EI Program is a training program that aims to empower individuals by expanding their intrapersonal and interpersonal EI abilities (High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program, 2002). The framework applies to anyone who wants to develop and grow, preserve internal happiness, and be effective and successful while at the same time maintaining healthy relationships with others. It requires the development of accurate self-awareness and self-management – intrapersonal skills, but also the ability to maintain social awareness and to be able to apply social management skills – interpersonal skills.

4.3.1   Curriculum Design

The program seeks to develop intra- and interpersonal competence.
- Intrapersonal competence indicates an inner awareness and understanding to manage one's emotional life and function independently, comfortably and

successfully. Intrapersonal ability is to be "self-smart" – to have inner strength.

- Interpersonal competence refers to the ability to perceive and understand other people's moods and desires, be willing to associate interactively with others and be proficient in relationships. Interpersonal ability is to be "people-smart" – understand others and be a team player.

Figure 4.1

The Framework of the Neuro-Link Model of EI
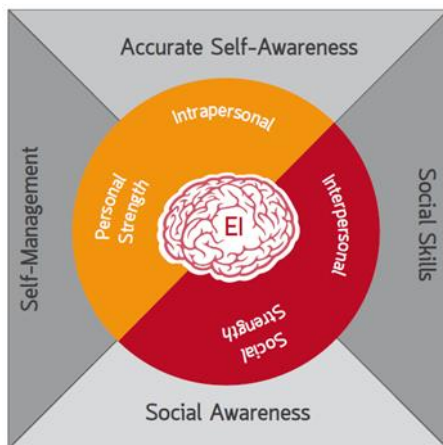
Note: The figure illustrates the curriculum design of the High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program (2002) (https://neurolink.company/cms/high-achiever-emotional-intelligence-development-program/).

4.3.2   Dimensions of the Program

The dimensions of the Neuro-Link EI Model (Figure 4.1) are interdependent and, to some extent, consecutive, starting with accurate self-awareness, followed by self-management, then social awareness and finally, social skills. The training program contains nine emotional skills presented in nine modules, specifically arranged in a hierarchical order, as later emotional skills build on earlier learnt skills. The training program follows the Neuro-Link Agility Profile and Neuro-Link EI Competencies Profile assessments as the candidate consults results from these assessments during the training program. Appendix D presents a brief description of the model.

4.3.3 The Neuro-Link Program Structure

Skills acquired from participating in this training EI program include the following
(High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program, 2002):

a. Intrapersonal skills:

    i. Accurate self-awareness – trainees can undertake various assessments
before starting the training program to gain personal understanding. In
addition, the specifically designed Neuro-Link Agility and EI profiles are two
mandatory assessments that precede the training program, as they are to
give individuals the necessary personal insight and understanding on which
the EI training Program is based. The first session discusses the purpose,
scope, and results of these assessments and the concepts and dimensions
of the EI program.

    ii. Mental well-being – trainees might now define their purpose objective and
create a vision based on what they learnt in the first module.

    iii. Brain wellness and mind power – guides trainees to understand and apply a
healthy lifestyle and increase performance: These include the importance of
rest and sleep, physical exercise, a healthy balanced diet, a positive mindset,
and brain fitness exercises.

    iv. Mental literacy – provides trainees with an insight into dealing with
adjustments, managing stress, and sustaining wellness.

    v. Mental wellness – following the previous module, this module teaches the
trainees proactive handling and resilience skills to deal with change, manage
stress and maintain well-being.

b. Interpersonal skills:

    vi. Social awareness skills – trainees acquire perspective on comprehending
another's truth, genuinely caring for them, and correctly evaluating their
behaviours.

    vii. Communication and conflict resolution skills.

    viii. Team functioning skills for social cohesion – leadership requirements in the
21st century.

    ix. Leadership abilities that are value-driven and aim to serve.

This program necessitates ample time between modules for the trainees to assimilate

knowledge and apply and practise the methods they learn daily. They can follow the training program online at their own pace or complete it through face-to-face training sessions.

4.3.4   How the Neuro-Link Program Applies to EI Theories and Approaches

As the Neuro-Link Program involves individual development through EI training and interaction with others in different contexts, it relates to this study's chosen theories, namely: The Person-Context Interaction Theory of Magnusson and Stattin (1998), Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (2012), and Kelly's Ecological Theory (J. G. Kelly, 1966).

The Neuro-Link EI Program indirectly applies to the Person-Context Interaction Theory of Magnusson and Stattin (1998) because of the close interaction between the individual and the environment, which is the crux of the Person-Context Theory and because of the importance given to context in the Neuro-Link Program. The program seeks to allow a person to anticipate and establish a sense of significance and purpose and further attempts to serve as a pathway in shaping change in an individual's behavioural factors through experiential growth to maturity. An interpretation and assessment of external environmental information guide the individual's actions by activating physiological systems that influence thoughts and emotions. All environmental aspects and operational processes involved within the individual provide meaning for their role in the entire functioning of that individual.

There is an ongoing reciprocal interaction process between individuals, other people, and their environments. The essential role that EI skills play is important to the individual in shaping perceptions, estimating plans and value systems, achieving goals, generating motives and behaviours, and accepting their biological makeup. Individual development is an ongoing process of restructuring at subsystem and whole-system levels within the boundaries of individual and social constraints. Therefore, it requires a continuous reorganisation of existing structures and processes and the creation of new ones so that entirely new behaviour may emerge. What appears to be similar behaviour for all individuals at different age levels can have significantly different psychological meanings for individuals of the same age

and the same individual over time, further necessitating the need for contextualising EI. An individual serves as an active agent in the process of human-environment interaction, and by choosing between alternative paths, the young person discovers certain types of developing environments other than just stereotypes. In this way, individuals organise their development. The manifestations of all behaviour when using EI skills, thus, play a significant part in this interaction between people and their situations.

Since people do not perform most behaviours randomly, they evaluate available information to make logical, reasoned decisions to choose specific behaviours. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (2012) states that acting with intent requires skills, opportunities, resources, and cooperation. This theory implicates an individual's intention to engage in all behaviours over which one can exercise self-control at a particular time and place. The Neuro-Link EI Training Program aims to bring about effective social and emotional growth by equipping people with skills to evaluate available information and thus allow them to choose controlled behaviours. Since the Theory of Planned Behavior implies a strong link between intentions and behaviour, I planned to investigate whether these essential components emerge in applying EI skills and whether some of the theory constructs apply to my findings.

Kelly's Ecological Theory, designed to predict and explain human behaviour in specific contexts, focuses on how people develop to become efficient and adaptable in various social settings (J. G. Kelly,1966). The theory explains the essential role of the environment and community in how people interact and relate to each other. Therefore, the intra- and interpersonal dimensions of the Neuro-Link EI Program can significantly contribute to the individual and reciprocal behaviours between individuals, groups, and communities. Because of this interrelationship, one individual's use of such skills can positively impact the entire social environment. Incorporating EI skills and expertise resources can connect community individuals and institutions that provide such skills for the whole community's benefit. It can enhance the change and development of an entire community, especially younger generations. This study examined the impact of EI skills acquired by participants in this study from the Neuro-Link Training Program against the principles and framework of Kelly's Ecological Theory in different contexts.

4.4   Proposed Outcomes Explored

Based on the research question of this study, objectives serve as a basis for outcomes from which specific themes became apparent. Results of individual interviews provided outcomes that formed a framework to build the analysis of the study. The aim was to analyse the study participants' experiences of the Neuro-Link EI Program, possible changes they have made in their daily behaviour due to learnt skills from the program, and how they apply them in the different contexts outlined in this study's Four-Dimensional Context Model. Aspects of explored experiences focused on how participants develop and integrate those EI skills in their lives and society.

As an educator and counsellor, I often deal with confused, overworked, overwhelmed, and demotivated individuals who generally do not understand or know the reasons for their negative experiences and feelings. My previous study (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018) proved that EI training positively impacts individuals in the workplace and their personal lives. It, therefore, emphasises the need for EI training. Conducting this study can not only clarify the role that the acquisition of EI skills plays in helping individuals to lead meaningful lives, manage stress effectively and improve their happiness and well-being in their personal lives but also especially the role that these individuals play in their communities and the impact that their skills have on society in general. Therefore, one cannot underestimate the importance of this investigation as it yields information that leads individuals to solution-based outcomes that can empower themselves and everyone in all the contexts of their environment.

4.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the qualitative research methodology of this study, designed to be able to fulfil the purposes of this study. Furthermore, I presented a brief outline of the Neuro-Link EI Training Program's curriculum because all my participants had completed this program. I also indicated how EI applies to theories and approaches.

An interpretive research paradigm helped me direct my research and learn more

about the topic under scrutiny. A qualitative research method allowed me to investigate, comprehend, and narrate the study participants' experiences. The discussion covered participant sampling, data gathering procedures and methods, and data selection and analysis. With a non-probability (non-random) sampling technique, those who met the required research criteria and were accessible and choosing to engage could participate. The interview-leading data gathering method suited this study with the grand tour enquiring style using open-ended but specific questions. Based on suggested outcomes, interviews initially started with some predetermined non-intrusive questioning followed by comprehensive, partially structured fundamental questions to guide but not force the interviewing process.

I was interested in finding out whether or not participants share similar views of their experience of applied learnt EI skills. Thematic analysis of collected data was the most appropriate technique. Applying a triangulation data collection technique and maintaining a high ethical and moral conduct level have increased the reliability and credibility of conclusions drawn from analysed data.

The complexity of human development and human interaction in the social context is an inexhaustible area for inquiry, research and discovery. That consequently launches interest in and discovery of psychological functioning domains, such as the contextualisation of EI, which were previously relatively unknown to researchers (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018). Therefore, a qualitative study on proficient Neuro-Link EI individuals focussed on how they contextually apply EI skills.

CHAPTER 5

Applying Emotional Intelligence Across Contexts – Interviews Discussion

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the method I followed to collect data and a concise explanation of the Neuro-Link EI Program for background purposes to the reader. This chapter will present the data from the ethnographic interviews I conducted. Gatekeepers at Neuro-Link contacted potential participants who qualified according to the required criteria to participate in the study. The nature of the study required that all participants had already completed the Neuro-Link EI training course and had to apply acquired skills actively. Therefore, I consider the participants as experienced in EI knowledge and applying EI skills. Individuals willing to participate in the study contacted me, after which the interview process proceeded.

A diverse group of six individuals participated in the study, and since participants live geographically spread, I conducted interviews via Zoom internet video calls. The participants consisted of three males and three females: four South Africans, one from Nigeria and the other from the Netherlands. Four participants live in South Africa, and two in Europe. Participants, consequently, represent different nationalities, genders, races, and cultural backgrounds. Two participants, particularly, travel regularly to visit various countries around the globe for training purposes, and all six participants work with culturally diverse audiences daily. Next, I share information from the participants' lived experiences and their understanding of applying EI skills in different contexts (see 2.5 for this study's Four-Dimensional Context Model).

To protect the anonymity and privacy of my participants, as explained to them (Appendix C), I assigned a pseudonym to each one and referred to them as indicated in Table 5.1. Four participants are Afrikaans-speaking, and although we sometimes spoke English during interviews, large parts were Afrikaans. I translated all interviews and quotes into English as accurately as possible to avoid losing the true meaning.

5.2   Grand Tour Questions

As explained in section 4.2.3.2, I used the "grand tour" questioning technique (J. Spradley, 2003, pp. 44-53), using questions broadly outlined in Appendix E to guide interviews. Although I allowed my participants to freely share their thoughts about applying EI skills, I tried to steer the conversation within the contextual framework so that it did not stray from the purpose and theme of the study. In summary, the "grand tour" questions were as follows:

1. Participants had to provide some biographical background, including personal and professional information, how they became involved with Neuro-Link, particularly the EI program, and how they are currently involved and in what capacity.
2. A general discussion on their personal experience of the various aspects of the EI program followed.
3. The discussions then focused on the application of EI skills, where the Four-Dimensional Context Model served as a guideline:
    *   Life phase context: Their personal development, including past experiences, current perspectives, and future expectations.
    *   Association Context: Whom they associate with, that is, family members, peers, groups, and those with whom they have a relationship.
    *   Localization context: Where they associate with others; recreational, educational, or occupational environments.
    *   Methodical Context: That includes personal and technology-mediated communication methods.

5.3   The Participants

Some of the participants I met for the first time during these interviews, and some are colleagues I have known since I started my journey at Neuro-Link. Another was a participant during my previous Master's degree research study, and we had the opportunity to continue our discussion by extending it to the current research topic. In what follows, I present each participant's journey separately, as they are all independent professionals in their respective capacities. In Table 5.1, I give a brief overview of the six participants of this study.

Table 5.1

Study Participants

Participant	Gender	Nationality	Residence
Participant 1: "Kelsey"	Female	Dutch	Europe
Participant 2: "AJ"	Male	South African	South Africa
Participant 3: "Aston"	Male	South African	South Africa
Participant 4: "Tony"	Male	South African	South Africa
Participant 5: "Olivia"	Female	Nigerian	Europe
Participant 6: "Edith"	Female	South African	South Africa

5.3.1 Participant 1 – "Kelsey"

5.3.1.1 Professional Background

Kelsey is a female professional coach, trainer, and counsellor from the Netherlands. She owns her own company and is a partner in a systemic neuroscience consulting group that trains people in EI agility.

5.3.1.2 Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program

Kelsey has undergone training in the Neuro-link EI Program and now shares it professionally with others. As a coach and counsellor, she believes you must always work on yourself. She understood herself well before the training, but not from a brain-based perspective as the program teaches. This knowledge changed something in her perception of understanding herself and others. Applying this insight produced different results. Her self-judgment decreased enormously, but how she sees herself and her abilities improved because she now understands how to "control her brain", as she explains. Knowing how her senses interact with the brain was also a vital aspect she learnt.

She explains how her ability to influence others has also changed positively through her improved social awareness and social skills because "we all have a brain", she says. Self-awareness and conflict resolution are the most significant benefits of her daily EI application. To try and find the middle ground in communication because

you understand yourself and others is the critical factor in conflict resolution. The EI program taught her to have more patience with others, as she now understands better how people think, feel, or behave: To act out can be due to a stressed brain, and one should know that without taking personal offence.

5.3.1.3 Life Phase Context

Emotional self-awareness could have helped her understand that she was good enough as a child, reckons Kelsey; you are the way you are, and that is okay. Being an introvert, insecure and dependent on others as a child, not having the power to live your life the way you wanted, or the constant urge to fit in, was an obstacle for Kelsey. "I never fit in, and I still don't, but I'm good at it now because I'm the director of my own life, and as a child, I wasn't. Other people controlled me", she explains. She was able to sort this out when she got older, and EI skills played a big part in that. "Through EI skills, you gain purpose in the mission. You learn a lot about yourself by living life and doing courses like this." Being a counsellor also helped build her confidence, she thinks. It is not just EI but also how you look at life. "I don't look back. I do not link past experiences to my future experiences because what's done is done. And then you move on because past experiences are absolutely different from recent experiences and are no longer connected", she believes.

5.3.1.4 Association Context

After completing the EI training, Kelsey feels that her self-concept has changed because she is more aware of herself as an individual. She is more patient than before, "and if you feel your own up, you can be there for others". Kelsey is thus more understanding, especially with family. Although always being patient with clients, her attitude towards family has changed. Kelsey loves the brain-based EI, of which the focus on brain-based is the differentiator for her. She admits that the EI skills she learnt significantly affect how she communicates with and how she sees others. Kelsey does not see her family much but applies EI skills when connecting with family members and siblings and in the manner she reacts to them. Kelsey does not have any children, nor does she work with children. "I always see myself as separate because I'm the only one who lives abroad. So, they are the group, and I'm there as well. But my relationships are good with my family." She tries to be with her

family as often as possible.

Knowledge of EI skills has given her more security in her peer group. "It helps you to stand on your own feet, to be safe in the world you live in", where she was not when she was little. It explains her motto in life: "You are the director of your own life, you can rewrite your script, and EI helps with that". The type and nature of each relationship, individual differences, the orientations each member nurtures about the relationship, and the history of the ties determine the application of EI skills when you associate with friends, family, or colleagues, she says. Skills do not change, she emphasizes, "but you use them differently, or maybe you'd use different EI skills. You apply what's needed because every situation requires another approach", albeit it depends on the environment and company.

5.3.1.5   Localization Context

Kelsey's behaviour varies with the situation's character as she is different when she delegates as a coach and assigns tasks to employees than when she goes swimming with a friend. However, EI skills do not change for her. You adapt to the circumstance and the other person. When delegating tasks, she uses her EI skills with the neuro aspects in mind, but when she swims with team members, she can leave out the delegating part but still interact with others to build a relationship.

She believes you are who you are, and that does not change. Everyone should do EI training for the confidence it brings, to better realize what they want, and for the communication and conflict resolution skills they develop. She proclaims that accepting the person in front of you is the most important thing for the world we live in now. "There's so much judgment, and when understanding comes in, judgment leaves the room." Although people think they can control others, they cannot. You can influence but not control, she says. "If people understand and are comfortable with that, it fills their cup. You don't have to judge others when you have a full cup. You don't have to control them. You can patiently relax and see what happens."

In general, she believes having EI skills in the workplace is essential. Without it, it is a mess, especially in resolving conflicts with a difference of opinion and different

communication styles. When doing team training, she notices that understanding members' different communication styles makes all the difference to the team. She experiences that people suddenly understand and are no longer annoyed when she asks why, what, when, and how. There is an understanding of the need for precise information and instructions to know what to do. The focus changes from yourself to the person you now understand better. Effective communication between people with entirely different points of view, personalities, and the like is vital in a workplace because if you must work together, you must be able to communicate well. For that, she emphasises, you need EI skills; to understand each other.

5.3.1.6   Methodical Context

Face-to-face interaction, of course, always beats the virtual method of interacting, she believes. Virtual-mediated communication lets us see and hear each other, which is essential, but we cannot smell or touch each other. "To counsel virtually is as effective as in a group context, but it's nicer when I'm next to the person", Kelsey says. Therefore, she thinks that you tune in more effectively with face-to-face dialogues. Although it takes much effort, Kelsey thinks you can achieve more. However, because she was already used to the virtual method, nothing much changed for Kelsey during the lockdown period as she functions very well independently, so she did not care much.

5.3.1.7   Summarizing Kelsey's Experience

What stands out about applying EI skills in different contexts will always be that the EI program is brain-based, which, for Kelsey, is vital. "Yeah, knowing and being aware of your own wiring and knowing it's not judgment, you know it is what it is. Of course, we can develop." For her, that is the most crucial point of all EI skills.

The Association Context stands out for her. "Because in the Association Context, you are the way you are, who you are, wherever you are." Some people say she is different when she is not at work. However, she believes you are the same person; you only behave differently, which is something else because you adjust to the situation you are in, she concludes.

5.3.2   Participant 2 – "AJ"

5.3.2.1   Professional Background

AJ is a young South African man. He recently became a father, and for the past eight years, he has been the marketing manager at a company that focuses on uplifting and empowering people by offering, among other things, EI training. He actively lives the company's values and takes their tools and assessment products to market.

5.3.2.2   Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program

The value of the EI program, for AJ personally, was significant to understand himself first because, as he explains: "I can't give to others what I don't have". The module on how to find your purpose was fundamental for him. In this module, you first get to know yourself very well, then live it out to family and friends in your immediate circles so that you focus not only on yourself but also on the people you encounter, and then, find the balance between the two, he explains. That is, not giving too much of yourself, but not too little. AJ says he can be very rigid, but the EI program helped him to notice that it is not the one or the other but rather the one and the other. It would be best to focus on intra- and interpersonal aspects, where he must constantly work. What does not come naturally to him is sharing personal matters with many people. Although he is very social, it is easier for him to keep private matters to himself. He explains that EI is especially valuable regarding his self-awareness and establishing where he fits into the broader scope of society. "You must, therefore, constantly work in an emotionally intelligent manner to keep it at a level where you do not become rigid in just one or the other, but a combination of the two", he says.

5.3.2.3   Life Phase Context

AJ explains that he and his siblings were fortunate to grow up in a home exposed to EI, and he wants to apply those values to his son's rearing. He and his wife want to give him the freedom to discover his identity in the best conceivable way, as he had the privilege of doing while growing up. There was never the suppression of "you may not, should not, will not, cannot". He and his siblings were allowed the space to explore; that is the same point of departure to apply with his child and the values that

he believes every household should have. The prerequisite for any parent is to take EI seriously and use it in their children's lives. He thinks teaching them these skills and how to apply them from an early age is vital.

As he developed, EI carried over from AJ's childhood to where he is today. His view is that it gives you the edge when it comes to your interaction with different people. The world is full of people you deal with constantly, a society with whom EI skills make you more comfortable to have good relationships; EI is thus much better for your relationships in general, he claims. "Yes, it started in our parent's home who applied EI daily. As children, we were aware of and familiar with EI. So, I can say my whole life has been a preparation for the work I do today." As he developed skills, it became easier to adapt, says AJ. It allowed him to work with and talk to anyone comfortably today. He does presentations in front of many people he never thought was possible, and he enjoys it.

5.3.2.4   Association Context

In his interaction with people, AJ was somewhat withdrawn, not sharing anything with strangers or people in whose company he did not feel comfortable. It was a journey he had to take. He uses the example of his marriage, where he had to learn to open up more about his thoughts and feelings, which contributed tremendously to his relationship. AJ tends to overthink things and quickly gets stuck in his thoughts. Acquired EI capabilities, however, assist him in bouncing ideas with people, especially in his close trust circle and during significant decision-making. He discusses it with them first, which was not the case before. "The EI program, thus, helped me to identify who my trusted core group is and who is outside that circle. And then who are just associates or peers, someone I won't necessarily share my deepest thoughts with." He can now set boundaries and identify with whom he can talk about serious things without sharing everything.

"The skills I learnt from the EI program had been important in identifying whom I wanted in which circle. That means I can trust my intimate group of people within my trust circle with my deepest thoughts." Close friends and family are just outside the trust circle, and further are acquaintances in the broader sphere, he explains.

Although brought up with a good example, AJ admits that his EI skills were initially low. Being a rigid and direct person who does not necessarily say what he thinks, the concept of humanity has never been that important to him. The EI program made him aware of that, to apply it professionally and in the close family dynamic. He now takes a step back and approaches situations or the subject matter more humanely.

"Not that I was inhuman, but the EI program made me aware that there are different ways of thinking and behaving." His starting point is always considering intra- and interpersonal aspects, which significantly contribute to his professional life. He works with people daily, and his EI skills allow him to think and act more humanely. "You must be able to convey a message firmly without hurting feelings or letting it come across as if you are attacking or criticizing the other." Being withdrawn, AJ hesitated to engage with new people and expand his network. "I had my pals and didn't try to make new friends." Due to the nature of his profession, he works with many people. When doing the EI program, you realize how much you restricted yourself from the world, and it has undoubtedly made him more open to allowing people into his social circles. "It's good for my relationships; it's good for my professional life, and equally so for my personal life. I've benefited tremendously from it", he testifies.

Regarding the initial development of social patterns in children, AJ explains how they will implement and incorporate the EI knowledge he has gained in his child's life. He and his wife feel strongly that their son needs to socialize regardless of culture. They are very inclusive in their approach. Now eight months old, his son is exceptionally social and comfortable with anyone. AJ believes they should not withhold him from people in an attempt to protect him. "For me, it was a tough adjustment because sometimes you get a stranger who asks to hold your baby, and my initial response is: 'No, this is my child; I don't know you!'" However, they decided to share their child with love, within limits, with anyone they feel comfortable with, and in a safe situation. Since birth, they have encouraged him to go to people, an engagement they will motivate throughout his development. "We believe in high love, high discipline", AJ states. "To create a solid identity is the great value they can teach him while still being small. And this is what makes the EI program so important once again: know your identity, know who you are as a person!"

5.3.2.5 Localization Context

The family is the primary starting point for applying EI, and then it spreads further. Occupation-wise, EI will always be there because it is the core of their work, AJ says. Company policy is that you practice what you preach. To live these values and apply them at home daily can pull the golden thread through to the occupational and social settings. "It is not just a one-and-done thing. We exercise EI every day from the morning you wake up until you go back to sleep at night." It is a lifestyle, something you cultivate, and when that change happens, it makes a world of difference because you make life easier for yourself and the people around you, he says.

From the nature of his work, AJ often finds that course participants are not as emotionally intelligent as they perceive themselves to be, especially when considering their 360-degree EI assessment results. They noticed diverse phenomena: Trainees are super emotionally intelligent and capable of sorting out problems, or entirely the opposite. People are either very rigid or too flexible, and the idea is to find the middle ground: someone with authority that also considers human emotion. He seldom finds that people can balance this comfortably. This is an exciting place to start because the roles mediators or instructors play are essential, if not the most important, because they are the ones that need to implement strategies in a company, explains AJ. "We can make suggestions, but they are the ones who should implement and drive it." He believes those who lead, create and shape the EI culture.

He further emphasises the need for teammates/employees to understand each other and know how and where they fit into the company's bigger picture. Since all are working towards the same goals, each still has a different approach with which they contribute, and everyone must understand that. It highlights the importance that management understands the value of each individual in their team and how to get them to function as productively and effectively as possible. It is then the responsibility of management to lead teams in such a way that everyone understands the uniqueness of each member and how each one works individually. Still, it is essential to work together towards a common goal. "I think that's where EI plays a huge role, knowing that someone who's probably going to have a different approach,

who's not like me or doesn't think like me, will need the space to be and do just that."

"But that is what is good about EI", says AJ. It is not only appropriate for when you are at work. "It is a lifestyle. You live and carry this stuff from your work to your child's education." So, it should be a prerequisite for each individual, he believes. AJ explains how the education system restricts teachers at educational institutions, necessitating parents' contribution. "The sooner you can give younger people and children the exposure and alert parents and teachers to EI for the home and classroom, the better", he claims. Since he works at schools regularly, he became aware that not only teachers should understand this. Schools usually organize a parent's evening when AJ visits to create EI awareness and stresses the importance of applying EI from home. When this takes hold with parents, they support the teachers in that children can apply EI skills they learn at home in school and then one day take it further into their adult lives.

5.3.2.6   Methodical Context

Regarding the application of EI skills in the method of interaction, AJ reckons that today's virtual space has made it more complex compared to where we were before: "You now have to be much more aware of how you use your tone of voice and your facial expression, and how you carry yourself, I almost want to say, in a digital way", he says. Most of the time, you talk to a blank screen in front of you to someone you cannot necessarily see on the other end. It certainly influences how you carry yourself and convey the message. He prefers face-to-face interaction as it is easier to determine how interested someone is in the conversation. He thinks our digital shift requires us to focus on how we convey a message without relying on body language. In response to how his EI skills help him with this, he testified that it took quite an adjustment to know how to act effectively in a digital world. "I had to change my tone of voice because people can hear when you're smiling when talking to them, which is rather weird." He emphasizes the extreme importance of how you convey your message to communicate so that you do not lose your audience. In other words, to meet them where they are and, thus, talk to them on a level they understand.

5.3.2.7   Summarizing AJ's Experience

Although AJ considers all contexts necessary, he chooses the Association Context because it resonates with him more personally. He works with his family, which is where his comfort zone is. He concludes by mentioning that he thinks EI is one of the most underrepresented skills and that the problem is ignorance. People do not know about or have heard of EI; if they do, they do not have the skills or knowledge to apply it. He mentions that people should not just talk about it or implement it from 9-5 only. It is something you should use daily. He claims it is a way of life, where it starts for him and ends: a full circle from start to finish.

5.3.3   Participant 3 – "Aston"

5.3.3.1   Professional Background

Aston is an experienced South African PhD graduate, educator, and lecturer specializing as a professional workplace learning consultant in the neuroscience of learning. He primarily identifies and addresses clients' needs by promoting learning performance optimization. He is further a keynote speaker, author, and father and has travelled extensively to expand, among other things, EI training across the world.

5.3.3.2   Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program

As a workplace learning consultant promoting learning performance optimization, Aston predominantly focuses on identifying the needs his clients experience, whether it is accidents in the workplace, absenteeism, conflict between staff members, team development or leadership problems. "Every business has different needs, so I look for solutions." Regarding EI, among other things, he states that he learnt a lot from the work of Daniel Goleman and Reuven Bar-On. He believes in the concept and therefore evaluates and trains people in EI skills using the Neuro-Link EI Training Program, which is practical and appropriate for the requirement of his clients and their development needs. In his opinion, there are probably hundreds of different emotional intelligence skills. Some of them are of more primary importance than others, but he regards it essential that anyone, from the highly literate to the blue-collar guys like miners, understands what EI is. When presenting training in EI, he says people are not interested in detailed abstract theoretical academic information.

They want workable concrete methods they can use to address their problems. The concrete framework of the Neuro-Link EI Model includes concepts such as brain-based learning and teaching and cognitive flexibility. It makes sense even to the guy with no developmental background but who experiences specific problems. Through EI training, people can effectively solve such problems in relationships, leadership, or personal issues. He found it essential to present content in simple language and concepts that make practical sense and remain interesting for trainees, something they can understand when they do not necessarily have an academic or theoretical background.

"This is my opinion, and I learnt it from William Smith: If you can explain something to an undereducated person in a certain area and he understands it, then you know you understand your field." He explains that the concept must be based on theory and research but must still be "human-friendly" and "brain-friendly" so that the ordinary person can access, understand, and apply it. From his religious conviction, Aston believes that EI is nothing new. He refers to the "love your neighbour as yourself" commandment in the Bible, which consist of "you" and "other", the two legs of intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities, which EI fundamentally stands on – established long ago. "In that lies the key for you to reach eternity, to become more of Jesus in you, and less of yourself." He bought strongly into EI because it resonates with his faith and philosophy of life. "When you believe it, you'll do and apply it, and that's why I apply it", he testifies.

5.3.3.3 Life Phase Context

By maintaining the foundation of spiritual, biblical principles, "you must love your neighbour as yourself", and believing that all the skills that EI include manifest through this, they as a family have consequently obtained a different result than what he and his wife had as children, Aston believes. Likewise, as a person, in his marriage, as a father, and in his profession, he says you need to be emotionally intelligent if you want to be a good leader. Otherwise, you are just a leader in name and not in deed. EI is the fundamental framework for what it requires of you as a leader. For him, it goes back to faith for sure. "God teaches us to love people as we love ourselves, and the secular name for it is 'emotional intelligence'", he says.

128

Aston's father was a railway worker, and his mother was a housewife. Aston and his siblings did not grow up in a home where EI was taught pertinently to them. He, therefore, understands how challenging and complex life and relationships can be when there is no EI. That is why it resonated with his heart so much. "When I started learning about this stuff, I changed a lot because I realized there are much better ways of doing things than I was used to, and when you do things differently, you'll get different results." In his life, he gets different results than the ones he had. Aston believes that knowing EI has freed him personally to maintain healthier relationships with people, be mentally healthier, develop better self-esteem, and believe in himself more. It further helped him as a man, as a father and as the leader of an organization. He claims this is long-term learning, investigating the process of improving, which means you must constantly develop. "It is a lifelong journey that prepares us to improve, and I believe EI is the framework for improving throughout your life. Something you must apply sustainably."

Aston says that EI develops within you; when it does, you apply it to anyone and express it within every context you find yourself. It starts with how you perceive yourself and how it has changed for you. Self-awareness helped him understand his worth and talents and build self-confidence that enabled him to understand what he had to offer the world, a revelation of his creative purpose and reason for existence. As a result, it has allowed him to become the person he needs to be instead of whom others want him to be. "The impact it had on me is that I am now extremely comfortable with myself and very content to be who I am, regardless of what other people think." Manipulative or domineering people's opinions do not bother him. In other words: "I like to listen to constructive advice from others, but when they make short-sighted assumptions, I don't mind them at all".

5.3.3.4   Association Context

By becoming emotionally intelligent, those lacking these skills may notice a change in you, but they do not understand it. Misinterpreting it in their context of envy and a lack of knowledge, they think you think you are better than them because you do or see things differently. "However, that is their problem, not mine", Aston says. "If I've

changed and you can't understand it, that's not my problem." However, this often creates a problem in his work. People sometimes do not want to understand and accept that the EI they will learn will benefit them. Emotionally unintelligent people see a simple thing like kindness as a weakness, and this manifests quite frequently in the corporate world, he says. Striving to be emotionally intelligent takes enormous effort to stay on course in a kind manner and not fall back into familiar habits just because others do not understand. That is why self-regulation is the second aspect of the first leg of EI, Aston explains. "One can no longer live your life subject to other people's opinions, will, or whatever? You must be able to manage what you understand about yourself. Very few people, in my opinion, are truly emotionally intelligent", is his experience. Firstly, they cannot tell who they are due to ego and insecurities. Secondly, they cannot necessarily take and maintain control over what they know is right despite the reactions they get from others in their world. "If it were easy, everyone would be emotionally intelligent, but in my opinion, that is rare among humanity", he states.

Claiming to be emotionally intelligent should manifest in one's life, for example, in your relationships with your staff, family, and the like. He claims that reading an EI book does not make you emotionally intelligent if you do not apply what you have read. What good is it if you know the stuff but do not apply it or become anything of what you know? Does this mean you refuse to buy into EI and dedicate yourself to the cause of continuously trying to improve? That emphasizes again that EI is a journey, he says. "EI is not a course, it's not a book, it's a lifelong continuous journey, and I believe lifelong learning is the only way to survive in this turbulent world." Aston says the underlying foundation for lifelong learning is an emotionally intelligent person who keeps an open mind to learning about oneself, from experience and others. If kindness, for example, is perceived by others as a weakness, staying kind is not easy. Real emotionally intelligent people keep pushing forward to what they know is right despite what others think or do, or even when they criticise you, explains Aston.

Therefore, people who work and live with you benefit from your skills if you are emotionally intelligent, but you get much criticism from people who have not learnt those skills. It reminds him of the old boys' club, which holds the "we are the norm"

attitude. The norm, then, is uninformed, he says. "I'm not even going to try to explain to them why I do things differently because even if I explain, the chances are high that they won't adapt." He believes the focus should be on being an example to others because setting the standard is the best way to positively impact the world and enable imitative learning. Those who want to change will choose to walk with you.

He links this to the "love your neighbour as you love yourself" principle. You must love yourself first because you cannot give what you do not have. You have to be able to internalize the concept of love before you can apply it to others. You cannot change other people, but you can change yourself, and when you change yourself, it is hopefully inspiring enough that others want to do the same. He says that by the example we set, we can change people if they are open to it. Aston uses trust and respect as examples: Trust is not something you receive but earn – to be a reliable person who can trust himself and understand that you naturally become reliable for others. If you do not internalize self-respect, you cannot treat others respectfully. "That is why I say it is a constant journey."

You can easily pretend to have EI until you get into difficult circumstances or face a problem; that is when genuine skills surface. Aston explains how he has been on the EI life journey for a few decades now and experiences it as fun. He enjoys talking about it and training people, but when things go wrong in his relationship with his wife or children, it matters how he deals with it. Despite his feelings, Aston can see the results if he constructively applies the EI he preaches. It requires discipline, a tremendous amount of work and self-change, as it is a powerful skill you need to develop. "This, I think, is the big challenge because doing the same things will give you the same results, but if you want a different result, you need to change what you do, which is what EI actually is." He believes it is a solution for the individual, a framework for a person to become an even better version of themselves.

5.3.3.5   Localization Context

In his opinion of how this plays out culturally, Aston explains that he thinks all cultures are emotionally unintelligent. Culture takes years to establish, even centuries. EI first came to the fore in the late nineties of the previous century. Although there were

principles of belief from which we could learn about EI throughout the ages, it is not so prevalently visible. You need to know and apply these things, he says. Being a frequent traveller, he meets different people of various cultures. Certain cultures perhaps have a better understanding of the value of EI, he says. "But to be brutally honest, although some cultures actively promote something like humanity, there is not much social awareness, empathy, effective communication, conflict management or necessarily functional team synergy visible among their people", he shares. To talk about a concept, humanity, for instance, although it appears to be very noble, if nobly applied as it claims to be, the results would have been much different, more emotionally intelligent. That does not only imply cultures of people, he says, but also subcultures you find in businesses. For example, if a company's culture is "work comes first", it may be task and money oriented only. "Although people go on EI courses, they don't apply any of the principles to change the company's culture; the money, winning, or results culture will still apply just as prominently", Aston states.

It takes time to change a culture, especially for the few people who teach EI. Whether considering micro-cultures or worldly cultures, he thinks many cultures have been born and raised emotionally unintelligently. As a guest speaker and presenter in about 54 countries on every continent thus far, he has had pleasant experiences, even constructive one-on-one experiences with specific individuals in many countries. However, he has never experienced that one culture anywhere in the world is more emotionally intelligent than another. He believes that even if we "talk" it, we do not "walk" (practice) it. Because behaviour is such a difficult thing to change, it is a lifelong journey that you must commit to, which people, in general, are unwilling to do or even find necessary. "It's too damn hard, and that's why they don't do it", he says. "I'm not convinced I've seen any culture effectively applying EI." He uses the example of highly productive cultures with a firm inherent respectful appearance, although they generally show respect to other cultures very selectively. Their productivity makes them very task-oriented but not people-oriented, leaving one wondering how emotionally intelligent they are then. "Not really. It's all just conditioned behaviour that has been born from culture, but it's not anchored into EI", he remarked.

5.3.3.6 Methodical Context

Since we communicate with a much larger and broader audience in several ways, Aston thinks one of the advantages of a globalized world is that diverse cultures can share more and influence each other. There are ways to write an emotionally intelligent e-mail and act emotionally intelligent digitally or not. Even though everything is digital, people are still talking to each other, and if you use it correctly, you can influence people positively. "Unfortunately, if you look at Facebook and TikTok and these kinds of platforms, you can see how wrong children and emotionally unintelligent people with a lack of skills behave and how much damage they can do." We can use the media well in promoting EI. Still, it would help if you were willing to do it and think about how; that is the challenge. It is the only way we will manage to bring about change. "There are too few people who understand what EI is about, and then there are even fewer who want to apply it." The reason is that you have to do things differently, which will evoke criticism from the uninformed, so he says you have to be strong and do the right things regardless of what the uninformed think. EI should still be the source, the foundation, the energy, or the driver of how we interact with one another. That is how we influence people, and technology can enhance that. By using technology, we can extend EI worldwide when we use it smartly, he explains. "I don't think many people think about EI when they hold digital meetings, write e-mails, are involved in social media communication, or train their staff to apply digital etiquette. Because people are unaware." Aston thinks one of our biggest challenges is guiding people from being unconsciously incompetent to become consciously competent. If people do not know what EI is, they will not know why they need it. In other words, we must guide them through a process: from unconsciously incompetent to consciously incompetent (informing), to consciously competent (EI training), and unconsciously competent (mastering), and that takes time. However, if no one else or we do not do it, the world will give the same results as it currently does. "I think now is a critical time where we have to start thinking how we can 'technologize' EI", he reckons. It can be a pioneering study, he suggests. Aston thinks the time has come for the world to understand that we still need to humanise technology to make it human-friendly. Therefore, we are using technology and should always do it responsibly and in an EI manner. As technology

evolves, it is becoming a more prominent tool for the future. EI must fit into that new lifestyle, and we should apply it accordingly.

A high percentage of people who get fired from their first jobs have bad attitudes, claims Aston. EI increases positive work attitudes. "That explains why the human development organizations such as the World Economic Forum and The Association for Talent Development emphasize the importance of EI skills", he says. Aston explained that these types of organizations categorize the future top human skills as follows: 1) Brainpower skills consisting of cognitive flexibility, problem-solving, critically analytical, and innovative creative thinking; and 2) The other big category remains EI, explains Aston. Everyone focuses so much on technology, but there is still insufficient focus on humanity. You learn mathematics and the like at school, but where is coaching and guidance, he asks? He uses Finland as an example, where there are two teachers per class: the one who teaches academic subjects and the pedagogue, the educator who takes care of the EI issues. What they do there does not happen in all countries. The human component does not feature in schools or businesses in our country because people do not get training in EI. Although we control technology, it poses many challenges. Brain ageing starts earlier due to the use of technology, but life expectancy has increased, he says. Gadgets like GPS or calculators give us information without requiring us to think, as long as we know how to use it. We, consequently, can no longer remember things like a 9-digit phone number. We are, thus, getting older but not using enough brain power anymore. Without developing brainpower and EI, he argues that we will have people in charge of technology who have no sense of humanity.

Human interaction deteriorates due to technology, Aston claims. "We had a rule in our house: 'When I look you in the eye, I don't want to see a phone in your hand'." The thought is: "I am more important than your phone when we converse". Children need to learn that people are more important than technology, but no one teaches them that. That is not because parents are bad people; they merely do not understand the value of EI. Consequently, people do not interact with others; when they do via technology, they behave in any manner that suits them, whether good or bad. "This is the limitation technology places on communication and why I say it is difficult to raise emotionally intelligent people in the digital age." If parents

predominantly use TV programs or digital games as an escape route to keep kids busy, what their children learn from them is not constructive. Parents who choose an emotionally intelligent child-rearing method must commit to wanting to do it.

Being a frequent traveller, Aston has seen how everything evolves around technology, especially in Eastern countries. Japanese, Chinese, and Korean people are incredibly effective and disciplined naturally, facets they most likely learnt from their culture, but EI does not feature at all, which these cultures do not understand. For example, he also noticed that the Russian or Hungarian languages do not even have a term for emotional intelligence. It explains the "unconscious incompetence" when he mentions EI, and people surprisingly ask what he is talking about and why it matters. It reflects a complete lack of understanding and awareness, he says. That is when you realize how much work it is to convince just one person firstly of the value thereof and why they need it. People should first be aware of what EI is to understand why it is vital to develop these skills. It is an enormous task to get our world more emotionally intelligent. Although he thinks technology can be a great tool, there is currently a big competition as it takes our focus away from essential human skills. Ideally, we should have established EI a long time ago to rather walk hand-in-hand with technology, which is not currently happening.

5.3.3.7   Summarizing Aston's Experience

People, thus, need to buy into EI so that they want to develop it to benefit themselves, he emphasizes. The question remains: Who creates awareness of EI? People trained in it understand and appreciate it. However, EI is a relatively new concept that only started to take off in 1995/96. The world has only had a brief time to create awareness thus far, explaining why people involved with the human development industry have this critical task. He says it should start with people like politicians and those in leading roles. Teachers, for example, are in the human development industry. Aston spends much time at schools, working with learners and teachers, and realises how little they know about this. "It is such a huge job; we'll need a few million workers to sway the world. But we need to start the change we want to see." That is how the brain works: "I cannot change you, but I can change me, and when I change, I might be a better inspiration for others to want to

change".

Awareness is where it starts; otherwise, no one will even know about it. Being busy with an awareness process currently, Aston sees the benefit of digital platforms. He says you package the message you want to share and then get it out in the field. Aston reckons that only having it in an academic journal does not help. He frequently communicates with academics and finds that many do not know what EI is, "especially those outside the human sciences study field. Believe me, that is a mission field on its own". There is essential work ahead, says Aston, and when talking about EI and saying that one must live it, he remarks that it is Kingdom work without trying to evangelise people, which he regards as lovely.

5.3.4 Participant 4 – "Tony"

5.3.4.1 Professional Background

Specializing in people and performance optimization from a brain perspective, Tony, a South African male, obtained an MSc in Neurophysiology and Anatomy and will soon begin his doctoral studies in the same discipline. He is a manager at a company, a father, a brother, and a son.

5.3.4.2 Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program and Life Phase Context

"Since I was a little boy, discussions around the dinner table always used to be about the brain. I enjoyed it, which is why I decided to get involved with the brain-based Neuro-Link Program." Around grade one, the teachers at his school identified him as a child with learning difficulties. After IQ tests, of which the result is till this day still unknown to him, they decided to put him in a self-paced class as they thought he was too slow for the average class. Schoolwork that is more competence related, he found difficult. "My dad had the background and understanding of how the brain processes information, and my parents refused to put me in a special class in mainstream education. They insisted that the teachers help me with things I found difficult."

Gaining an understanding of how his brain processes information helped him to understand who he is and to manage himself and stressful situations. "Obviously, from being a 'special class candidate' to achieving three degrees, yeah, shows how understanding who you are from a brain perspective impacted me to becoming the person I know I can be." No "you're not good enough"-labels from psychometric tests or "you are unable"-lies have negatively influenced his perception of his potential, says Tony. "So, in a nutshell, that's me and the power of growing up with understanding the functioning of the brain and EI", Tony testifies.

With what he had to go through as a child, his parents supported him in an emotionally intelligent manner. They understood him, cared for him, and recognized and validated his emotions. Their application of EI skills had its first and most significant impact on his life. Then later, he completed the EI training program. Understanding what it is all about, and facilitating the program, allowed him to understand other people's behaviour. The greatest thing about this program is that it focuses on the brain and how it processes information, he says. From an emotionally intelligent perspective, you can use that information to understand how another person processes information in their specific way or style. He understands how to get the best out of this person, primarily through emotionally intelligent communication, conflict resolution and management. He can read when and how to approach someone and what he can or cannot say in a particular situation. This knowledge opened many doors in his communication with others. He explains that he tries to understand people before understanding the circumstance and to know them before listening to their situation. The first part of the EI program, understanding yourself, was the breakthrough, he says: to understand who you are and how you should reflect this in your behaviour. "This is why it is so important to first go through a specific process to understand myself, gain that accurate self-awareness, and manage myself optimally from there."

Tony says that being aware of your purpose, vision, mission, values, and morals and how it challenges you to stay on track and understand where you are and where you are going makes it easier for you in the social context. When working with people, he often finds that they are eager to advise others, thinking they are emotionally intelligent, only to discover that they do not understand themselves. They usually do

not know how to put themselves in another's shoes. Many people say it is common sense, but if it is, why do they not apply it when interacting with people daily? When going to the store and someone greets you negatively, for example, he says you should be able to put yourself in that person's shoes before getting angry. You should ask yourself: What could have happened to this person? Maybe they have had a difficult day or personal issues they carry into their work environment through unpleasant behaviour. That is empathy, EI in motion. Tony says we need to be aware of others and their circumstances without only looking at ourselves (I, me, and myself). We all interact with people daily, and even though it is not with clients or people you do not know, it is still with your loved ones at home.

5.3.4.3   Association Context

Tony says applying EI skills is vital in interacting with family and friends. He was pretty individualistic before he did the program and had to learn which skills to work on. "I did my own thing. I marched to my drum, and I still do, but now from an emotionally intelligent perspective." He uses EI in the family dynamic because you feel more comfortable among them, especially when communicating with family. "It works well to practice skills there. You can be a little more direct, and when conflict or problems during communication arise, this is where EI contributes a lot." It is not only your point of view that counts, but also theirs, and this creates more cooperation and constructive collaboration with the person you are communicating with, he believes. "I think EI creates the opportunity for people to talk to each other, hear each other's point of view and understand each other."

From his family perspective, Tony says his first son is nine months old, and they are already interacting with him in an emotionally intelligent manner rather than "I'm telling you how it's going to be". He realized that through crying, there is something this child is trying to communicate to them as that is his only way of communication. As parents, they try to find out what is bothering him and what their baby needs. "When I cry, how does my world respond to me? Will someone be there for me and help me?" Should you not interact with that child emotionally intelligently, he may experience feelings of rejection, says Tony. "From an EI perspective, I don't want my child ever to experience that rejection. I will be there for him every step of the way

and do everything I can." We are all human, and sometimes you miss some cues or get frustrated, but that is also okay, says Tony. The more you know what a child is trying to communicate, the better you can address their needs. "How often have I gotten frustrated when our little one cries because he cannot share with us, and you don't know why?" Realizing something must be wrong, you need to take a deep breath and think. Handling things without being emotionally intelligent can have detrimental consequences. You have to be aware all the time. He says relaxing and thinking about something allows it to make much more sense.

When he and his wife started dating, he had not focused much on EI skills. Tony explains that the EI program taught him how to listen effectively, not just to listen so that he can respond, but to listen to the other person's needs, reflect on the information he gained, and validate it in his response. This act makes his life easier. Especially in their marriage, it has become much easier for him to communicate with his wife because he applies the skills he has learnt. The better and deeper you understand EI, the more it helps you to know what you do wrong in every situation. You realize you should step back, refrain from "I want to tell you now" or "yes, but", and first listen effectively to the other person, explains Tony. That is when the words you use also start to change. "I always try to make sure I hear what my wife is saying and understand it correctly because then I can learn", he says. The more questions you ask, the better you get context. It is essential to realize that you should be aware of the skills and apply and use them. Otherwise, you will jump back to your old behaviour, claims Tony.

Tony agrees that EI is complex, broad, and integrated. He explains that the course gives you core information and guidelines, but you have to try and dig deeper into those skills and work on them continuously. "If I apply EI at home or work, I should also apply it with that woman at the store who was rude to me." You must be consistent and apply EI skills in all situations, not just some, as EI is not a one-time occurrence but a constant journey. Every day you need to choose to be emotionally intelligent with every interaction you have, even in an email, he says. It is also necessary that EI is a two-way street. People's understanding of emotion or what they seem to understand from EI is that they only need to control their emotions. It is much deeper than that. It is to understand yourself and others, their behaviours,

emotions, the consequences of certain words, and body language. When they do the emotional intelligence training, they will still need to buy into it. We get confronted with opportunities to improve ourselves through EI skills daily, but we do not necessarily choose to do so. We need to start with ourselves, explains Tony.

5.3.4.4   Localization Context

Tony believes mediators, people who do coaching, and those who want to make a difference in someone else's life must undoubtedly be EI-trained. Still, they must do it correctly. It cannot just be a quick thirty-minute video course after which you get a certificate and consider yourself emotionally intelligent. "As said before, EI is a journey, and it's a choice that you must constantly make every single day. The impact mediators have on others' lives is great." Comparing mediators without EI background with those who are EI skilled and experienced, the latter will be much more successful even with demanding clients because it is easier for them to adapt and be agile in the situation. EI inexperienced mediators may get emotionally confused by being either too involved or not at all and be unable to manage demanding clients objectively. Mediators should be the constant factor in cases where people must make big life decisions or when mediating those already in conflict. Tony emphasises that the mediator should take control of the emotions in the room, identify specific problem areas and address them, resolve conflict, listen effectively and communicate emotionally intelligently.

According to Tony, being emotionally intelligent is a huge responsibility; the more EI skills you learn, the greater your responsibility is towards yourself, your environment, and the people with whom you interact. The minor differences are what we want to celebrate in our country, but do we celebrate the differences, he asks? People usually communicate with those who think like them and complement them. You seldom associate with someone who thinks differently than you. Thus, we tend to celebrate similarities rather than differences. EI is to commemorate both similarities and differences, not just seeing life through my lenses, but to be able to see life through another's lens as well, says Tony. Emotionally intelligent people are more willing to listen to someone with a different opinion than their own. To try and be a critical thinker, solve problems, and make decisions, you need to risk taking offence

at times and understand another's truth, not just your own. Then see how we can collaborate because somewhere between those two truths lies thé truth. We need to see how close we can get to the truth because that would unleash more effective communication, more effective listening skills, and more collaboration, and that is where we then celebrate the similarities and differences between people rather than only the similarities, he believes. "I experience this first-hand when presenting the EI program, specifically the social awareness module. When looking at race, gender, and all those areas, we all have our ideas and opinions." He says it is essential to immediately break down walls in a safe environment where people can discuss their opinions without feeling judged. The actual work starts even before they say anything. We need to break down walls of prejudices before we can start addressing real issues. People might use specific generalized lenses to perceive the world and consequently make incorrect assumptions due to unpleasant experiences, but that does not mean those perceptions are correct. Biased assumptions may further re-enforce the negative perceptions one has created. We need to address the root of perceptions.

With its immense diversity, South Africa lies like a barren piece of land as far as the development of EI is concerned and is an excellent and ideal place to start. The progress in developing EI in the population is slow, Tony says. He found that the world is still mainly concentrating on skills and competencies: whether you can do the job. No one necessarily wants to pay attention to interaction. Therefore, they see considerable differences in how people work in teams when they do the EI training program. Overwhelming employees without attending to the human factor is not an EI-smart way of operating. He says you need to think critically about what you can do to improve it; people do not always want to take that step. Especially in job interviews, they focus too much on competencies. They do not necessarily create specific EI scenarios to determine how people will react or handle situations. Teaching empathy impacts people significantly during EI training when they learn to walk in their team members' or CEO's shoes. It encourages people to think further, even if it is not necessarily what they want to hear. He claims that EI forces you to listen to what you have to, not what you want. EI reveals the truth as it helps you to be brutally honest with yourself.

Tony mentions an example of a training group he had, operational managers from a large organization in South Africa. They were struggling with their performance due to failed interaction with staff members. Ineffective communication created an issue within the entire organization. Management treated people disrespectfully with the notion of: "My thank you is your salary at the end of the month"; thus, everyone did their own thing. That is not what a working environment should be like, he claims. Incorporating EI into the company, starting with management, is where things started to change because they began acknowledging each individual for who they are. Changing how you interact with a person peels away those layers, and people begin to understand each other, changing their attitude towards the entire company. Employees now know they get noticed, feel they belong, and their contributions are acknowledged; consequently, they started believing in the organization. That all contribute to each individual's purpose, values, and morals, affecting everyone else in the company. Tony explains that all modules in the EI program have a cascading effect on one another. Should you not adapt to specific skills, somewhere in future modules, it will have repercussions on how that affects other specific skills, the people around you, and your performance.

Operations managers are busy people. Before completing the program, some company's group members did not perform well. After the program, the worst performers increased their performance the most. "One person with the lowest performance increased by 34%. That made a massive difference because the entire team changed how they interact from an EI perspective." Tony explains how the team was more willing to help their leader and excelled because they felt more comfortable communicating without fearing rejection or judgement. They felt understood as management acknowledged team efforts. That contributed to their performance and the organization's well-being. "There was an overall 20% to 30% increase in job performance of the entire operations managers who have undergone training", he says.

Companies often focus more on their leaders and not all their staff but expect lower-level employees to do all the work, employees who do not necessarily get the opportunity to undergo EI training, says Tony. However, those who received EI training manage their meetings or engagements with their teams very well; they first

find out how their people are before sessions start. Even little things one does in the first five minutes can contribute much to the team's dynamic. Those who have not done EI training jump straight into work and pay little attention to their staff's well-being. That is when employees feel neglected and that nobody cares about them. They and even their leaders then struggle, especially when everyone is also working from home. In contrast, those who have had EI training manage their teams much better.

5.3.4.5   Methodical Context

Applying EI skills has a massive role in technology-mediated and face-to-face communication, reckons Tony. People comfortably interact in either of these ways lately. From personal experience, he thinks, "EI has taken some shots during the Covid pandemic. The virtual platforms have created a sort of escape for people who don't want to interact and harmed the social development part of EI". He noticed and now sees, especially since the Covid restrictions and lockdown, that those people who no longer had social interaction became stronger in themselves, but to the extreme, as they have retracted into seclusion. They experience difficulty returning to work and adapting to it with much resistance.

Tony says that people became more abrupt with one another. They do not necessarily want to connect with other individuals. It thus took away that interactive connection. The lockdown had a considerable influence on relationships, he says. When people have to return to the office where interaction and communication occur, they notice how some have changed. For the withdrawn person, the expressiveness of others annoys them, and they feel that they talk too much. The expressive person thinks they are the only ones working because no one else says anything, leaving them to do everything on their own all the time. So, people moved prominently towards those two poles. However, this is not ideal because Tony explains that people need to be as balanced and flexible as possible to adapt and be agile in the changing process they are going through.

There is a tendency for people to demand salary increases or insisting on not coming to work. Tony explains that we are now sitting with what they call "the great

resignation" lately. People change or jump from one job to another as if it is out of fashion because they only focus on what they want, not necessarily what suits the company. They expect to be paid and only care about their well-being without considering the company. However, it works in both directions. The company's mindset changes to: "We just want to care for you, but if you don't wanna be here, then leave". People then feel taken aback and wonder why that is. There is no collaborative interaction but an ultimatum, demand, or command, and when people get commanded, they do not have a choice. Tony thinks people must have a choice, but it must be mutually beneficial. "I don't like the word compromise because compromise gives us the idea that one person needs to give something up and the other would gain something." Collaboration is something different, he says. If we need to give something up, all of us should give it up or gain for the greater good, and it will not be a win-and-lose scenario.

Tony explains that he has seen EI take a bit of a dip due to people not interacting or connecting. Part of the EI process is knowing yourself and others to such an extent that you can regulate yourself and your emotions. Since they only needed to focus on themselves, they did not necessarily look at other people and their perspectives. He experienced that video calls make it easier for those who work from home, and what people have started doing is sitting in corporate meetings with their screens turned off. People will often connect on their phones, but they are actually on the road, listening to the discussion on their headphones, but there is no evidence that they are actively attending. He says you cannot read their body language or see the emotions on their faces if they are excited or think something will not work. You do not have those non-verbal cues to guide you as in face-to-face interaction. Even if it is not your strong point, looking at someone's physical behaviour gives you many clues about what you can or cannot say in a specific situation. You can see from someone's physical behaviour whether they are open to listening.

Technology-mediated communication thus plays a huge role in applying EI skills, says Tony, and now is an excellent opportunity for people to realize that EI is something we need. Virtual communication makes it easier because you can communicate geographically broader, but it is also unfavourable because people are not together. He has business partners in Europe he meets with regularly, some of

144

them never even met each other, but they always keep their videos on during meetings. "We understand each other. But I can assure you, it will be a different type of interaction when we meet in person", he says.

Even when authoring emails, you need to consider the use of EI skills, Tony explains. He says that your introduction to the email makes a huge difference in how a person interprets it and ultimately determines their willingness to help you. People interpret others' approaches differently; therefore, your approach and attitude explain a lot of your message and acknowledgement of them as a person. If you are uptight, people may feel you do not care about them. Some may not have an issue or take offence if you email them briefly, such as: "Hi, Frank, please send me this report. Regards, Tony". However, if you have someone that processes information from an emotional point of view, a little notion of "How are you doing? Are you okay? How are things with the kids?" can significantly affect how this person will approach the specific request in the email. So technology-mediated communication, thus, has a significant influence, he says. "I almost want to say it's saving on the pocket but taxing on the heart."

5.3.4.6   Summarizing Tony's Experience

If he had to choose the context he regards as most significant, it would be the Association Context. According to his quite strongly receptive profile, the most considerable influence of the EI course in his life was learning to have more courage. "To know that people don't judge me when talking to someone or conveying my opinion in an emotionally intelligent way, even if I differ from another, has made my life significantly easier, and has now extended to my work", he admits. Teaching people how to apply emotionally intelligent skills in life or the workplace is now easier. Tony now knows what comes first and what follows, explaining that this is where the EI framework is so important. "So instead of doing things slower and harder, you might as well do them faster and easier." EI allows you to learn who you are, understand yourself accurately, and then look at others and see how you can contribute to their lives. He explains that the personal understanding part has the most significant influence in managing yourself in social settings when applying EI skills during interactions. He expressed it as follows: "EI training significantly

145

impacted my life, starting with myself, whereafter, it automatically spilt over into every facet of my life. It affects interacting with others, whether at work training people or at home taking care of my family. It especially has value when I converse with people who think completely differently from me or oppose me when I apply these skills most, as it assists me in knowing how to deal with challenging scenarios without feeling nervous or bad. I know who I am precisely, and I'm okay with myself. And if I'm okay with me, so are other people".

A positive attitude and openness to learning from someone else challenge Tony. He enjoys breaking down others' defences so they are willing to listen and be challenged. People do not realize how much EI influences the workplace and personal lives. He wishes everyone could get a taste of what it has to offer, how it can open doors and how they can get the best out of another person when they understand themselves and others. Some people find EI training boring, but he says it is usually the same person who has trouble working with others. The reality they do not realize is that their actions cause concern. "People think emotional intelligence is common sense. But if it was common sense, why don't they apply it? Or, if you know it, why aren't you better?" he asks. People have become lazy. They think they only need to understand the concept of EI. However, it is a daily practice. You have to look at past and present experiences and predict how to deal with future circumstances in an EI manner.

5.3.5   Participant 5 – "Olivia"

5.3.5.1   Professional Background

Olivia is a British-born Nigerian female language teacher, personal transformation coach, and supervisor who trains the teachers of business professionals at a private college. She studied at a university in Germany and currently lives in Luxembourg. Olivia can work well with people, whether male, female or whatever background they are. "It is the best experience for me. If somebody had asked me if this was EI, I would've said no, I'm just good with people." Olivia speaks at least six languages, and human behaviour fascinates her. "I have this feeling to really just observe people being themselves, observing their behaviour, the non-spoken language, and this spontaneously happens because I love people", she says. Just carrying on with

her daily teaching all these years, Olivia had no idea it had anything to do with EI, she admits.

5.3.5.2 Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program

Olivia realized that people's struggles start with not understanding that when you are with others, you must know that it is not "I rule"; it must be "we rule". An "I rule" attitude lets you clash with whomever you are dealing with. She once taught a French manager, who became the director of the International Coaching Federation. He suggested that she should start coaching. He told her a little bit about personal development and personal growth. That is literally where her journey with EI began, she says. She understood that when teaching humans, you are not teaching somebody who absorbs language neutrally but should be able to use it practically. They have to feel what it is you want them to understand.

So as she delved into coaching, she wanted to know more about this: What is the tool, what is the strategy, and what is the method? Olivia loves coaching and has done it for three years, but somehow, she knew there was more to it "because I noticed that when you work with people, they often say, 'yeah, but that's not easy'. And to know why it is not easy, I realized it had a lot to do with emotions". That is how she found someone who was at the time teaching emotional mastering, and she started with NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming), CBT (Cognitive behavioural therapy), and emotional mastery. Olivia realized that being self-aware has much to do with your emotions. She discovered emotional agility (David & Congleton, 2013), the ability to regulate emotions and truly understand what these emotions tell you. Most people do not know that emotions tell you to stop something, do something differently, or change something. That is the basis where the work needs to start before you even work on EI, she explains.

EI is like a formula, Olivia says. "I like to talk about food. Let's say you have lasagne; you need ingredients. You can't say it's only the pasta that makes the lasagne great, or the sauce, or the meats. It's a formula that has four main ingredients." EI ingredients are moving assets that you need to understand. You could be somebody with great confidence. However, if you are not confident in a part

of your life, it could mean that something else is lacking, such as self-value, self-worth, and self-esteem. It also means that within each facet, whether social awareness, self-management or self-awareness, there are these movable assets that you have some of, some not, or some people have none, she explains. "So, EI, to me, is the complete formula that has to be a living system, where you can adapt to people, where you can see yourself and still see others."

Given that she did the emotional mastery class for so long, it made sense to understand that she could expand the formula she already uses. Working with many people, she noticed she used EI aspects before she did the Neuro-link Program, but the Neuro-link Program made especially sense to her for the neuro agility aspect thereof (Neuro Agility Brain Profile). "That's when I realized you cannot help someone with EI if they don't know how their brain ticks. It is actually a brain thing", she says. You cannot change the mindset of others before understanding your own. "Understanding my brain profile (neuro agility) makes a difference", Olivia declares. "Now, when I was younger, I used to think that I was so bad because I am not rational like others, I am not good with numbers, and I thought I was lacking something."

Olivia saw everything that she could not do, which other people have the skills for and thought there was something wrong with her and never realized it was just not the direct first preference of her brain. "People used to say I am so expressive and talk a lot. It was like an insult. So, I started to change myself by trying to make myself smaller to make other people feel comfortable." When she understood that expressiveness is not an insult and that she is not stupid or necessarily has to be a "numbers person" and there is nothing wrong with her, that this is how she processes information, it changed her life. "And now I wish I had known that when I was fourteen", she testifies.

Doing the Neuro-Link Program and delving into all those aspects, which she thinks is very important, added to what she already was doing. She began working with sales professionals, HR organizations and leaders to "decode their unique brain signatures", as she describes it. That would allow them to understand themselves, enhance their human potential, and achieve self-mastery to maintain sustainable

growth and a mindset that delivers high-level results in all areas of their lives: within the self, the family, the world, their teams, or another culture, she says. That is what this program did for her. These EI competencies allowed her to understand why she could train a Swedish mother of four, a young 25-year-old student, or a gentleman just doing it as a hobby before he retires permanently. She describes it as a formula that works. When you are confident in yourself, you can put yourself in the place of another unconditionally, regardless of their culture, age, or gender, she believes. "I'm really passionate about this topic, and I'm a formula person, and any formula that is brain-friendly, like this, is just very important", she says. She thus uses it in her own life and when training people.

EI also allows you to cross over generational bridges. One of her best friends is young enough to be her daughter. Through this, she gains perspective from a generation other than her own, which she considers very important today. Talking about a generational gap between us and the millennials or "generation Z's", for example, is not a solution to effective communication. She believes anyone can learn from a millennial just as they can learn from us. Hence, you allow space for coexistence and collaboration that does not exclude. Instead, in her opinion, this is the basis for inclusion and diversity. Our brains are the most inclusive organ we possess, and every one is unique. It is not because you are a man, a woman, a baby boomer or a Generation X. It is incredible when one can overcome that, leaving out the unnecessary but bringing in the necessary personal aspects. "That is what this has done for me. Considering my personal and professional relationships, everyone I am in contact with learns from me, and I can say I learn from them too, which is collaboration." That is so important as they both learn every time, she says.

Olivia did, amongst other things, neuroscience coaching and leadership development. A vital aspect she learnt is that the brain is a social organ, which makes us social beings. "How the brain reacts to being socially excluded is like being physically beaten", she emphasizes. Understanding how the brain works make it clear that if you cannot appreciate yourself, starting with accurate self-awareness, it will not have the foundation it needs. "So what you cannot allow, what you cannot embrace, what you cannot accept, what you cannot take as given in yourself, is going to highly impact what you can allow, embrace, and see in others."

5.3.5.3 Life Phase Context

Growing up within your family is the first place where you get part of your identity. The neurogenesis of our identity starts with family members. She agrees that is how you learn things as a young person. Children inherit a need to belong, and when they become adolescents, they are out in the world, out of school amongst peers. That is when they probably start asking questions and comparing how they are at home is how they must be outside. "I'm sure many people have experienced that. I had to be a certain way at home because that was the rule, and I had to be a certain way in public because my parents were quite known." She realized she had to relate with a certain kind of people. On the other hand, she also noticed that you behave differently when no one monitors you. Becoming an adult, having worked on self-awareness and self-management, would become fundamental to how she relates to people in her relationships. She says whether she tolerates it or not has a lot to do with her self-awareness because that is where your values, beliefs, and inner compass are, she says. "That must develop, or let's better say, you need to be aware of it. It's one thing saying, well, I know myself. Yeah. But to accurately know yourself is knowing when to give space or step back." That interplay with the various nuances of our brain, of being able to allow yourself, but also the other, definitely plays a role in how she associates with people, she says.

5.3.5.4 Association Context

The people one associates with, and the relationships you have, Olivia intentionally chooses. Who you connect with or not is your choice, she says. That allows you to have healthy boundaries when you find yourself being challenged and triggered. "When I coach people, I tell them you are responsible for what triggers you. And when something triggers you, that requires you to use the EI tools." She says it is when you are pushed to a certain point where you either do not want to be or have no choice but to get involved when you use your EI skills. Olivia is not married and does not have children, but she has nieces and nephews whom she loves. Her intermediate family are not much interested in the work she does. She finds it interesting to notice how her family members apply some EI skills without even knowing what EI is.

Concerning self-regulation when growing up, Olivia was taught valuable lessons. Feelings do not mean you need to box people in; it is not an excuse to hurt others. Feelings mean you go to your corner, breathe, and then have a conversation, not to point fingers, but to grow and learn, she says. However, her mom did not want them to discuss their feelings as a family. She thought they had to be silent, and it would somehow disappear. "But I had to learn from that because that caused a lot of internal struggles with regard to values, self-esteem, confidence, and your ability to take opportunities when they come around", Olivia explains. Without self-esteem, you will not jump at an opportunity or take any risks and will not open up to the world, which she had to learn. The family is thus where you learn, but it can also be the source of people's struggles. That is why EI competency is so crucial to acquire. Many difficulties we, as adults, experience, especially when interacting with others outside our family, are where the need for EI becomes ever more evident, she explains. Being an educator, teaching teachers how to teach others, she also taught them about the "human factor"; to be a human teacher. That means when you, as a teacher having a bad day, you go into your classroom, you leave your problems outside the room. That is how you prime yourself emotionally. You have only one or two hours with those humans; they will feel those emotions. She believes you can choose the energy you carry, which will ripple through.

Olivia is currently learning Korean. She watches seven different programmes in Korean and is now used to reading the captions. "And I think emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, being agile, is exactly that. Getting used to it." She uses being a bully as an example: First, you recognise and admit you are a bully. Then you decide to change by regulating yourself better. Now you have to learn how to change, and it is okay. At first, people may not believe that you have changed, but they will notice through your behaviour, and when you apologise, they will be okay with it, she says.

5.3.5.5   Localization Context

Olivia says you do not behave the same way in every context, which she regards as balance. People have a role depending on the circle with which they associate. There is a way you act with your different friends. There is the way you respond to

your family. She believes that we all need to belong and thinks it starts with being social beings. That means you also have to behave in a certain way to belong in the different circles you are in, depending on whether it is recreational, educational, or occupational. As said before, the brain reacts to social rejection as if you get physically beaten and depending on how much pain you are willing to endure, you will play your role, she reckons. If you have developed EI and practised it to a certain extent, you will activate it every time, depending on the setting. EI is not a program you did yesterday and is complete; it is a continuous journey. She explains with an example: The more clarity you get on who you are, the more you learn from your different circles. Going to her 30th school reunion to meet her friends, she reacted entirely differently to things now than in the past, she noticed. The person she was at her 10th, 15th, and the following school reunions are not the person she is now. What you draw from your occupation, how you are, how you relate to your family and friends, and whatever hobbies you do all impact whom you become. "We have grown up, you know, so it plays a role, definitely. Your EI competencies play a role", she says.

People react depending on how they feel: your sense of safety, but also your sense of responsibility about the world, and the community, discerning between what you consider as good or bad, whether it is resourceful or not. That again shows that if EI, starting with the foundation of self-awareness and self-management, is not present, it gets challenging to focus on anyone else. You may not be directly affected by something, but if you have that human code you understand in yourself, you could and should be able to see that in others. How are they affected? Your ability to take action to help others will only take effect if you can put yourself in their place and if you can see beyond yourself. "EI does play a role in how successful you operate in these contexts, I think. The lack thereof will make it very difficult for you to display empathy", she claims.

Olivia mentions the impact of a ripple effect, and there is a ripple effect when you start from the basis, she says. You can develop self-control, self-confidence, self-value, self-assessment, self-inquiry with compassion (not judging), and how you facilitate yourself when interacting with others. Eventually, this allows a win-win scenario with empathy, she believes. Acceptance has a lot to do with it. The neuro

agility program helps her do that automatically, she says. Since she did her neuro agility profile and given the number of briefings she has done, she realised that it is amazing how our brain does what it needs for survival and growth. "When I ask someone if this is a threatening situation and they say no, it's good. I have this slogan: 'The dinosaur is just a lizard', and in EI, I think that is the key." Because the brain constantly protects itself from change, anything it does not know, cannot identify, or have no memory of, becomes a problem. If you cannot control that in yourself, you certainly will not be able to handle that in others, she states. That is a lifelong process. If you continue practising to control that daily, you will do better today than yesterday and the day before. She noticed that with her nieces. One has just turned fourteen, and Olivia realizes that as she grows up with the demands of her world, she must constantly change and adapt her relationship with her niece. "I have to grow, to reactivate my adaptability so that I do not nullify her existence and her experience. And we all have to do that so that we do not treat each other as static and always the same."

5.3.5.6 Methodical Context

Nothing is static, and because of that, we have to adapt and change daily because life is changing. Everybody is changing, and life is throwing many challenges at us lately, especially with the COVID pandemic that we have just gone through. Like many people worldwide, Olivia had to adapt to the online world. She taught English then and made it a habit to ask people to switch on their videos during sessions. They had ten newly hired people at one company at the time who did not know each other. She thought meeting and welcoming new colleagues would be beneficial for everyone. "Facilitating that, I could see the awkwardness that people have. So what the pandemic did for us is that it actually exposed the immense gaps in basic EI competencies", she explains. The gap is enormous, and people must change communication, even in written form. Very vital, as it exposed the need for EI she experienced. Working on EI skills will help people understand that even if you are writing an email or leaving a message, you still need to be aware of the human aspect, Olivia says. That is very important because that precisely happens in the technological virtual space. This space is not a reason to forget your self-management. She says it is the ideal opportunity to build self-awareness and self-

regulation because failing will create enormous problems, especially from now on. Although we will go to the workplace sometimes, the hybrid way of working is here to stay. Again, she says it calls for global responsibility and understanding where everybody must play a role.

She gives an example of their Zoom meetings where five students never want to activate their cameras until she asks them every time. Once, she left her camera off and just started talking. Some people in the group complained that they could not see her. "I know. How does that feel? I can see some of you but not others. We are in a world where it's a win-win situation, right? We don't want a win-lose situation." She used the opportunity to create awareness. "It takes EI to understand who is losing. Self-inquiry. Just ask yourself who is losing", she asked one who did not want to put on his camera. He said, "Well, yeah, we obviously like to see you, and you like to see us". "Absolutely", she replied, "but I don't think it's fair that you get to see me, that I stand up for you, but you are unwilling to stand up for me. We're a team. We're a family here, but not everybody is winning". When asking them what they could do for all to win, all five of them switched on their cameras. To ensure the exercise succeeded, for the following three times they met virtually, she did not activate her video at the beginning. She never needed to ask them again as the habit took hold. That was an experiment, but after that, they understood team synergy, and this was an EI moment, even without saying it.

EI competencies are thus habits that need to settle in, she believes. You have to relive them every moment, every day. "It helps with forgiveness. It helps with forgetting. It helps to let go of the unnecessary", she says. One of the students who never activated his camera but used to complain first is a manager where he works. He testifies how he applies this exercise when he has meetings at work: "I understand a hundred people might slow down the system, but if it is less than ten people, I also tell them: 'Videos!'" Olivia explains that in everything she learns and shares, the intrapersonal skills automatically win into your people skills and expand.

During the pandemic, Olivia was on a land forum undergoing deep NLP, personal growth, and reflection training. She learnt of the three stages of neurogenesis of identity: Your identity starts to form when you are a minor. One of the first words you

hear is "NO". How that reflects on your identity is "something is wrong with me here. So I have to behave a certain way not to hear NO all the time!" When becoming an adolescent with the NO already imprinted in your system, in your identity, you get the perception that something is really wrong here. That is the time when you feel you need to "belong". You now think you have to join a punk, intelligent, troublemaker, or whichever group, provided that you belong, and that is the second problem, she explains. Somehow you find a way to join those people with a perception of "That's how I need to dress, that's how I need to talk, that's how I need to be, and then I will belong". When you ask people who they are, you often hear: "I'm a manager. I'm a…"."No, no. You are whom you have become, the role that you unconsciously picked up along the way", she says. Then comes the third part that builds your identity: When you are no longer an adolescent, you realise, "Wow, I am out here alone, and I have to do it all by myself as an adult". Thus, here we are as adults, with this "something is wrong with me, so this is the role I have to play so that I can belong" perception. And then we start asking questions: "Do we operate on the field, or do we operate from the side-line watching as life happens?" She explains that EI is so dynamic, not set in stone and why we cannot do without it. The less agile your brain is, the less you can implement these competencies for yourself or others. It is just like that. EI is not only a Sunday activity. It is a lifetime activity because it starts when you wake up. Once you realize that something is your choice and your responsibility and do something about it, you can help others, Olivia explains.

5.3.5.7   Summarizing Olivia's Experience

Olivia thinks the Life Phase Context plays the most prominent role in her life, and then the Association Context. "I realized that going to my family helps me to always calm down from wherever I subconsciously have landed. When away and on my own, I'm in my own sphere." In the Life Phase Context, you do self-inquiry, checking the health system of your inner circle, where you are the core, she says. "Through self-inquiry, am I allowing my 'masculine' energy? The 'do this, do that, that's how it's done, write an email, don't care about etiquette…' that's what I call masculine energy. But 'feminine' energy is 'being'. Masculine energy is 'doing', and men and women have that."

She found that women are so busy "doing" and struggle when thinking about their neurogenesis of identity. "See, when I understood neurogenesis of identity, I had to return to my past. I had to ask what experiences I had where someone said no and how I started to act based on that first 'No.'" Being able to do that, she discovered that she could discern and realize nothing was wrong with her. As we have social brains, there is nothing abnormal about wanting to belong, she says. "You can ask yourself, wherever you are, why you want to belong there. The confidence comes when you realize: 'If this is a mama group and they don't want a non-mama there, I'm not gonna feel bad about that'", Olivia explains. That is how she has been able to regroup in her identity to realize "wow, that's what my identity is like, now I'm an adult, and I don't really need to struggle about these things because I can actually just 'be'. Now it makes sense. You accept whom you were designed to be and whom you make yourself up to be". Olivia works on self-awareness daily by reflecting on what she has learnt, not to strive for perfection but to do better.

She believes there is magic when you avoid labelling people for the mere connotations you attach to labels. "How can you possibly manifest the life you want, or how can you contribute to your community when your mind already says this part of my community is bad?" Then literally, she says you are not in your life, you are not in your community, and you are not sending anything ahead. Everyone leaves a legacy wherever they are. Getting positive feedback from those you cross paths with assures you can "be" and learn to love yourself when you are good to others, even if they are not your family or friends or have the same values as you. "We're not talking of extreme cases. I'm talking of the daily scenario", she explains.

At a company she previously worked, two people who sat opposite each other in an open-plan office never spoke to each other for four years. Even their screens were higher to avoid eye contact. She describes her speaking to the director about the situation: "I remember going to the director and saying: 'Doesn't it bother you when two of the people you manage directly are literally like enemies? Doesn't that make you feel uncomfortable?' 'Yeah', he said, 'but they do their work'. 'But they're not robots. You may think that is nothing as long as they do their job, but is it not your responsibility to ensure psychological safety? Four other people sit around these two in that office and are in the middle of the feud. Don't you think it affects them?' I

asked. He replied: 'Look, everybody needs to do their work. We are not in a kindergarten'. I thought that did not display EI at all".

His lack of EI had a detrimental effect on Oliva's trust. He does not apply self-regulation either because he started getting angry as if she interfered with his business when she questioned him. "He couldn't adapt. He didn't have self-confidence because if he did, he would've had one-on-one talks with each of them", which was the inference she could make. She left that company in 2018. Four years later, the two are still not talking, and the manager has since been fired. She realises he allowed toxicity, which emphasizes the necessity of EI. "Let's just call EI human essence. It's the skill of humanity. That's what it really is." She says leadership is not just reading a list of what a leader should do. Leadership is EI plus technical skills or whatever your job entails. She feels you miss a valuable opportunity when people work in disharmony for four years, and you do not apply leadership skills. There was psychological damage to those two people who could not stand each other for whatever reason. He also forfeited the opportunity to reach a healthy connection and working environment, which he did not insist on. Hence, these two people spent their time protecting themselves. Olivia believes emotional literacy tells you they both shouted: "I don't feel safe". "How could he not see that? And if you have such unhealthy atmospheres in a face-to-face setting, how will virtual settings destroy everything if there was a gap even before?" she wonders.

As newborns, we are happy and fulfilled until the first step of our identity happens when we are told "No". That is when we must learn to be okay to function in whatever world we choose to belong, Olivia thinks. Self-expression is so important because we do not need to play roles. Not that roles are wrong, she says, but when you allow self-expression in yourself, you will allow it in others, and when we can do that, we exchange what we have because we do not label. That is what she loves about neuro-agility. It does not condemn the other profile. Instead, they can accomplish so much when they work together. When you apply EI, you stop worrying about the roles you have to play and just "be", she says.

Olivia shares a story that taught her valuable lessons. When growing up, at about nine years old, her grandmother taught her the man is the head of the family, but as

the head is nothing without a neck, she must remember that she will be the neck one day. The good thing is that the neck does not have to say it aloud. She explains how her grandmother helped her accept herself: "Kids used to tease me about my nose. They always told me I have a button nose. My grandmother taught me: 'Tell them to be grateful there's somebody around them with such a nose because this is the only nose that can smell fire before you see it'. And that just gave me confidence. 'This nose can smell trouble way before it comes.' You don't know what that means at nine years old, but when you think about it, as a leader, you're supposed to be able to anticipate and forecast. Already there are EI skills in these stories".

In Nigeria live many nomads, Eritreans, "those people that just kind of rolled like gipsies" who travel around with their entire families, she says. They would stay in a place for a while and then move on again. Olivia's mum had a habit of taking some of the girls in and sending them to school, and after one year, the family could come back to pick them up again. At home, she told Olivia and her siblings: "This is your new sister". That is how she grew up. In total, she had about four of these "sisters". "No Internet, no telephone. But they became the sister. They ate with us. We did everything together. You know, us, as Africans, like to sew the same attire for Easter. We all look the same", she explains. One of these girls who lived with them would learn how to read and write and do whatever training she could in that one year. As agreed, the family returned for their child after a year, and she explains what that taught her: "I remember how I always felt like, oh, I've lost a sister. But as an adult today, I think it helped me to be okay with 'letting go'. Letting go does not mean you have to hold tight onto something. Rather, you are able to let go of that physical, tangible. What is stronger is to hold it in your heart. And I think this is something that maybe people like Mandela, Gandhi, and Ken Saro-Wiwa did when you can hold on in your heart. I aim for that every day".

When doing this brain training, she always asks those in her coaching program if they know their palette of labels that dictate how they judge, evaluate, connect, relate, and choose. "You know, the ones that make you say I want that car, not that one. How positive are your labels?" She says we all have a label palette, which is fine. "If you

are objective, how many of those labels are positive given that they run your life? Isn't it important to be aware of the palette?" she concludes.

5.3.6 Participant 6 – "Edith"

5.3.6.1 Professional Background

As a training officer at a holding company and head of learning and development, Edith studied education and obtained a Master's in Innovation Technology. She further completed a Change Management Practitioner course, a coaching course at the International Coaching Association, and the Enneagram course. She is a single parent and resides in South Africa.

5.3.6.2 Involvement with and Personal Experience of the Program and Life Phase Context

Edith regards it as essential to include the life span context representing the phases of your life in this study. There are phases in your life where you apply EI in your family context when your children are small, are teenagers, and leave to be on their own. She thinks each phase is entirely different, and one must constantly adapt. "I think it is one of the biggest challenges to be mindful of EI: how you adapt to all the different situations as you progress in your family life. I was always very mindful of where my children emotionally are", she says. A rule in the house, not that it always worked, but their home should be a place of safety for everyone. There must be room for everyone's personality. She explains: "Our home must be the only place where I can be myself, express myself, and allow others to do the same, with respect, obviously. I have always believed that we should be able to live out who we are". In a domestic context, she believed that it is imperative not to generalize as if everyone is the same where emotions are concerned, as each of her children is different and unique. No father figure in their house naturally made the dynamics very different. Psychological safety has always been important to her. "You should at least feel safe in your own home and free to be yourself, even if there are communication problems or arguments, that we really understand each other and give everyone space." That is how Edith managed it in her home environment.

Edith and her siblings grew up very independently. Thus, looking at the broader family structure, her parents, brother, and sister worked the same way: There was enough space for everyone. Her mother did not "faf" around them or attend their activities often. Consequently, they have, as siblings, always supported each other. Everyone did their own thing, and Edith experienced it as a comfortable environment. "So, I think that's something I've learnt and passed on. When something is not nice, we talk about it an incredible amount. Sometimes too much, I think." One should always be careful not to overthink things, which Edith thinks she and her children tend to do. Speaking has never been a problem. "So, communication in our house has always been very, very big." She says that allowed everyone to discuss things and get others' opinions, which helped them immensely.

Comparing her children to many of their peers, Edith noticed that they understand their emotions, as they are used to talking about them. She often shared professional training content with them and regularly sent them information from TED talks about communicating better or making difficult conversations. These themes are fundamental because Edith knows how complex the world is and what one faces constantly. From an early age, she told them that adults are also just children who have grown up, and all are not necessarily mature. "Many children I know are more mature than some adults." How people treat you is not determined by age; she wanted her children to know this. The teaching context of the past dictated that you have to respect and obey teachers, even if you disagree with them. However, as a mother, she made her children aware that age and authority have little to do with maturity precisely because she had difficulty understanding and processing this when growing up. "The whole thing about having to conform when the teacher has spoken always made me very rebellious. I wouldn't say I liked it at all. I have tried to raise my children so that they understand this, without rebellion", she explains.

Telling them these things would lie in their subconscious, which they will only understand later when they get older. You cannot wait till they are eighteen to explain what EI is or how they should handle matters or superiors in an emotionally intelligent manner. When her children were too young to understand, they always thought she was preaching again, but they started to realise what she was talking

about as they aged. She believes planting those seeds in childhood added incredible value to her family's circumstances.

Earlier, EI was not a familiar subject much discussed. Edith remembers EI as thoughtful and mature, with genuine empathy and compassion for others. She emphasizes: "Just because I understand why you do something doesn't mean I approve. I think our domestic circumstances also had a lot to do with it. The fact that you know why daddy, a teacher, or a friend was rude or unfair because of something that happened that day means you understand the reaction, but it doesn't mean they are right, and you just mindlessly have to accept it. You can accept it a few times, whereafter you know it's just an excuse. You don't have to keep buying into their behaviour just because they have a reason. Behaviour is a choice and requires work". People will always expect you to compensate and conform just because they have an excuse if they don't try to grow and learn to improve their behaviour to emotional maturity regardless of the circumstances, recons Edith. That is wrong, and you do not have to, she claims. She explains that chronological age is not necessarily a determinant of emotional maturity because even if you are sixty and never developed EI, you have not really progressed past eighteen, twenty, or twenty-five.

She claims that how you grow from life experience and the things you deal with over the years does not teach you sufficient EI skills without proper training. You will be open to every guy's cute idea because you have never formed that screening ability, and you will probably stay a child until you are eighty. Edith explains how her mother read widely, and they grew up in a house where she talked about the knowledge she gained. She always based her conversations on something she read, heard, saw on television, or someone mentioned in an interview. "I think that's how you pass the stuff on to your children until you are old. Your children see and hear this and do what you teach them."

5.3.6.3   Association Context

Children associate more with their parents until puberty, when they start associating more with their peer group, and this is where the trouble begins. Edith says if you do

not instil those things early, children will struggle as teenagers and adults. "My oldest daughter is now 26. She struggled with many of these things until this year." Without them knowing, you give them a criterion to distinguish between something that sounds right or does not sound right, fits well, or does not, she says. So, they learn to be aware and not just to accept, even if they do not have the answers. That is important to her. She described her view on open relationships between a parent and child, referring to her relationships: "With us, you can talk about anything, and even if there are consequences, it is better to speak up than to remain silent, and I would say they come to speak most of the time. There is always something you won't tell your mother, but I was fortunate; I have an open relationship with my children that I cultivated from childhood. Again, you can't suddenly expect an 18-year-old to come and talk to Mom about everything. They won't. So, it depends on how you shape them".

The willingness to keep the communication channels open starts from a very young age and it is part of the skills to get to know and understand themselves. As a parent, you see qualities in them that they do not yet understand, and it allows them to understand themselves better. Edith explains how she treated her children differently according to their personalities. Her second daughter is much more sensitive than the eldest. "We had notebooks to write letters. I'll find the little book on my pillow where she wrote what bothers her or what's not fun, and then I'll write her a note back and leave it on her pillow", she says. They also worked a lot with colour cards where she could tell what colour she was today, a bright or darker colour. These methods aimed to make her aware of different emotions. In this way, Edith could explain that it is sometimes okay to feel sad as it is impossible to always feel good. "You sometimes feel like this and often don't even have a reason, and it's okay. You'll notice it will change again in a couple of days", she will comfort her, creating awareness that different feelings are normal.

Awareness is fundamental in EI because it is not something people talk about often, maybe because emotional stuff used to be considered a weakness as it was for her, says Edith. Edith gives a statement describing her background and current views on how she assisted her children in gaining skills to deal with difficult emotions. She permitted me to quote her: "For 17 years, my ex-husband was an emotional abuser.

162

Yes, so that's why I always countered it. I had to explain without naming him what they should watch out for when someone is not emotionally intelligent; when you don't have to listen when someone is talking to you; to distinguish when someone tries to manipulate something; and to recognize when someone is wrong even if they are older than you. I did this with a definite purpose to give my children the discernment to understand this from an early age. It wasn't always easy and clear for them, but I kept going, and the older they got, the more they started to understand the context. As in my situation, I believe anything terrible can also have a good side. Then the good side of a tough situation was the necessity that, when exposed to such things, they know they should at least try to think about this before summarily internalising it. Especially in a situation like abuse, people think if it doesn't bleed, it isn't hurting. Oh, so many times, I wished I could show the scars! But we gained life experience that teaches us skills for similar situations. We had that background and had to live it much earlier because it was a reality".

5.3.6.4 Localization Context

As an instructor, Edith's role in her profession contributes enormously to transferring skills to others. EI skills go hand in hand with understanding, she says. What she does at home is something she does naturally, also at work, she says. To understand the purpose, she prefers explaining the context to people, the pros and cons. The most important thing that motivates people to make an effort, take in information, or study is understanding the context and future benefits. She thinks conversations regarding that are crucial. If people understand the reason for the program and have the information and the context to buy into it, and you have convinced them to continue, she believes. If, for example, selecting the University of Stellenbosch as an institution for employees to attend a course at, even without explaining why, one gets context because one understands it is a good university with good lecturers, plus the certificate will be worth much. The university's reputation speaks for itself. However, using an unfamiliar institution that people know little about might raise many questions. Selecting company employees to take courses also requires context to understand whom it will suit best. Mentioning that it is for junior managers, for instance, explains the context. You have to give a narrative that provides context, which she thinks is particularly important.

Edith believes EI is very much about motivation. It is always advisable to tell someone why it is necessary, and compassion is vital. Compassion is not just about how I put myself in your shoes. Compassion also gives someone a vision of what to anticipate: When selected as a participant in a course, a person should prepare to put in a lot of time and effort and realize how much the outcome will bring. That is how she applies it in her working environment. They struggled initially because of the large organization and completely overworked people. However, having these conversations gets easier. Explaining the purpose and value to the individual and the company is crucial. "You have to want to do it and see it through. I expect you to take ownership, and when you start, you should finish. So, for me, there's the other side where you also undertake to do your part", Edith explains. People should work together toward a common goal and plough everything into it because, eventually, you can have an incredible leadership structure at the top. Still, there is no alignment if you do not promote that the rest of the workforce develops. "I think it's challenging to work on yourself. Probably the hardest. So, EI is also about everyone willingly moving in the same direction to get alignment in the company. It is a process of purpose, autonomy, and mastery."

5.3.6.5 Methodical Context

Edith explains how their in-person training had to switch to e-learning during the pandemic, which is still the case at this stage. "We will never go back to in-person training again. I'll tell you why", and she explains: Logistically, it has always been a significant problem because members of all regions of the country and even from abroad need training. To make it economically worthwhile, the minimum size of a group was fifteen. If, for instance, only eight could attend, they could not continue. Travelling to central venues was additionally a problem for everyone. As a facilitator and teacher, she understands how much fun it is to be in a class when you do training. Where they previously offered regional training per group at a time, she now has only one online class for all groups. Some even attend from the UK; all get training from the same facilitator, which was previously too expensive to fly them in, she says. Now it is more transformative, equal, and open, and people get to know each other. "Yeah, so I'm a huge fan of the mere fact that technology has allowed us

to be more inclusive so that everyone can share in the same, and I can tell you, people have adapted very quickly", which Edith regards as very positive. "I understand human contact is lost, which is negative. But from a pure training perspective, I think there are many more positives than negatives." Economically, they save as it is much cheaper. They train more people than before and save on venues, food, travel, and accommodation costs. "So, from a training point of view, I love it", she testifies. They save time and the type of visuals they use changed as they no longer need to print or bind manuals. "When I think about it now, even though it was only three years ago, it already feels old-fashioned to me. It's so amazing", she says. In one training session, were eighty-nine people from all over the country. "You know how logistically I would scramble to prepare for a physical presentation this big?"

Technology-mediated or hybrid working, however, Edith thinks, requires personal responsibility to ensure that you keep human contact. Returning to work is now generally optional since the lifting of covid restrictions. Although working from home, people should still try to go out, see friends and connect with others more often. She reckons it is essential for all of us to physically attend meetings in the office from time to time to avoid a feeling of complete seclusion and isolation. "We all physically went to work every day two years ago, so when you feel cut off, you should take the initiative and go to work", she says and continues that each has the responsibility to see other people. EI ties to commitment; everyone has ownership and accountability when feeling isolated. One needs to take the initiative and do something. "It doesn't matter what it is, even a coffee date with your manager to see her in person, as long as you do it." Even in the work environment, EI goes hand in hand with autonomy and ownership because you must be aware and mindful of when these things happen and be prepared to act. It is so easy for people to always judge the company for what they are doing wrong without taking responsibility for their choices. She explains: "especially when excuses about petrol, children and the like begin. Then I wonder why no one had these excuses three years ago when they were here eight hours daily. So, what happened in the meantime? You have changed! Accountability that goes hand in hand with EI is essential. You must recognise and admit when the virtual environment swallows you into a comfort zone. If it's ok with

you, you can do it as long as you have the courage, but on those days when you don't feel well, take the initiative, go to the office because you need to see people".

Management preferred that no one goes to the office during the pandemic, which was understandable. Nevertheless, we have learnt precious life lessons, says Edith: "What an incredible privilege to suffer collectively and do the same thing globally! Because when things are difficult for someone, everyone suffers and has compassion for each other because they understand me, and I understand them. We all experienced this together for the good or the bad. Regardless of anything, it is incredible how something like this could build the character of our nation. So, what a privilege it was. It changed my whole life. The EI that an organization must demonstrate is how to create that collective feeling within the company. You can do everything you want, but if you don't have that, you struggle, which is a company problem".

5.3.6.6   Summarizing Edith's Experience

Edith thinks the Life Phase Context stood out for her "because if we all get it right, the others are not that hard", she says. She also mentioned that she always wonders about parenting, children, and EI. There is something about it that you have no control over, but for her, it is always so sad when people have children and do not realize: "When I launch this child, I launch you into primary school, I launch you into high school, and I launch you into ballet". Wherever a child starts with something new, we launch them, and with that comes everything they learn. This fire in their engines will either let them go far or make them stop quickly. Sometimes they cannot manage things emotionally and stop. She remembers when all kids went to veld school in their younger grades. "It was bad. You got on that bus, it was terrible, but we learnt a lot there", she says. You could tell the difference between the child who gets sick, cries, and ends up in the infirmary and the other who complains but keeps going. You could tell from their behaviour how things were at home, and Edith concludes: "Books and books about babies and children with guidelines about muscles, teeth, and nutrition are available. But books on how to make your child aware of emotions and how to deal with people usually only start from primary school. I have often wondered if one shouldn't write a book on making your child

emotionally aware of things from a young age, like showing them that there are emotions, just like hunger, and that everything has a name. Maybe there are such books. It was not there when I was there. It is tough for a parent to always know this stuff. I think there is a gap in that it is not more readily available to parents".

5.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, we get a glimpse of the experiences of six participants who, among other things, attended the Neuro-Link EI training. They apply these learnt EI skills daily across contexts and extend knowledge to the broader society through coaching and training. I explored their perspectives of and attitudes towards EI, the sustainability of skills learnt and the impact of these skills across different contexts. The descriptions of the six participants indicate that the EI training program significantly impacts their personal lives. They unanimously agree that developing EI skills into a lifestyle positively impacts the people they associate with in any context. Consequently, this is consistent with Goleman's (2013) statement that balanced inner and outer awareness skills are essential.

From the interviews I transcribed and then summarised in this chapter, I was able to formulate my findings, identify themes and reach conclusions about the topic and objectives of my study. The concluding chapter below discusses these findings, conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 6

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1   Introduction

Since the eighties of the previous century, the importance of raising awareness for and training in EI skills has emerged prominently (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018). In many circles, it is generally considered an essential skill. In several research studies, for example, that of Magnusson and Stattin (1998), Mitchell et al. (2010), and Ybarra et al. (2012), academics and institutions confirmed, emphasised, and encouraged the educating of people in EI. The World Economic Forum considers emotionally intelligent behaviour and action a requirement in today's professions (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018). At the beginning of this study, I highlighted the important pioneering work of several theorists in this area (see section 1.1).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand what people mean when they talk about EI, and theorists have come up with various descriptions. From our general understanding of developing from a multifaceted life, we consider EI a form of behaviour or specific qualities a person possesses to guide behaviour. EI is the intra- and interpersonal skills we use to select, manage, and maintain cognitive and emotionally driven behaviours to express ourselves socially. It is the ability to maintain oneself in any given context by using these EI skills to benefit all parties involved, present or not. EI appears to be a concise term representing a comprehensive concept unanimously agreed upon by all the participants of this study during the interviews. That includes many skills such as respect and esteem, recognition of own and others' value, loyalty, a positive attitude, cooperation, resilience, enthusiasm, love, empathy and compassion, hope, fairness, flexibility, understanding, autonomy, responsibility, communication skills, to name a few. It always involves the self and others and life in general.

As a functioning entity, man is inextricably part of a context, whether via social interaction or situational factors – an immediate physical and social milieu in which people live, where something happens or develops. That includes the culture in which individuals get their education or live and the people and institutions with whom they interact, as per Barnett and Casper (2001).

I based this study on exploring how social context moderates the relationship between EI and human functioning, as Cherniss (2010) suggested more research should focus on. When it was only in the proposal phase, I initially divided social contexts into primary/family and broader/extended contexts and planned to research it that way. However, the intensity deepened exponentially as the study progressed. Consequently, the Four-Dimensional Context Model developed spontaneously from the information I derived from a detailed literature study. Accordingly, I constructed a model illustrating four broad context categories with sub-sections and summarised them as the association-, localisation-, life phase- and methodical contexts (see section 2.5).

I recruited six candidates meeting the prerequisites to participate in this qualitative research study to obtain the abovementioned goal. All participants are considered experienced EI skills experts, purposefully chosen candidates with experiential relevance who could contribute to an evolving field of research. All are familiar with the Neuro-Link EI Program, actively offering training to promote EI awareness, and they represent a scope of diverse backgrounds, nationalities, races, and genders.

The study further aimed to uncover the value of learnt EI behavioural skills in various contexts where individuals find themselves and to find out whether there are similarities and differences between the South African and international contexts. Further, I also aimed to determine whether specific contexts encourage emotionally intelligent behaviour more than others and to what extent EI affects the relationship between the social context and human functioning.

6.2   Most Important Findings of this Study

A qualitative research method allowed participants to tell comprehensive stories to shed light on their application of EI skills in the different contexts they function and how it compares across contexts. They could draw on past and present experiences and describe their subjective perspectives through life narratives. Knowledge acquired from interviews with the participants allowed me to gain some understanding of their EI experiences.

A diverse group of participants concerning nationality, gender, culture, and profession were involved in the study. Although their careers vary between learning and development education, counselling, marketing, neurophysiology, workplace consultancy, and language teaching, all are involved in training/coaching, specifically EI, in a private capacity or at work. They are, consequently, highly qualified professionals who realise the value of EI and strive to promote and extend the concept worldwide. Feedback from the participants was mostly positive. They all enthusiastically participated in interview discussions. The seriousness with which they regard EI and its promotion was evident. There was no need to prompt their input as they spontaneously shared their views. Therefore, I only needed to guide the conversations to ensure we covered all aspects of the study in detail.

In the following sections, I present my most important findings regarding how my participants are affected by the EI training program, how they view training and the practical application of EI, and their experiences related to EI in various contexts.

6.2.1   Experiences of the EI Program and Importance of EI Training

Each study participant received thorough training in EI and is applying it across the study's pre-determined relevant contexts. From the interviews, it is clear how they gained personal value from understanding EI concepts which they now share with others. The participants unanimously testified that you could not give another what you do not have or understand yourself. To be genuinely emotionally intelligent, first of all, starts with yourself. Self-understanding is at the heart of EI, they believe. Olivia describes EI ingredients as moving assets you need to understand (meaning that the skills she gained are not static but can develop), a complete formula for a living system where you see yourself and others realistically as they are. Similar to the participants of my previous study (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018), the current study's participants all testified that the NL neuro agility profile assessment results provided their key to thorough self-understanding, mainly because it has a brain-based approach, as Kelsey described it. Since most of my participants did not understand it as teenagers, they now realise that shortcomings are not necessarily a sign of weakness but create an excellent gap for a deeper understanding and

potential for growth in their personal lives. Furthermore, they realise that people possess diverse characteristics, each making a unique contribution, and when people with EI work together, they make a good team.

All the participants testified that their self-judgment decreased, but their self-concept and self-confidence increased after completing the EI training and changed relational outcomes when interacting with others. A better understanding of their neurological makeup equips them with the knowledge assisting them to feel more secure, which benefits everyone. Some of my participants, like AJ, Kelsey, and Tony, considered themselves quite reserved, making it difficult to understand how and where they fit into the broader scope of society. The EI training program helped them to get that picture more clearly. It also changed their perception and understanding of others. Their improved social awareness and skills consequently increased their ability to influence others.

All the participants also agree that EI is indispensable in human functioning. They unequivocally testify that their clear understanding of EI is directly related to their training from the Neuro-Link EI Model, and they consider EI awareness and training extremely necessary. An essential objective of the Neuro-Link Program is to give those interested a thorough overview of each person's unique way of operating. Assessments reveal this whereafter extensive EI skills training teaches trainees to tap into personal behavioural preferences to enable them to behave emotionally intelligently in their unique way. All the participants also agree that the program's design is easy for anyone to grasp, learn and practically apply skill objectives, whether the learner is a blue-collar worker or a highly qualified professional.

According to the participants, focusing on and understanding how others process information in their particular way or style improved their communication and interaction skills with others in general. Tony explained that EI allows you to understand people's behaviour rather than their situation, which gives them a sense of worthiness. His view is further that understanding the cause of conflict gives you the insight to find solutions that you can sort out in an emotionally intelligent way. All the participants testified that since their training, they feel more in control and can remain objective in diverse situations.

The participants of the study also train other people in EI. By the nature of their work, my participants found that people's problems stem from unmet needs, regardless of the context in which they occur. People who struggle usually experience life as "difficult", as Olivia describes it. Their struggle, however, begins with a lack of understanding, whether it is about how things work, why things are the way they are, or how to solve problems. According to Olivia, when training people, it is thus vital that they understand and "feel" what you want them to learn. Aston believes it is only possible with mutual love and care, which ultimately sums up all EI aspects.

The more you practice these skills, the faster you will master them, and the easier you will be able to apply them, everyone agrees. EI is complex, broad, and integrated and requires conscious focus. Because everyone already has experience in lecturing EI courses, they agree that training only provides the core information and guidelines. The responsibility then shifts to each trainee to dig deeper and apply it continuously after completing training. Then practice begins. They furthermore have the unanimous opinion that EI is not a one-time event. It starts with yourself when you get up each day and then escalates as you interact with others. Your immediate family is usually the first people you deal with daily, from where it then spreads to colleagues, peers, or the general public. However, you must apply EI consistently and continuously: with every interaction every day.

6.2.2 Experiences and Views of EI Related to Life Phase Context

This context indicates the lifespan of the individual (see section 2.5.3).

Some participants, like Kelsey, Olivia, and Tony, realised that their behaviour as children differed from others, consequently not knowing whether something was wrong with themselves. They tended to accept others' behaviour as the norm. The NL assessments and EI training changed their understanding and perspective to realise their unique value. They learnt skills to live up to their potential. However, they all agree that one should not postpone obtaining this knowledge until adulthood. Every participant believes children should get exposure to EI and be taught skills as young as possible. Olivia articulated what all of them conveyed in some way: It will

172

enable them to understand themselves, improve their human potential and achieve self-mastery to maintain sustainable growth and a mindset that produces high-level results in all areas of their lives – within the self, the family, the world, their teams, or in other cultures. She noted that this knowledge allows them to grow beyond self-centeredness and to converse comfortably across generational, nationality, cultural, and professional boundaries and describes EI as a "formula" that works. It displays a reciprocal learning and influencing process that offers space for coexistence and collaboration that does not exclude anyone but contributes to diverse inclusion.

Olivia noticed how people apply some EI skills without realising or being aware, indicating that all people inherently acquire some EI skills via cultural upbringing, which we display through behaviour when growing up. The Nigerian culture, for example, transmits many of these values through narrative life lessons, she explained. However, Olivia experienced that essential skills have lagged in her family, leaving her with internal struggles regarding values, self-esteem, confidence, and the ability to take opportunities when they come around. She realised that the family is where you learn most, but it can also be the source of people's struggles when essential elements are lacking. Olivia could only address this after completing her EI training. Similarly, Kelsey, an introverted, insecure, and dependent child, experienced a change after she could alter her perspective following EI training.

The participants agree that we face opportunities to improve ourselves daily, and EI skills provide the means, but people do not necessarily choose to do so. They further agree that it has to start with ourselves. Self-acceptance is a valuable starting point that a child should learn at a very young age. If you cannot recognise, accept, and embrace your own qualities as worthy, it will have a significant impact on how you will acknowledge those of another. Self-awareness is where your values and beliefs, and inner compass are, and it brings about self-acceptance. Edith mentioned that planting wise EI skillset seeds in childhood adds incredible value to family circumstances and saves children tremendous agony and struggles when they reach puberty and adulthood. She added that you equip them with criteria to distinguish, be aware not to conform thoughtlessly, and make informed choices.

Olivia regards self-expression as a critical EI quality. Allowing yourself to express yourself freely and giving others the space to do so will prevent labelling. EI does not condemn; it includes. Olivia noted that social exclusion feels emotionally similar to being beaten physically. The inability to cultivate self-acceptance at an early age produces adults who feel unwanted, unsure if something is wrong with them, and do not belong or fit in. All the participants believe that EI is dynamic, but it is not a given, and the less you know about it, the less you will implement these competencies for yourself or others. Tony emphasised that the EI framework is crucial because it focuses on the essential principle of being yourself first and then equipping you to extend skills to others. He and Kelsey agree that EI endows you with the satisfaction of being who you are, knowing where you fit into society without feeling judged, embarrassed, or guilty, knowing that you belong where you are, and understanding your essential role in society. Tony also said that EI does not occur automatically but requires purposeful, thoughtful behaviour through challenges. It embraces differences rather than resisting them. All the participants unanimously believe that EI requires understanding, effort, and daily practice to form and establish habits beginning in childhood.

Only two participants, AJ and Tony, grew up in homes where their parents applied EI constructively daily. They explained how much it contributed to their development and the advantage it gave them in identity formation and maintaining themselves in society. Although Aston, Edith, and Olivia mentioned that they were not deliberately raised with EI skills, they noticed how their upbringing spontaneously included some EI principles. However, Aston, Edith, Kelsey, and Olivia point out how the lack of other EI skills left a significant gap in the growing stages of their lives. They all realise the backlog it caused and how challenging and complex life and relationships can be without it.

Aston began to understand most EI principles when he started his own EI research, and EI training refined and enhanced this knowledge. However, the other participants did not have previous knowledge of EI and were able to bridge this gap with the EI training they underwent. Since their training, AJ, Aston, Edith, and Tony have consciously applied EI skills in rearing their children and still do. Due to this, Aston and Edith testified how their children exhibited EI characteristics as teenagers

174

and young adults, distinguishing them from their peers and even people much older than them. Edith believes that children should understand the naturalness of emotions and how to deal with them from an early age. Teaching them some basics of EI, effective communication, love, and the skill to transfer this knowledge remains fundamental; otherwise, rebellion can arise, as she experienced as a child. The EI knowledge Aston gained through training made him realise there are better ways to handle situations with his children than he was used to when growing up. Improved methods that he consequently applied brought significantly different results. He has changed and believes that applying EI principles has freed him to maintain healthier relationships with his children and others, be mentally healthier, develop better self-esteem, and believe in himself more.

EI is thus a lifelong journey that prepares one to improve, all the participants agreed, emphasising that the Life Phase Context plays a worthy role in contextualising EI, something you must apply sustainably. All participants testified that EI develops within you; when it does, you use it with anyone and express it within every circumstance you find yourself. It is a lifelong journey. They further expressed that you must strive to constructively apply EI despite your feelings, especially during turbulent events. When something triggers you, pushing you to a point where you do not want to be or forcing you to involve yourself, you must use EI tools. Therefore, they believe EI requires discipline, tremendous work, and self-change. It is a powerful skill you constantly need to develop with time, a long-term investigating process of learning and improving.

6.2.3   Experiences and Views of EI Related to Association Context

This context refers to the association of people – whom they socialise with (see section 2.5.1).

Developing your identity starts within the family for every individual, all participants agree. Gaining EI skills has a reciprocal influence on family members. AJ calls the family his close trust circle, where he can bounce ideas with people he can trust and feel comfortable being who he is. His EI skills evolved because even though being raised with EI, he had to practice these skills, which improved as he grew older.

Trust boundaries, especially, were vague to him. EI training specifically allowed him to set clear boundaries: whom he wanted to let into which circle, meaning his close trust circle, and then more distant circles of friends, colleagues, and strangers.

In the family, the child must experience the space and safety of recognising and expressing different emotions and their appropriateness, especially in broken homes where trauma may play a prominent role, Edith explained. You should constantly be aware, listen effectively to another's needs, and reflect on the information you have gained to validate it in your response. Edith experienced first-hand how being mindful of EI in adapting to all the different situations as your family life progresses remains a significant challenge. Tony agrees that effective communication, especially listening skills, is vital, and adults should manage the emotions in the room. In that way, children learn and acquire skills. It should be a collaborative process between parents and children. The better and deeper your understanding of EI, the more it helps you realise what you do right or wrong in every situation. Tony further claims that even your vocabulary changes when you gain EI skills.

Edith also believes that each individual in the family deserves their rightful place, with ample space for each unique personality. She explained the various creative ways she applied to accommodate her children individually without generalising. When she was in an abusive marriage, a prevalent reality in many families, she taught her kids to recognise emotional manipulation and deal with it intelligently. Aston further emphasised the need for good EI leaders, whether as parents or managers of businesses. However, all participants agree that the family is the immediate context where it starts and where we learn. Still, as Edith and Olivia noticed, it can also be the source of people's struggles if EI is not applied and taught. Many difficulties we as adults experience, especially when interacting with others outside our family, is where the need for EI becomes even more recognisably evident, mentioned Olivia.

All the participants repeatedly emphasised the value EI training added to their socialisation with others: their peer group, friends, and general relationships. Kelsey mentioned how it helped her feel safe in her world. It took time to feel comfortable and to open up to others more about his thoughts and feelings, AJ similarly admitted. He continued that it nevertheless requires thorough self-understanding and steadfast

self-management to stand firm in an emotionally unintelligent society where people regard EI as unnecessary. The uninformed are easily critical and judgmental, especially if they do not understand what EI is or what it involves. Aston added that with EI knowledge, your outlook on life undoubtedly changes and your behaviour accordingly, especially when you adopt these skills to your newly learnt way of thinking. He, therefore, strongly feels that you should set the example to establish a standard that will encourage positive imitative learning for others to follow spontaneously. Practising EI remains an enormous responsibility, all participants agree.

According to Kelsey, relational nature, orientation, or historical ties with those you associate with, determines the skills you will apply, as it may differ with family, friends, or colleagues. EI skills do not change, but every situation requires a different approach, and contentment has a considerable influence. Interacting with people comes naturally to some participants, while it became easier for others after they have learned EI skills. Allowing people into his social circles was good for AJ's personal life, relationships, and professional life. Most participants mentioned that being emotionally intelligent allowed them to choose their relationships and the boundaries they set and to be content with that.

6.2.4 Experiences and Views Related to Localisation Context

This context refers to the location of people when they socialise (see section 2.5.2).

All the participants agreed that EI is important in any location, and because many people are not aware of or practising EI, they stressed the importance of training people in EI: at home, school (teachers and learners), and the workplace (especially management and employees of companies). People trained in EI can then practice it anywhere – at home, in an educational setting, in the workplace or a recreational situation.

Olivia thinks you behave in a certain way to belong in your different circles, depending on whether it is recreational, educational, or occupational. If you developed EI and practised it to a certain extent, you will activate it every time,

177

regardless of the setting but indeed, according to it. Kelsey, Olivia, and Tony mentioned that behaviour varies according to the situation. People have a role depending on the circles with which they associate. Olivia regards this as balance because there is a way you behave in every different situation and with different people; for example, you will not act the same with your family as with your friends. Tony's interesting comment was that people tend to communicate with those who think alike and complement them but seldom with those who think completely differently, thus enhancing similarities instead of differences. He believes emotionally intelligent people are eager to learn from those with different opinions or knowledge because it creates constructive discussions and critical thinking and solves problems. Breaking down walls of prejudices and incorrect assumptions can start addressing genuine issues. Therefore, he concluded that EI should commemorate both similarities and differences.

All the participants agree that sharing EI knowledge starts with living it and setting an example; by actively modelling it and sharing through training. Training should be accessible and presented on the level of trainees (whether training children at home or school or adults at a company). From the needs assessments and training Aston does across a wide range of companies, he found that the content of the EI training program should be easy to understand for any person. It must convey concepts and the essence of the program in simple language that makes practical sense to remain attractive for trainees to apply practically and effectively. Training will not benefit them if trainees do not understand what they need to learn and why, and how to use it in their daily lives, whether at work, school, or home. EI usually first becomes visible during human interaction. Some participants, like Aston and Tony, noticed that the people they train often suppose they are more emotionally intelligent than they actually are. The 360-degree EI assessment results usually reveal the contrary. A second problem Tony detected is that people tend to advise others quickly without applying empathy. Thus, people think EI only involves controlling one's personal emotions without realising its role in mutual interaction.

Motivation is crucial when encouraging people to do EI training, Edith noted. Playing a significant role in the training of professional officials, she believes that the selection of candidates and the reasons for training presented to them determines

the degree to which trainees buy into and take responsibility for the process. It will ultimately also determine the success of the training. However, EI training should not be limited to business and the workplace. All the participants agree that it must start with children, parents, and educational staff. It should be a collaborative effort of cooperation between learners and trainers. Several participants (AJ, Aston, and Tony) get schools involved to create a culture of active participation in learning and promoting EI skills. Nonetheless, they believe that responsibility starts with parents at home. Some participants go as far as to say that being EI proficient should be a requirement for every individual.

The participants stressed the importance of EI training in the home and school contexts, but they also especially commented about EI training in companies (or generally in the workplace). When Aston refers to the behavioural practices at companies, he emphasises that we should distinguish between conditioned cultural behaviour and EI. Companies can have a task-driven or people-driven benchmark or both. Usually, task-driven targets of management focus more on the company's turnover than the health of the corporate culture and its people. According to all the research participants, EI training is crucial in companies because having EI-skilled workers is essential for effective communication, problem-solving and constructive collaboration in the team. They also believe that it brings a sense of compassion for one another, which gives each employee the feeling that they are valuable and fit into the business structure. In that way, they work, focused on a common goal, improving productivity and effectiveness. They further agree that trainees must realise that the EI skills they learn are essential because if they consider, for example, kindness as a weakness, it will be challenging to exercise and apply empathy, which is a fundamental EI skill.

A typical participant comment was that the common challenge to them in the corporate environment, where EI is still a relatively unknown concept, is creating awareness of EI's existence and importance. People do not know about it or remain unaware until they experience problems and need intervention. Many companies remain to maintain the primary goal of making a profit, consequently neglecting the human dignity of their staff in the process. As a result, a "don't care" attitude arises among employees, especially when they feel neglected. Thus, all participants agree

that leaders, mediators, and coaches should be skilled in EI because they exert the most influence on others' lives. Mediators that resolve conflict situations in businesses, in particular, should be EI competent since they are usually the constant force taking the lead to resolve issues in emotionally charged, turbulent situations with demanding clients or personnel.

Furthermore, all the participants agree that EI requires thorough training. Because it is such a comprehensive concept that requires intensive effort, people should thoroughly understand its scope and choose to practice it daily. It is a process that takes time, months or even years. Participants like Aston and Tony experienced several cases where applying EI skills and staff training in companies made a significant difference; productivity increased, and problems decreased. They also saw the opposite, where the absence of EI had profound negative consequences for the company. According to Olivia, lacking EI training can cause the absence of successful and effective leadership skills. The presence of EI-skilled leaders involves the appreciation, regard, and practical application of EI and technical skills. That consequently leads to a sense of cohesion within the company involving and including everyone. Tony believes a mutually collaborative attitude that benefits everyone – the employee, management, and the company – is crucial and should be established and in place. Times of crisis, such as the recent pandemic, usually test mutual loyalty, and this is usually where EI skill is of great value. Edith noticed that during collective suffering, parties tend to develop a sense of togetherness that carries them through but also keeps the company healthy and standing. Here, empathy, an essential component of EI, particularly plays a significant role.

6.2.5   Experiences and Views Related to Methodical Context

This context refers to the method by which people socialise. Here two specific contexts emerged: face-to-face and virtual interaction methods (see section 2.5.4).

Many message elements are lost when the person you communicate with is not in your presence. All the participants agree that effective communication in the virtual space is thus much more complex, requiring more effort. The pandemic necessitated technology-mediated communication, exposing the immense gaps in essential EI

competencies. Furthermore, it also feels as if personal and technologically mediated communication lately compete for people's attention, Aston mentioned. All the participants in the study still prefer personal interaction when dealing with people. However, then they agree that there is room for the recent changes that technology brings. Therefore, the move to the online world was inevitable and necessitated immense adaptation and EI skills.

The application of EI skills plays a vital role in both personal and technological methods of communication. Because face-to-face communication was the most prominent method in the past, everyone is used to it and uses additional cues such as body language, facial expression and gestures as essential props that help guide the conversation according to EI principles. However, all participants experience losing these cues during technologically mediated communication which demands more diverse types of input and responsibility from the parties to convey messages successfully.

The restraint regulations of the past pandemic forced unexpected and unfamiliar digital methods, which were necessary then. It has its advantages and disadvantages participants notice. However, these methods did not fall into disuse after the lifting of restrictions. On the contrary, it became even more prominent. In particular, in-person training switched to e-learning, which Edith considers the most positive move. They accommodate many more candidates over a wider geographical area in one presentation making attendance accessible for more participants, even those who could not previously attend training. They save on manuals, venues, food, travel, and accommodation costs, making training significantly more cost-effective. As a result, the company where Edith works will never return to in-person training again. Nevertheless, according to all the participants, it is, therefore, necessary to focus on how to practice EI skills in digital contexts.

According to Tony, restriction and isolation significantly disadvantage human interaction in general. People who thrive on social interaction have suffered immensely. On the other hand, using virtual platforms has created a kind of escape for those who prefer to be alone instead, causing them to withdraw even further.

That harmed the social development part of EI tremendously, he remarked. EI encourages socialisation, and restriction and isolation limit connections and slow down a healthy interaction process, causing numerous organisational problems. Since the choice of hybrid working, where employees can choose their workplace, such as the company office, their home or alternative office space, became generally accepted, it is everyone's responsibility to maintain human contact, believes Edith. She remarked that people should still try to go out, see friends and connect with others more often, especially colleagues. EI ties to commitment; everyone should accept ownership and accountability when they feel alone and isolated. Virtual communication makes it easier because you can communicate geographically broader, but it is also unfavourable because people are not together. Therefore, Edith commented that one must be mindful of being consistent with EI values when these things happen and prepare to act, as adapting to a changing world requires balance and flexibility.

Although man controls technology, it poses many challenges. Large masses of society readily use social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and the like. Aston argues that this can have catastrophic consequences to cause enormous damage without EI. Either people do not interact with others, or when they do on these platforms, they behave in any manner that suits them, whether good or bad. Abusive poor behaviour is entirely inconsistent with social cohesion and the promotion of EI. Aston claims that we will have people in charge of technology who have no sense of humanity. When not used responsibly, technology can cause human interaction to deteriorate. He hopes that instead of technology opposing EI, as may be the case, it should complement EI.

On the positive side, technology greatly facilitates the delivery of training courses, as most participants experienced. Culturally diverse and geographically larger audiences interconnect more and can influence each other positively. Participants like Aston and Edith agree that one can use the media well in promoting EI. Most participants found that the presentation style requires much more attention and creativity in how presenters have to keep their audiences engaged. Because digital interaction is quite impersonal, it is an adjustment to act emotionally intelligent effectively, whether teaching a course, conducting a meeting, or simply drafting an

email. The participants' general suggestion is a change in communication style that will demonstrate EI: paying attention to aspects such as tone of voice, approach, and attitude and constantly keeping the human element in mind. Olivia and Tony used the example of attendees who fail to switch on their cameras during virtual meetings or training, which ultimately creates interaction problems. However, as technology develops, it becomes a more prominent tool for the future.

6.2.6   Summary of Experiences of Participants Uncovered through Interviews

Without exception, all the participants stated how the knowledge they gained from the neuro agility profile, a crucial part of the EI training, affected them positively. It added value to their lives and those they still influence through ordinary interaction, training, or childrearing. They experience how awareness and knowledge continuously contribute to personal development to identify and regulate their thoughts and emotions. It leads to an organised perspective to form their self-structure, identity, and purpose, to create a new vision and grow emotionally. It equips them with an improved understanding of their strengths which they share for the benefit of others but mainly aids in acknowledging shortcomings and developing strategies to break limiting self-beliefs and improve weaknesses in general. The participants agree that EI training stimulated an ongoing soul-searching process. Some expressed disappointment that they could not have the luxury of benefiting from this intervention at a much younger age.

All participants consider the Life Phase Context essential for acquiring EI knowledge and learning skills for forming healthy habits they can apply from childhood. Edith perceives each phase of one's life as entirely different from other phases, presenting unique challenges, and one must constantly adapt to situations as one progresses. She believes that understanding neurological makeup forces you to look at your past and analyse where you are now to know where you need healing. Although not all of my participants were fortunate to be exposed to EI when they grew up, those who did (AJ and Tony) testified that its value gave them an edge in life. For all participants, parenting is the primary and most important for launching children into life equipped with the necessary skills to benefit them from childhood through puberty to adulthood.

The associational context stands out for most of the participants. They believe that the association (especially the home: family and close relations) and localisation (educational) contexts should cooperate in improving EI awareness. Some have described the Association Context as the more personal comfort zone, a quiet space where you can learn and practice skills. It is easier to transfer knowledge to others from there. Knowing and being aware of your wiring without being judged allows you to develop and be the best you can be for others. Your home and amongst your dearest family and friends should be where you can be yourself, express yourself and allow others to do the same, with respect – your safe place, as some described it. In my participants' view, each individual is different and unique and requires equal space and opportunity to live out who they are. From there, it spreads further and seeing that one associates with others daily, your different relationships with your family, friends, colleagues and even strangers necessitate skilled EI competencies that benefit everyone, all participants agree.

Furthermore, EI-skilled individuals complement the location where they socialise, be it school, work, or even recreational environments. All the participants clearly distinguish between task- and people orientation and how to integrate them into daily life. Incorporating people orientation with task orientation is a significant shortcoming in today's society, especially in companies. The participants consider people orientation as an essential element. The reason is that positive outcomes are better attainable when considering people's emotional sides in all contexts of society because it creates a dignity that makes them feel worthy. Aston, Olivia, and Tony noticed how a predominantly task-driven mindset of a company's management could suffocate the sense of humanity and destroy healthy human relationships in any community of the Localisation Context. This phenomenon emerged clearly, as several participants mentioned it in their interviews. They also believe that if EI skills develop into a lifestyle, it will positively impact those with whom one associates, for example, colleagues in the workplace.

Even though everything is moving more prominently in a digital direction as technology develops, people still talk to each other (whether face-to-face or digitally). All participants remarked that there are many ways to behave emotionally intelligently, even in a digital environment, which thus inescapably involves the

Methodical Context in applying EI skills. EI must still be the source, the foundation, the energy, or the driver of how people interact with each other. Technology may be saving on the pocket but taxing the heart when inappropriately used, but Tony believes that if used correctly, you can influence people positively. Utilising digital platforms as essential and ideal means of communication could expand EI globally when used smartly. Aston likewise emphasised that now is a critical time to decide how they can "technologise" EI – to use technology in a human-friendly manner. EI must fit into this new lifestyle, and people must apply it accordingly.

In summary, the general message from the participants is: Claiming to be emotionally intelligent must manifest in your life. Reading a book about it or doing a course does not make you emotionally intelligent. Instead, practising EI knowledge ultimately demonstrates the mastery of skills – you must become them. They further emphasise that EI is a life journey, having an open mind to learn about yourself and others from experience. Getting it right may not always be easy because you may have to go against the norm, sometimes make unpopular choices, and keep moving towards what you know is right despite what others think or do or when they criticise you. Being emotionally intelligent has a dual purpose: a) To apply it to yourself, and b) to educate the world by creating awareness, living it, setting the example, and teaching the uninformed. Aston propagates the idea of training people to move from being unconsciously incompetent to mastering the skill of being emotionally intelligent. He believes that people must first understand what EI is and why they need it before becoming proficient in applying EI. It becomes a *will* to develop, to benefit oneself and others.

6.3   Themes that Emerged from Analysis of Participant Data

The analysis process included information from all participant interviews of the study, which I transcribed word-for-word. The coding and categorisation of this information (using an Excel spreadsheet) highlighted prominent aspects from all participant discussions that formed the following themes spontaneously. It reflects each participant's subjective experience and perception of applying EI skills in the relevant contexts. These themes, not in any particular order of importance, formed a coherent narrative for inferences and conclusions that I explained in the different sections of

this concluding chapter. Summarised, these are:

6.3.1   Transfer of Essential Knowledge

All the participants see the knowledge of EI and having EI skills as essential, and they consider the generational transferability of such information as very valuable and even crucial. Some participants were introduced to EI at an early age, others much later. They recognise and realise the value and extent to which it enriches their lives and improves society through them (or through emotionally intelligent people). They believe it must be passed down through generations, highlighting the parental home (Association Context), school (Localisation Context) and childhood (Life Phase Context) as the primary points of departure. Love and care drive this mission. However, EI should also be transferred in other localisations such as recreational groups, businesses and workplaces by presenting training and exhibiting EI in one's behaviour and through example.

Several participants noted that they learnt a limited amount of EI skills in their upbringing as children, which form part of their culture, and transferred from cultural conceptions without labelling it as EI. Therefore, all participants emphasised that acquiring comprehensive essential EI knowledge is impossible without sharing knowledge through appropriate training or instruction and example.

6.3.2   Assessments and Training

The participants mentioned how results obtained from assessments of the NL model explained their unique neurological makeup, which made particular sense for them to understand why they think the way they do. For a few of my participants, this allowed them to accept and be content with their identity without feeling ashamed for what they previously considered flaws. These results pointed out strengths some had previously interpreted as weaknesses and can now be used to their advantage for a more fulfilled life, such as Olivia's expressive nature. In addition, the content of the EI training program brought knowledge of self-understanding and social understanding that equips and enables them to maintain themselves comfortably in a complex society. All the participants testified that the program improved their self-concept and self-worth. Learned skills allow them to apply skills practically.

6.3.3   Enthusiasm, Excitement, Positive Attitude

It was noticeable with how much enthusiasm and excitement the participants took part in the interviews, and observing their positive attitude towards EI was refreshing. EI is a passion, a subject they believe in to inspire a global society. They believe this attitude is something you carry with you, regardless of the context and that you model to everyone you deal with, as a parent, friend, or colleague, irrespective of the mode of interaction. It involves all relevant contexts of this study, therefore, playing out widely across them. It starts with yourself inspiring others, all participants noted.

6.3.4   Humanity

Emphasis by the participants repeatedly focused on the gap where industry completely ignores humanity, continuing to prioritise performance-based technical knowledge to achieve goals and hit targets. It tends to create an impersonal, neglected, even "bleeding" society at home, school, or work, as many participants highlighted and experienced. This trend still applies worldwide, and some countries ignore the humanitarian factor entirely, some participants noticed. This notion also applies across contexts. Children grow up and adapt in an environment where this attitude is a priority and passed down from generation to generation. It requires a paradigm shift to sway people's attitudes by prioritising empathic ways with which you treat others, whether it is your family member, peer, or colleague: humanity and respect for another's being, not only for what they do but for who they are. All my participants concurred that due to the traditional ways of functioning so deeply rooted in society, it takes a sustained effort of them to convince people otherwise. And it is precisely here that EI plays such a key role.

6.3.5   Lifestyle

A theme that mainly emerged in the interviews describes EI as a lifestyle rather than a skill. The participants' standpoint is that one manifests certain behaviours in every moment of one's existence. Behaviour is a choice. EI requires cognitive input. It thus depends on each person whether they consider EI when choosing behaviour and actions. All participants unequivocally view EI as a lifestyle, a way of life entirely woven into one's daily existence, regardless of their immediate context, thus again

involving all the relevant contexts of this study. AJ described it as a part of you that you wake up with, carry throughout the day, and take to bed at night. It is not something you own like an object but what you practice. It is also not something you acquire overnight but learn and practice over time as you gain experience. Olivia mentioned that it is not a static characteristic but grows over time with conscious effort. According to the participants, it is precisely the most challenging circumstances, which can occur in any context, that test EI behaviour and skills and judge its success.

6.3.6   Empathy, the Essence of EI

Several of the EI theories, such as that of Bar-On (2006), Goleman (1998), and Petrides (2010), consider empathy as an essential element of EI, so much so that they incorporated it into their EQ assessments. Furthermore, findings of research studies such as Bratianu's (2015), Clark-Polner and Clark's (2014), Fer's (2004), and B. Kelly et al.'s (2004) emphasised the essential role that empathy, as an EI skill plays in interpersonal interaction, whether in the professional or personal lives of people. The Neuro-Link Program incorporated empathy as the first interpersonal competency module theme in their EI training program. During this study's interviews, all the participants repeatedly mentioned empathy, directly or indirectly, as vital to social interaction. Empathy is, thus, probably the most significant aspect of EI, its essence, and it includes empathy for self and others. Empathy involves the cognitive and emotional contribution of an observer or listener; to acknowledge and be sensitive to another person's emotions. Without empathy, we will not be able to recognise the human dignity of others. From what they conveyed in the interviews, it seemed to me that the participants of this study grasp it, understand it, live it, and transfer it across all relevant contexts.

6.3.7   Themes Summary

Themes emerged spontaneously from interviews. Since almost all the themes were mentioned pertinently in all the interviews, they were easily identifiable because the participants were mostly unanimous about their experience of applying EI in their different contexts. Although empathy and humanity form part of the EI training program, how genuinely the participants experience and value it is evident.

Furthermore, the knowledge and understanding of EI inspire the participants to such a great extent that it is visible in how they talk about, apply, and promote it. It is also noticeable that the essence of the purpose of EI across contextual boundaries reflects in these emerging themes.

6.4   How Findings Relate to Psychological Branches and Approaches, Theory, and Existing Research

6.4.1   Psychological Branches and Approaches

In the Cognitive Psychology branch of the discipline, social cognition (R. J. Sternberg & K. Sternberg, 2009) involves attitudes, attribution, and group dynamics. Cognitive processes, such as attention, perception, thinking and problem-solving (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2002), are essential when working things out for oneself or interacting socially. This study's findings reflect that EI requires conscious action of continuous thinking, choices, decision making and the execution thereof. Given that cognition is involved in everything possible a human being might do, extensive and sustained cognitive action, regardless of the context, is thus omnipresent in EI.

Understanding the influence of the physical environment on behaviour is inextricably linked to the social aspects of the environment. That consequently connects the contextualisation of EI with the Social- and Environmental Psychology branches. The past pandemic highlights Cassidy's (2013) person-in-context perspective (also discussed under 1.4.2) when considering three areas of research describing how people respond to their environments: (a) Environmental perception – how we were restricted to moving around and socialise freely, required introspection on how we perceived these *newly established* environmental changes, and; (b) Environmental appreciation – forced us to determine how we felt about these changes; and (c) Environmental personality – required us to distinguish how we had to adjust and respond accordingly. Thus, concerning Cassidy's perspective, being able to move around freely is a given that no one considers much consciously until you lose that privilege, as happened during the pandemic, which forced people to reconsider their perception of and appreciation for their social environment. The participants testified how the restrictions impacted people's behaviour during and after Covid. They noticed a definite change in their behaviour and of those they associated and worked

with, which could be an interesting area of research for Social- and Environmental Psychology.

The pandemic restrictions thus showed the considerable influence that social variables had on people's perceptions, attitudes, behaviour, and intergroup phenomena (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2002). That implies the actual, imagined, or limited presence of others (Allport, 1985, as cited in Social psychology, n.d.) or their complete absence, as some people may have experienced during the pandemic restrictions. It pertains to the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of Social Psychology, which are the two pillars of EI. All the participants repeatedly testified to the indispensability of inter- and intrapersonal interaction in applying EI skills. Given the information from their interviews, it became clear that they consider these two facets the golden thread we can draw throughout EI, regardless of the context, as interaction always involves self and others. Considering that the restrictions of the pandemic affected social interaction, intra- and interpersonal communication suffered quite a bit, as most participants noticed and experienced.

Since EI starts with self-understanding and the learnt skills we practice, it spreads systematically to society, thus including Community Psychology as an inseparable applicable part in contextualising EI. By the nature of their professions, each participant practices and transfers the skill resources of EI to others, thereby displaying their relationships with their communities and society in general, which aligns with the functioning goals of Community Psychology.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory which explains human development as a prolonged transformation process, contributed significantly to forming the Four-Dimensional Context Model I used to explore EI, which includes, among other things, the Life Phase Context. Relating to this concept of development, all participants testified that EI is a continuous behavioural growth process from awareness to further development and refinement throughout a person's life. Developmental Psychology, for example, aims to understand and document the changes in people over their lifetime (Kohlberg, 1982; Piaget, 1972), therefore, undoubtedly connecting this branch of Psychology as part of the contextualisation of EI. Contextualising EI thus involves several branches of

Psychology.

6.4.2   Theory

During this research study, I attempted to evaluate the applicability of the chosen theories within the Four-Dimensional Context Model to determine whether these theoretical predictions apply to my study. All three chosen approaches focus on individual functioning, behaviour, and growth in social settings. Individuals are an inseparable part of all contexts, facilitating the contextualisation of EI behaviour. The Ecological Theory and Person-Context Interaction Theory bring contexts and the individual together, while the Theory of Planned Behavior thus focuses on the internal behaviour of the individual.

6.4.2.1. Kelly's Ecological Theory

The Ecological Theory of Kelly (Jason et al., 2016) determines the environment's influence on the individual and how the individual influences the environment accordingly. It focuses on the essential role the community and environment play in how people interact and relate to each other, emphasising the intra- and interpersonal dimensions of EI. In all the interviews, the participants testified how their quality of life increased with the learning and application of EI skills and input from others, which equally benefit anyone they come into contact with. It starts with the immediate family and then spreads to the broader society, regardless of the context. When one considers the participants' learning and applying of EI skills according to the four principles of Kelly's Ecological Theory, one can say that their acquiring and demonstrating of EI (a) interdependently impact their closer relations and the broader community in which they function. They bring new skills that result in the (b) circulation of shared resources, allowing everyone to (c) adapt to bring about (d) successful change in various contexts. That applies to any relevant contexts mentioned in this study (see section 3.4.3).

6.4.2.2   The Person-Context Interaction Theory

According to the Person-Context Interaction Theory proposed by Magnusson and Stattin (1998), all behavioural manifestations are significant in human interaction and

their situations. The individual and his environment form a unit and emphasise the close dependence of individual functioning and development on social, cultural, and physical input, a process predominantly activated by a range of cognitive, emotional, and other facets of the mental system. Behaviour varies according to the nature of the situation, guided by an individual's interpretation of the environment, which involves biological, mental, emotional, and social factors. As EI behaviour involves all of the above, it plays a significant role in the reciprocal interaction between individuals and their situations. One's actions vary according to how one assesses external information, which differs from situation to situation. That activates the physiological system influencing thoughts and emotions. As deduced from the interviews, EI behaviour is not static but will vary according to experience and skill to deliver relevant output. Furthermore, regardless of the context, whether the life phase-, association-, localisation- or methodical context, the interactive reciprocal role between individual and environment significantly influences each participant's EI behaviour, development, and growth. This theory is, therefore, relevant when studying and researching EI.

6.4.2.3   Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's (2012) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains how individuals choose their behaviour and its intentions in relation to their environment. The key component of this model is prospective behaviour. TPB states that behaviour in social interest is primarily voluntary, which is the intent of EI-skilled people. Their EI-motivated intentions are consequently the principal determinant and best predictor of specific behaviour. From the interviews, it was clear that participants choose emotionally intelligent behaviour to benefit themselves and the wider community, whether it is another person or a social environment such as the family or workplace. Their understanding that their EI benefits themselves and others drives their choices: Most participants testified that becoming aware of and learning EI skills gave them the insight to constantly decide how and where to adapt and change their actions and behaviour. That brought about improvement in their social interaction with others. However, they also realise this can have a far-reaching benefit for society if every person operates from the same premise. That is why they apply these skills and convey them to others through modelling and training, regardless of the context. The

TPB assumes that individuals evaluate available information to make logical, reasoned decisions to choose specific behaviours. EI knowledge equips them with skills to make beneficial logical, reasoned decisions. That proves this theory appropriately applies to the use of EI skills in all relevant contexts.

6.4.3   How Findings Connect to Existing Research

In their research study, Ybarra et al. (2012) noted that the importance of the social context in which people use their EI skills requires comprehensive research. In addition, they state that research studies described thus far use participant feedback in laboratory settings or hypothetical, verbal descriptions of social situations to report on people's opinions and feelings, which may not reflect actual thoughts and feelings. This study, however, attempted to do an in-depth investigation and describe the use of EI in the diverse nature of contexts as described in the Four-Dimensional Context Model by reflecting participants' actual experiences through their narratives. Participants' interviews took place in their natural settings. It, thus, gives a glimpse of their subjective opinions and feelings, which is a very conscious activity in the reality of their lives. Since this was a qualitative study, participants' perspectives and experiences of applying EI in these contexts emerged through their narratives. Habermas and Hatiboğlu (2014) claim that people draw upon earlier or present experiences in life narratives to understand past actions. The participants' life stories also explored their past, and they described their family constellation and their family and socio-cultural histories, emphasising the Life Phase Context.

Ybarra et al. (2012) further raised questions on how social context influences EI, which navigates, shapes, guides and constrains a person's EI, regardless of the emotional EI level they think they hold. This study's interviews uncovered that circumstances challenge one constantly to use EI skills irrespective of the context. The participants of this study unswervingly testified that EI is not static or a one-time item that you own but remains a continuous conscious action of trial and error, adaptation, and practice under changing circumstances. The success with which one applies EI improves as one practices skills that become automatic, as Ybarra et al. similarly mentioned. Hence, the recommended Neuro-Link EI Training Program is

crucial, as one of my participants also emphasised, since anyone must be able to apply learnt skills practically.

Ybarra et al. assert that the truth and accuracy of social events are difficult to ascertain. Therefore, the meanings one attaches to them are flexible and interpretable. From the interviews of this study, it appears that although any social situation is difficult to predict, determine, or interpret accurately, the participants experienced that they can rely on the results and the feedback they get from applying EI skills to navigate their successful application of EI in future.

Matthews et al. (2007) admit that EI is essential, but a high EI could also be harmful. When a person has excessive self-enhancement or inflated self-esteem that manifests as narcissism, it leads to denial of problems and has a consequential "dark side", they noted. Inferences from interviews in this study suggest, on the contrary, that excessive self-enhancement or inflated self-esteem does not reflect a high EI level but rather a lack of EI skills.

The participants agree with what Dalip Singh describes, in his psychological dimensions of EI, that one's goal should be to strive for emotional sensitivity, maturity, and competence (Behera, 2016). This maturity and competency Singh mentions are not necessarily linked to a person's age but rather to the experience they gain during the continuous practice to improve their EI skills, as my participants emphasised. However, accumulated life experience likely contributes to EI; there is a slight increase in some elements of EI with age, as Fariselli et al. (2008) noted. All the participants of this study agree that it is a developing ability. It starts with becoming aware of EI and remains a lifelong process of development and growth, as findings from my interviews regarding the Life Phase Context pertinently indicated. That is following the findings of Fariselli.

In agreement with the findings of Frolova et al. (2019), my participants mentioned that EI could positively affect children's development if instilled early, transforming them into better persons. Children trained in these skills and familiar with EI develop respect for others' opinions and practise positive interaction. The participants agree that we should consider our youth an essential source of human capital, as Behera

194

(2016) stated. According to Dost et al. (2017), children who understand the role of emotions would have a better foundation for a successful future. Tony, one of my study participants, could attest to this comment. A teacher initially identified him as a slow learner and suggested he should be in a special class for children with particular needs to accommodate his problem. That caused immense uncertainties as a child. However, his parents' refusal to accept such a judgement and the guidance and assistance they modelled in an emotionally intelligent manner enabled him to cope with emotions caused by this from an early age and taught him valuable EI skills. He developed to currently studying for a doctorate in Physiology.

The participants of this study agreed that the home is the ideal place where gaining emotional skills begins, from where it escalates to other environments/contexts. It corresponds with what researchers such as Behera (2016), Debaryshe and Fryxell (1998), Ghanawat et al. (2016), Kreppner (2000), Magnusson and Stattin (1998), and Schutte et al. (2013) noted. The essential finding of Ghanawat et al. is that children whose parents display constructive EI-related behaviours in everyday life are most likely to acquire EI skills as part of their behavioural repertoire. That leads to parent-child socialisation practices that encourage the development of EI in children and adolescents to regulate their emotional reactions towards others and cultivate good social skills and pro-social behaviour. Testimonies from this study's interviews confirm these researchers' findings. Those brought up with EI (AJ and Tony) confirmed the value it added to their personal and social lives. The others (Aston, Edith, Kelsey, and Olivia) emphasised the gap and loss they suffered due to the lack thereof in their upbringing. By applying EI skills in their children's upbringing, Aston and Edith noticed a significant difference in their children's behaviour compared to that of their peers. That highlights the development and application of EI in the life phase and socialisation contexts. It further supports Ghanawat et al.'s proposal for school-based intervention EI programs as a tool for learners with disturbed family functioning and poor EI, highlighting the Localisation Context.

The understanding of EI and learning and practising skills have a constructive, positive effect on all the participants in this study, resulting in a positive attitude. All confirmed that learning EI skills contributed to a stronger, more secure self-image, promoting a sturdier belief and confidence in their abilities and judgement.

Therefore, they will not hesitate to face confrontation to assert a strong point of view for the greater good or choose to feel less pleasant in a situation where such a feeling can eventually be beneficial. It confirms what Ford and Tamir (2012) found: People with high EI are more skilled at flexibly using their emotions to achieve goals. Those, who choose useful feelings, even if they are unpleasant to experience over pleasant feelings that are useless, understand their emotions, try to regulate them strategically and are higher in EI, they noted. Matthews et al. (2007) described EI as a beneficial foreseeable resource in occupational contexts with leadership, teamwork and effective communication requirements. They noted that EI might be beneficial in other, such as clinical and educational, contexts as well. However, the participants in this study emphasised that EI skills are indispensable for successful performance in individual tasks, regardless of the context.

According to Matthews et al. (2007), it is still uncertain whether successful programs targeting specific skills apply to a particular context instead of global intelligence. They suggest a comprehensive research study examining the effect of EI training worldwide could shed more light on this. This current study also contributes to investigating the impact of EI in various countries since some of the participants are of international origin. Most of the participants offer training, among others also, specifically the Neuro-Link EI Training Program, to a global audience. They testified to the program's effectiveness and that EI skills are globally common and appropriate across contexts. Although understanding it is still limited in most countries, the EI concept remains universally the same regardless of the culture to which one belongs. It was noticeable that the meanings of participants' perceptions of EI and the implications of applying learnt skills do not differ depending on their respective roles or cultural reference. They all testified that their acquired EI knowledge positively affects their well-being and positively impacts their relationships with family members, peers, friends, and colleagues. Their benefit from the knowledge improved their coping strategies in general. All the participants in this study are staunch propagators for expanding EI knowledge and skills, increasing available knowledge regarding using these skills in diverse contexts and encouraging the public to develop them for general life improvement. The study participants further agree that raising awareness for EI training is the most critical task, as Behera (2016) likewise noted.

According to all participants, awareness begins at home, where parents model the correct EI behaviour, emphasising practice, training, and improvement. School education should also collaborate so that teachers work with parents to raise awareness and train EI skills. The participants agree that valuing the child's needs, wishes, and developing personality is essential to incorporating EI training, as B. Kelly et al. (2004) similarly explained. That will produce a strengthened individual who, in their professional life, will already possess those skills to benefit them and the company where they are employed, accenting the Localisation Context.

Since globalisation and work have expanded across international borders, Dost et al. (2017) and Lin et al. (2012) suggested that training in EI skills should be available in foreign languages. Not only is the Neuro-Link Program available in additional languages, but participants in this study are reaching out to several countries to provide EI training. One of the participants mainly offers language teaching to international students in her country of residence, where she explicitly incorporates EI into their training.

Regarding the methodological context, restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and business expansion worldwide have made virtual means of connection more of an everyday phenomenon that has caused even faster-unprecedented changes in how we communicate. The participants of this study agree with Quisenberry (2018) that relying mainly on technology to manage and coordinate projects has many challenges, such as limited communication, a lack of interaction in the physical presence of others, and "social loafing" (a tendency of laxity which can reduce if users accept liability and responsibility). Considering EI, most participants noticed these challenges and still prefer to be in the physical presence of those they are communicating with since nonverbal cues form such an essential part of communication, which tend to get lost during virtual interaction. The concern they express is that while the use of computers globally bridges distance obstacles, it can bring a sense of convenience that leads to carelessness for people to be with others when it is possible, which they have already found appears to be the case, which confirms the social loafing, previously mentioned. Consequently, this trend can be permanently detrimental to human interaction, damaging the promotion and

progression of EI. The participants further stated that social media platforms could be a dangerous playground for everyone, especially children who do not have EI skills. Following what was found by Behera (2016), all of my participants agree that children who chat with friends and strangers on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and the like need now more than ever to develop EI skills from a very young age. It is equally essential for the broader society.

Based on my interviews with my research participants, I can state that this current research study thus complements existing research, confirms existing notions, and brings answers to some questions but predominantly expands further across contexts.

6.5   Personal Reflection and Conclusions Drawn from the Study

Based on the research question of this study, in an extensive research effort, I could not find similar studies comparing the mutual impact of EI skills across different contexts. Therefore, I considered contextual factors during the planning phase of the research study, which delivered comprehensive feedback from participants. The aim was to analyse the study participants' opinions, experiences, and how they apply skills learnt from the Neuro-Link EI Program in the different contexts of the four-dimensional context model, namely the association-, localisation-, life phase, and Methodical Contexts (Figure 2.2).

As in my previous study (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018), this study once again strengthened my faith in the EI concept and, with the contextualisation of EI, brought interesting added information to the fore. My findings from the previous study indicated that EI training produces positive results. Likewise, this study yielded similar evidence, and since I also completed the training, I can identify with the outcome and participants' points of view: I also experienced that EI training guides people through introspection, whereafter they learn to recognise, acknowledge, and accept their emotions as a given and essential part of their DNA makeup. The unique Neuro-Link approach offers program trainees the opportunity for self-understanding that fosters true identity discovery and self-confidence, consequently enabling constructive self-management. Furthermore, I also found that EI training

leads to the interpersonal understanding to respect and value others for who they are. I also realised that EI training changes the behaviour and attitude of anyone who completes the program, learns the skills, and then applies them. It encourages servant leadership (Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck, 2011) and empathy, increasing social understanding and mutual respect.

The Neuro-Link-EI Training Program succeeds in accommodating a broad spectrum of trainees: The content contains essential research information from a wide range of academic disciplines; it is composed in a way that makes the transfer of skills comprehensible to any participant regardless of age, profession or nationality; and the learnt skills are also practically implementable by any person who follows the program. All trainees can identify with the program's content because it applies to any person's everyday socialisation and existence. That is why I could also relate to the program and am convinced that it can be suitable for many other people.

Thus far, I have focused on when and how my study participants learnt and developed EI skills and how they integrate and apply them across contexts in their lives and society, which I have discussed in detail. Apart from my disciplined upbringing, which included some elementary aspects of EI, I only received official EI training as part of tertiary study and via the Neuro-Link Program. Similarly to my participants, I view EI as a required skill that develops systematically and requires constant practice to master. It is a way of life entirely woven into my daily existence. Emotion, people, and circumstances are variables that bring new challenges daily, constantly requiring conscious choices and advanced EI skills application. I can thus never assume I am entirely EI competent as each situation differs with its unique dynamic. However, I can confidently hope that the relevant EI training I received will equip me with the knowledge and understanding to read situations, recognise the appropriate skills and apply them practically and adequately.

Although I have discussed in detail the application of EI skills by my participants in the chosen contexts of this study separately, it appears that definite boundaries do not limit people from acting emotionally intelligently across contexts. EI skills are not used more intensively or differently in specific contexts than others. Therefore, different skills are not specifically applicable depending on the context. What seems

to be the case is that the context's nature facilitates the application of such skills as the user feels more at home in it. Empathy, for example, remains empathy – unchanged, whether in the family, at the workplace, or in a video call. Context is thus irrelevant when weaving EI into daily life and decision-making. The degree to which each individual practices EI constantly is what matters. When asking whether specific settings encourage EI more than others and to what extent, according to my findings, the answer is no because EI should be a constant occurrence regardless of scene or circumstance. The degree to which people experience the nature of the event and their EI maturity level determines how they will apply EI. It has become clear from the study that some circumstances are more demanding than others, which necessarily challenge and test the successful application of EI skills. In these situations, we improve personal growth. Thus, in some settings applying EI skills comes naturally and efficiently. Still, not easily in others, such as challenging situations, and the EI experience of the user is the determining factor, regardless of the context.

Nevertheless, I was also interested in finding out whether or not participants share similar views of their experience of applied learnt EI skills in the relevant contexts. It unequivocally happened to be the case. Regardless of the culture, education, age, profession or gender of my participants, who indeed differ from each other in many respects, it seems that EI is as universal as being human in itself and is experienced and interpreted in the same manner by everyone. The similarities and differences regarding applying EI skills do not differ when comparing South Africa with the international context. The participants understand the EI concept equally and apply it similarly.

6.6   Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A notable strength of this study is the positive response I received from participants, which is worth mentioning. The similarity of their overall views on EI, considering that they had no insight into the other participants' interview responses and opinions, is noteworthy. Their passion for and promotion of EI is commendable. They encourage expanding EI globally with sincere dedication. Everyone testified that becoming aware of and learning EI skills enriched their lives and improved and facilitated

functioning on a personal level and when socialising. I presented the chosen contexts to the participants in advance, on which open-ended questions produced comprehensive data. Since all are competent professionals, especially in the field of EI, it is worth valuing their opinions, mainly because it is modelled on extensive experience, not only for practising EI but also for teaching it. Participants could freely talk spontaneously and share their perspectives and opinions; enough time allowed interviews to flow smoothly as all participants were relaxed and at ease. Their positive reactions, without hesitation, also create the impression that their narratives are indeed their genuine experiences and not just information given to satisfy me as a researcher.

The Four-Dimensional Context Model allowed a natural flow of discussions from one context to the other that could generate a broad spectrum of information. The interviews flowed effortlessly without the impression that my participants felt forced to respond. Although information sometimes overlapped across contexts, I obtained enough data to describe the application of EI skills in each context. I have had the opportunity to explore the application of EI skills across a wide range of contexts. However, more contexts or a contextual approach from alternative angles are still possible. Although the sample size of six participants was relatively small, it did not detract from the quality of information I could collect. Participants represented more countries than South Africa, giving a broader perspective of the subject under scrutiny. Expanding to a wider variety of participants from more countries not represented in this study may generate a more complete representation of the contextualisation of EI. Although several participants discussed social interaction in the application of EI skills in various contexts, the reciprocal influence of behaviour, attitudes and opinions between individuals and their group dynamics did not emerge pertinently in this research study. Therefore, further study in this regard should yield more comprehensive findings.

My involvement with and belief in the value of the Neuro-Link Program can be seen as a limitation. My personal beliefs may have influenced my evaluation, and it may therefore be considered biased and a study limitation. Nevertheless, I have attempted to remain as objective as possible in all aspects of the study. I set up open-ended questions in such a way as to give participants a chance to express their

own opinions without influencing them and strived to reflect on their truths when presenting their views and analysing the data.

Yet, this study strengthened my opinion on the validity and utmost necessity of EI and informed and broadened my view of the spectrum to which it applies.

6.7   Recommendations for Further Research

Since the concept of EI is recognised in the academic sphere and applying EI skills across contexts is accepted as an essential mode of behaviour, relatively few studies have reported on people's lived experiences. Thus, I recommend further qualitative studies that can provide a more realistic account of opinions and experiences regarding EI. A greater variety of contexts or a contextual approach from alternative angles can broaden the contextualisation of EI knowledge. To extend research that represents a broader audience to generate a more complete representation of the contextualisation of EI, researchers could involve participants from additional countries other than those used in this study. Since this is the only study of the contextualisation of EI that I know of and could find, research should expand exponentially.

The absence of humanity when using technology-mediated communication becomes a primary concern. The impact that the lack of EI-based behaviour has in the virtual world requires further and intensive research.

Finally, Hackman (1992) mentions in his study that once social norms are firmly established, they become part of a group's operational structure. More is discoverable to determine whether EI can become such a social norm across contexts to form part of the operational structure of human behaviour.

6.8   Final Reflection

Nearly forty years after the launch of the EI concept and after much evidence was gathered and delivered, academics now recognise EI's existence as a mental capacity among the class of general intelligence. Since the World Economic Forum regards EI as among the top ten most desirable skills (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2018;

Schwab & Samans, 2016), raising awareness of EI and providing training opportunities is a necessity.

After completing this study, I can explain EI as: "The mental, cognitive, and emotional behavioural skills that one learns and applies, to which you consciously continuously pay attention, which develops and improves with practice in all aspects of your life and over your lifetime, and which you use by maintaining yourself in your interaction with other people. We measure EI by the success we achieve with these skills. It includes skills such as discipline, kindness, respect, esteem, empathy, compassion, positivity, and support, to name just a few". Regardless of gender, race, nationality, culture, or profession, all people acquired a certain degree of EI through their upbringing, as Samad (2014) similarly noted. However, becoming emotionally intelligent requires a sustained process of awareness, practice and application; a process from unconscious incompetence moving to mastery. EI is an intra- and interpersonal framework of self-understanding, self-management, and social understanding and management. We mainly obtain this understanding from assessment results such as the Neuro Agility- and 360-degree EI profiles and any other assessments which may provide this understanding. In addition, a practically applicable training program in emotional intelligence, such as the Neuro-Link EI Training Program, contributes to this knowledge.

To fully understand it, we should consider EI's relationship with personal and social intelligence, which share common concerns with the human world of inner experience and outer relationships. Therefore, EI is a potent determinant of personal and professional success, as Bratianu (2015) stated. Research and conceptions described thus far provide essential early steps in the study of EI, but they do not fully explain the importance of the social context in which people apply their EI toolkit. Each person exists as an individual who is unique in terms of temperament, character traits, and personality but shares society with others who, in turn, are equally unique in their way.

Individuals interact in various ways and relationships (Association Context – whom we associate with). They socialise in multiple capacities and places (Localisation Context – where we socialise) daily throughout each one's existence (Life Phase

Context – when). They, further, socialise in various ways, whether face to face or by technologically mediated methods (Methodical Context – how we associate). These different contexts spontaneously emerged during my study of relevant literature and existing research in this area in my effort to contextualise EI.

This research study was an exploratory journey to broaden my understanding and explore the role of applying EI skills across these different contexts and the comparison of EI behavioural skills in terms of similarities and differences in these contexts. My key findings were that definite boundaries do not limit people from acting emotionally intelligently across contexts. EI skills are not used more intensively or differently in specific contexts than others. Furthermore, applying EI skills does not differ when comparing the South African and international participants. Therefore, it appears that we cannot make any distinctions in how people of different genders, ethnicities, nationalities, cultures or occupations apply EI skills.

The application of EI begins with each individual. First, we are responsible for acquiring and applying knowledge and skills, and by mastering them, we must pass them on or model them to others. Several participants claim that EI is one of the most underrepresented skills due to ignorance or a lack of knowledge. Since the world is not emotionally intelligent, change must occur. I value the comment one of the participants, Aston, made, which sums it all up: "You cannot change another, but you can change yourself and inspire others. God teaches us to love people as we love ourselves, and the secular name for that is 'emotional intelligence'. Many do not know EI, especially those outside the humanities field. There is essential work ahead!"

REFERENCES

Acebes-Sánchez, J., Diez-Vega, I., Esteban-Gonzalo, S., & Rodriguez-Romo, G.

(2019). Physical activity and emotional intelligence among undergraduate

students: A correlational study. *BMC Public Health*, *19*(1), 1-7.

https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7576-5

Ackerman, P. L. (1996). A theory of adult intellectual development: Process,

personality, interests, and knowledge. *Intelligence*, *22*(2), 227-257.

https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-2896(96)90016-1

Adams, B. G., & Crafford, A. (2012). Identity at work: Exploring strategies for Identity

Work. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology/SA Tydskrif vir Bedryfsielkunde,*

38(1), 45-56. http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S2071-

07632012000100009&script=sci_arttext&tlng=es

Adams, G. (2012). Context in person, person in context: A cultural psychology

approach to social-personality psychology. In K. Deaux & M. Snyder (Eds.),

The Oxford handbook of personality and social psychology (pp. 182-208).

Oxford University Press.

Adams, G. R., & Marshall, S. K. (1996). A developmental social psychology of

identity: Understanding the person-in-context. *Journal of Adolescence*, *19*(5),

429-442. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1996.0041

Ajzen, I. (2012). The theory of planned behaviour. In P. A. M. Lange, A. W.

Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology*

(pp. 438-459)*.* SAGE Publications Inc.

http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446249215.n22

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Emotion. In *APA dictionary of*

psychology. Retrieved January 4, 2021, from

https://dictionary.apa.org/emotion

Atkins, P., & Stough, C. (2005, April 6-7). *Does emotional intelligence change with age* [Conference presentation]. Society for Research in Adult Development annual conference, Atlanta, United States.

Baas, M. (2019). In the mood for creativity. In J. C. Kaufman & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp. 257-272). Cambridge University Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/9781316979839.014

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research.* Oxford University Press.

Barlow, A., & Banks, A. P. (2014). Using emotional intelligence in coaching high-performance athletes: A randomised controlled trial. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *7*(2), 132-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2014.939679

Barnett, E., & Casper, M. (2001). A definition of "social environment". *American Journal of Public Health*, *91*(3), 465.

Bar-On, R. (1997). *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On EQ-i).* Multi-Health Systems.

Bar-On, R. (2000). Emotional and social intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). In R. Bar-On & D. A. Parker (Eds.), *The handbook of emotional intelligence: Theory, development, assessment, and application at home, school, and the workplace* (pp. 363-388). Jossey-Bass.

Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema, 18*(supl), 13-25.

Beasley, K. (1987). The emotional quotient. *British Mensa Magazine,* 25. http://www.keithbeasley.co.uk/ei.html

Behera, A. K. (2016). Understanding emotional intelligence in educational context. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 5*(2), 17-28. https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v5(2)/version-2/B05202017028.pdf

Beldoch, M. (1964). Sensitivity to expression of emotional meaning in three modes of communication. In M. Argyle (Ed.), *Social encounters: Contributions to social interaction (*pp. 121-131). Routledge.

Boyatzis, R. E. (2006). An overview of intentional change from a complexity perspective. *Journal of Management Development, 25*(7), 607-623. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710610678445

Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development, 29*(1), 5-12. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710810840730

Boyatzis, R. E., Goleman, D., & Rhee, K. S. (2000). Clustering competence in emotional intelligence: Insight from the emotional competence inventory (ECI). In R. Bar-On & J. D. A. Parker (Eds.), *Handbook of emotional intelligence: Theory, development, assessment, and application at home, school, and in the workplace* (pp. 343-362). Jossey-Bass.

Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011). Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic, and workplace success. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *5*(1), 88-103. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334.x

Brackett, M. A., & Salovey, P. (2006). Measuring emotional intelligence with the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). *Psicothema, 18*(1), 34-41. http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=72709505

Bratianu, C. (2015). Emotional knowledge. In C. Bratianu (Ed.), *Organizational knowledge dynamics: Managing knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and*

transformation (pp. 50-71). IGI Global.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development.* Harvard University

Press.

Brouwers, S. A., & Van de Vijver, F. J. (2015). Contextualizing intelligence in

assessment: The next step. *Human Resource Management Review*, *25*(1),

38-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2014.09.006

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of

learning. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(1), 32-42.

Brownstein, B. (2001). Collaboration: The foundation of learning in the future.

Education, *122*(2), 240-247.

Cambridge. (n.d.a). Context. In *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved July 30, 2020, from

https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/context

Cambridge. (n.d.b). Contextualise. In *Cambridge dictionary.* Retrieved June 10, 2021,

from

https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/contextualize?q=contextuali

se

Cassidy, T. (2013). *Environmental Psychology: Behaviour and experience in context*

(1ˢᵗ ed.). Psychology Press.

Chai, T. (2015). A look at contextualization: Historical background, definition,

function, scope, and models. *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, *18*(1), 3-

19.

Cherniss, C. (2000, April 15). *Emotional intelligence: What it is and why it matters*.

[Meeting presentation]. Annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and

Organizational Psychology*,* New Orleans, LA, United States.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228359323_Emotional_intelligence_What_it_is_and_why_it_matters

Cherniss, C. (2010). Emotional intelligence: Toward clarification of a concept. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 3*(2), 110-126. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2010.01231.x

Clark, G. L. (2018). Behaviour in context. In G. L. Clark, M. P. Feldman, M. S. Gertler, & D. Wójcik (Eds.), *The new Oxford handbook of economic geography* (pp. 196-212). Oxford University Press.

Clark, M. S., Lemay Jr, E. P., & Reis, H. T. (2017). 4 Other people as situations: Relational context shapes psychological phenomena. In J. F. Rauthmann, R. A. Sherman, & D. C. Funder (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of psychological situations* (pp. 40-61). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190263348.013.5

Clark-Polner, E., & Clark, M. S. (2014). Understanding and accounting for relational context is critical for social neuroscience. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *8*(127), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00127

Collins (n.d.). Emotion. In *Collins dictionary.* Retrieved January 7, 2021, from https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/emotion

Contextual Perspectives (n.d.). https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-lifespandevelopment/chapter/contextual-perspectives/

Corey, G. (2013). *Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy* (9th ed.). Brooks/Cole.

Cornelius, S., & Marston, P. (2009). Towards an understanding of the virtual context in mobile learning. *ALT-J*, *Research in Learning Technology, 17*(3), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687760903247617

Crano, W. D. (2000). Milestones in the psychological analysis of social influence.
Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 4(1), 68-80.
https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/1089-2699.4.1.68

Damasio, A. R. (2004). Emotions and feelings. In S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda, & A.
Fischer (Eds.), *Feelings and emotions: The Amsterdam symposium* (pp. 49-
57). Cambridge University Press.

Darwin, C. (1872). *The expression of the emotions in man and animals* (1st ed.). John
Murray.

Daus, C. S., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2005). The case for the ability-based model of
emotional intelligence in organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational
Behavior*, *26*(4), 453-466.

David, S., & Congleton, C. (2013). Emotional agility. *Harvard Business Review*,
91(11), 125-131.

Debaryshe, B. D., & Fryxell, D. (1998). A developmental perspective on anger:
Family and peer contexts. *Psychology in the Schools*, *35*(3), 205-216.
https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6807(199807)35:3%3C205::AID-
PITS2%3E3.0.CO;2-M

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Motivation, personality, and development within
embedded social contexts: An overview of self-determination theory*.* In R. M.
Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (pp. 85–107). Oxford
University Press.
https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195399820.013.0006

Delport, C. S. L., Fouché, C. B., & Schurink, W. (2011). Theory and literature in
qualitative research. In. A. S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouché, & C. S. L.
Delport (Eds.), *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human*

service professions (pp.297-327). Van Schaik Publishers.

Dost, E. N., Hashemifardnya, A., & Jalali, V. (2017). Emotional intelligence in high school: The effects of self-awareness instruction on Iranian pre-university students' academic achievement. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, *2*(4), 15-30. https://dx.doi.org/10.24001/ijels.2.4.3

Durrheim, K. (2002). Research design. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 29-53). University of Cape Town Press.

Durrheim, K., & Wassenaar, D. (2002). Putting design into practice: Writing and evaluating research proposals. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 54-71). University of Cape Town Press.

Ergin, A., Karatas, H., & Mutlu, E. (2020). The relationship between emotional intelligence levels, problem solving skills and academic achievements of engineering students. *International Journal of Educational Researchers, 11*(1), 47-62.

Faltas, I. (2017). Three models of emotional intelligence. *PA TIMES American Society for Public Administration.* 1-3 https://patimes.org/models-emotional-intelligence/

Farh, C. I., Seo, M. G., & Tesluk, P. E. (2012). Emotional intelligence, teamwork effectiveness, and job performance: The moderating role of job context. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *97*(4), 890. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0027377

Fariselli, L., Ghini, M., & Freedman, J. (2008). Age and emotional intelligence. *Six*

Seconds: The Emotional Intelligence Network, 1-10.

Fatum, B. A. (2008). *The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement in elementary-school children* (Publication No. 3345150) [Doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Fer, S. (2004). Qualitative evaluation of emotional intelligence in-service program for secondary school teachers. *The Qualitative Report*, *9*(4), 562-588.

Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Extremera, N. (2006). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical and empirical review of its first 15 years of history. *Psicothema*, *18*, 7-12. http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=72709502

Fiori, M., & Vesely-Maillefer, A. K. (2018). Emotional intelligence as an ability: Theory, challenges, and new directions. In K. Keefer, J. Parker, & D. Saklofske (Eds.), *Emotional intelligence in education: Integrating research with practice* (pp. 23-47). Springer.

Ford, B. Q., & Tamir, M. (2012). When getting angry is smart: Emotional preferences and emotional intelligence. *Emotion*, *12*(4), 685-689. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0027149

Forsyth, D. R. (2014). *Group dynamics* (6 th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/232790316.pdf

Frolova, O., Kashkaryova, L., Serbova, O., & Malykhina, T. (2019). Comparative analysis of the emotional intelligence development of adolescents with different levels of psychological competence. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, *8*(4), 68-78. https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v8i4.2297

Gao, Y., Shi, J., Niu, Q., & Wang, L. (2013). Work–family conflict and job satisfaction:

Emotional intelligence as a moderator. *Stress and Health*, *29*(3), 222-228.

https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2451

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences.* Basic

Books.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice* (1st ed.)*.* Basic

Books.

Gardner, H. (1999). Are there additional intelligences? The case for naturalist,

spiritual, and existential intelligences. In J. Kane (Ed.), *Education, information,*

and transformation: Essays on learning and thinking (pp. 111-131). Prentice

Hall.

Gardner, H. (2003). Multiple intelligences after twenty years. *American Educational*

Research Association, 1-14. https://talent.army.mil/wp-

content/uploads/pdf_uploads/course-material/Multiple-Intelligences-After-

Twenty-Years-Conference-Paper.pdf

Gardner, H. (2006). *Changing minds: The art and science of changing our own and*

other people's minds. Harvard Business Review Press.

Gardner, H., Feldman, D. H., Krechevsky, M., & Chen, J. Q. (Eds.). (1998). *Project*

zero frameworks for early childhood education. Project spectrum: Early

learning activities (Vol. 2). Teachers College Press.

Gardner, H., & Hatch, T. (1989). Educational implications of the theory of multiple

intelligences. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(8), 4-10.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X018008004

Gardner, L. (2005). *Emotional intelligence and occupational stress* [Unpublished

doctoral dissertation]. Swinburne University of Technology.

Gebhardt, W. A. (2006). Contextualizing health behaviors: The role of personal goals.

    In D. T. D. de Ridder & J. B. F. de Wit (Eds.), *Self-regulation in health*

    behaviour (pp. 27-43). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Gerrig, R. J., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2002). Glossary of psychological terms. In R. J.

    Gerrig & P. G. Zimbardo (Eds.), *Psychology and Life* (16 th ed., pp. 1-44). Allyn

    and Bacon. https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/deborah.mcginty/psyc-

    2301/chapter-i-intro-to-psychology/glossary-of-psychological-terms

Ghanawat, G. M., Muke, S. S., Chaudhury, S., & Kiran, M. (2016). Relationship of

    family functioning and emotional intelligence in adolescents. *Pravara Medical*

    Review, 8(2), 10-14.

Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.*

    Bloomsbury Publishing.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence.* Bantam Books.

Goleman, D. (2001a). Emotional intelligence: Issues in paradigm building. In C.

    Cherniss & D. Goleman (Eds.), *The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to*

    select for, measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups,

    and organizations (pp. 13-26). Jossey-Bass.

Goleman, D. (2001b). An EI-based theory of performance. In C. Cherniss & D.

    Goleman (Eds.), *The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to select for,*

    measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and

    organizations (pp. 27-44). Jossey-Bass.

Goleman, D. (2004). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review, 82*(1), 82-91.

Goleman, D. (2013). *Focus: The hidden driver of excellence.* A & C Black.

Habermas, T., & Hatiboğlu, N. (2014). Contextualizing the self: The emergence of a

    biographical understanding in adolescence. *New Directions for Child and*

Adolescent Development, *145*, 29-41. https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20065

Hackman, J. R. (1992). Group influences on individuals in organizations. In M. D.

Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational*

psychology (pp. 199-267). Consulting Psychologists Press.

Haenen, J., Schrijnemakers, H., & Stufkens, J. (2003). Sociocultural theory and the

practice of teaching historical concepts. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. Ageyev, &

S. Miller (Eds.), *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context* (pp. 246-

266). Cambridge University Press.

Härkönen, U. (2007, October 17-21). *The Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory*

of human development. [Conference presentation]. V International conference

on PERSON. COLOR. NATURE. MUSIC, Daugavpils University, Saule,

Latvia. http://inaclass.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Bronfenbrenner-

ecological-systems.pdf

Hawkins J. D., Smith B. H., & Catalano R. F. (2004). Social development and social

and emotional learning. In: J. E. Zins, R. P. Weissberg, M. C. Wang, & H. J.

Walberg (Eds.), *Building academic success on social and emotional learning.*

What does the research say? (pp. 135-150). Teachers College Press.

Hiebert, P. G. (1984). Critical contextualization. *Missiology*, *12*(3), 287-296.

https://doi.org/10.1177/009182968401200303

High Achiever Emotional Intelligence Development Program. (n.d.).

https://neurolink.company/cms/high-achiever-emotional-intelligence-

development-program/

Hutchison, E. D. (2018). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment*

(6th ed.). SAGE Publications Inc.

Imel, S. (2000). *Contextual learning in adult education. Practice application brief no.*

12 (ED-99-00-0013). ERIC.

https://www.academia.edu/25166086/Contextual_Learning_in_Adult_Educatio
n._Practice_Application_Brief_No._12

Ivcevic, Z., & Hoffmann, J. (2019). Emotions and creativity: From process to person
and product. In J. C. Kaufman & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge
handbook of creativity* (pp. 273-295). Cambridge University Press.
https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/9781316979839.015

Ivcevic, Z., Hoffmann, J., & Brackett, M. (2014). Creativity, emotions, and the arts.
Arts and Emotions–Nurturing our Creative Potential, 7-23.

Iwasaki, Y. (2007). Leisure and quality of life in an international and multicultural
context: What are major pathways linking leisure to quality of life? *Social
Indicators Research*, *82*(2), 233-264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-006-
9032-z

Izaguirre, R. (2008). *The relationship among emotional intelligence, academic
achievement, and demographic characteristics in first-year community college
students* (Publication No. 3318590) [Doctoral dissertation, University of the
Incarnate Word]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Jacobs, T. (2018, May 25). *The link between creativity and emotional intelligence*.
Pacific Standard. https://psmag.com/news/the-link-between-creativity-and-
emotional-intelligence

Jansen Van Rensburg, A. S. (2018). *Exploring the impact of emotional intelligence
training in the workplace* [Unpublished master's dissertation]. University of
South Africa.

Jason, L. A., Stevens, E., Ram, D., Miller, S. A., Beasley, C. R., & Gleason, K.
(2016). Theories in the field of community psychology. *Global Journal of*

Community Psychology Practice, 7(2), 1-27.

https://www.gjcpp.org/pdfs/TheoryPaper_FormattedFinal.pdf

Johnson, B. W. (2017). *Understanding and applying emotional intelligence: A qualitative study of Tampa Veterans Administration Hospital employees* (Publication No. 10639316) [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida]. ProQuest Dissertations.

John-Steiner, V., & Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, *31*(3-4), 191-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.1996.9653266

Jordan, P., Dasborough, M., Daus, C., & Ashkanasy, N. (2010). A call to context: Comments on emotional intelligence and emotional social competencies. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 3*(2), 145-148.

Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H. R. (2014). *Social Psychology* (9th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Kelly, B., Longbottom, J., Potts, F., & Williamson, J. (2004). Applying emotional intelligence: Exploring the promoting alternative thinking strategies curriculum. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *20*(3), 221-240. https://doi.org/10.1080/0266736042000251808

Kelly, J. G. (1966). Ecological constraints on mental health services. *American Psychologist, 21*(6), 535. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0023598

Kelly, K. (2002). Calling it a day: Reaching conclusions in qualitative research. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 421-437). University of Cape Town Press.

King, D., Bellocchi, A., & Ritchie, S. M. (2008). Making connections: Learning and teaching chemistry in context. *Research in Science Education*, *38*(3), 365-384. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-007-9070-9

Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M. J., & Dalton, J. H. (2012). *Community Psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (3rd ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Kohlberg, L. (1982). Moral development. In J. M. Broughton & D. J. Freeman-Moir (Eds.), *The cognitive developmental psychology of James Mark Baldwin: Current theory and research in genetic epistemology* (pp. 277–325). National Academy Press.

Kokkinos, C. M., & Kipritsi, E. (2012). The relationship between bullying, victimization, trait emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and empathy among preadolescents. *Social Psychology of Education*, *15*(1), 41-58. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-011-9168-9

Kozulin, A. (2003). Psychological tools and mediated learning. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. Ageyev, & S. Miller (Eds.), *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context* (pp.15-38). Cambridge University Press.

Kral, F. (2005). Fictional contexts, actual contexts, and virtual contexts in brick lane, by Monica Ali. *Commonwealth: Essays and Studies*, *28*(1), 109.

Kreppner, K. (2000). The child and the family: Interdependence in developmental pathways. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, *16*(1), 11-22. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-37722000000100003

Laborde, S., Roseville, F., & Allen, M. S. (2016). Emotional intelligence in sport and exercise: A systematic review. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, *26*(8), 862-874. DOI: 10.1111/sms.12510

Lamb, J., Pepler, D. J., & Craig, W. (2009). Approach to bullying and victimization. *Canadian Family Physician*, *55*(4), 356-360.

Legg, S., & Hutter, M. (2007). A collection of definitions of intelligence. In B. Goertzel & P. Wang (Eds.), *Advances in artificial general intelligence: Concepts, architectures and algorithms* (pp. 17-24). IOS Press.

Lenzen, M. (2005). Feeling our emotions. *Scientific American Mind*, *16*(1), 14-15. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/feeling-our-emotions/

Lievens, F., & Chan, D. (2017). Practical intelligence, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence. In J. L. Farr & N. T. Tippins (Eds.), *Handbook of employee selection* (2nd ed., pp. 342–364). Routledge.

Lin, Y. C., Chen, A. S. Y., & Song, Y. C. (2012). Does your intelligence help to survive in a foreign jungle? The effects of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence on cross-cultural adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *36*(4), 541-552. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.03.001

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications Inc.

Lomas, J., Stough, C., Hansen, K., & Downey, L. A. (2012). Brief report: Emotional intelligence, victimisation and bullying in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(1), 207-211. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.03.002

Magnusson, D., & Stattin, H. (1998). *Person-context interaction theories.* In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 685–759). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Marsen, S. (2008). The role of meaning in human thinking. *Journal of Evolution & Technology*, *17*(1), 45-58.

Marton, F., & Booth, S. A. (1997). *Learning and awareness*. Psychology Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4),

    370-396. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0054346

Matthews, G., Zeidner, M., & Roberts, R. D. (2007). Emotional intelligence:

    Consensus, controversies, and questions. In G. Matthews, M. Zeidner, & R. D.

    Roberts (Eds.), *The science of emotional intelligence: Knowns and unknowns*

    (pp. 3-46). Oxford University Press.

Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (1999). Emotional intelligence meets

    traditional standards for intelligence. *Intelligence, 27*(4), 267-298.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-2896(99)00016-1

Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2016). The ability model of emotional

    intelligence: Principles and updates. *Emotion Review*, 8(4), 290–300.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073916639667

Mayer, J. D., Roberts, R. D., & Barasade, S. G. (2008). Human abilities: Emotional

    intelligence. *Annual Review of Psychology, 59*(1)*,* 507-536.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093646

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey &

    D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence:*

    Educational implications (pp. 3-31). Basic Books.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory,

    findings and implications. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*(3), 197-215.

    https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability

    or electric traits? *American Psychologist, 63*(6), 503-517.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.63.6.503

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R., & Sitarenios, G. (2003). Measuring

emotional intelligence with MSCEIT V2.0. *Emotion, 3*(1), 97-105.

https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/1528-3542.3.1.97

Mazzeo, C., Rab, S. Y., & Alssid, J. L. (2003). *Building bridges to college and

careers: Contextualized basic skills programs at community colleges*

(ED473875). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED473875.pdf

McKenna, J., & Webb, J. (2013). Emotional intelligence. *British Journal of

Occupational Therapy, 76*(12), 560.

McLeod, S. A. (2007, May 10). *Social Psychology: Definition, theories, principles, &

examples.* Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-

psychology.html

McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and

theory. *Journal of Community Psychology, 14*, 6-23.

https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:1<6::AID-

JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.a). Context. In *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*.

Retrieved July 30, 2020, from https://www.merriam-

webster.com/dictionary/context

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.b). Contextualize. In *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*.

Retrieved June 10, 2021, from https://www.merriam-

webster.com/dictionary/contextualize

Mitchell, G. W., Skinner, L. B., & White, B. J. (2010). Essential soft skills for success

in the twenty-first century workforce as perceived by business educators. *Delta

Pi Epsilon Journal, 52*(1), 43-53.

Mysirlaki, S., & Paraskeva, F. (2020). Emotional intelligence and transformational

    leadership in virtual teams: Lessons from MMOGs. *Leadership & Organization*

    Development Journal, 41(4), 551-566. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2019-

    0035

Narayanan, M. (2011). Assessment based on Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple

    Intelligences. *American Society for Engineering Education*, *22*(248), 1-23.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.18260/1-2--17529

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). *How People*

    Learn II: Learners, contexts, and cultures. The National Academies Press.

    https://doi.org/10.17226/24783

Neisser, U. (1967). *Cognitive Psychology.* Prentice Hall.

Nogaj, A. A. (2020). Emotional intelligence and strategies for coping with stress

    among music school students in the context of visual art and general

    education students. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *68*(1), 78-96.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429420901513

Oakes, J. (1989). What educational indicators? The case for assessing the school

    context. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *11*(2), 181-199.

    https://doi.org/10.3102%2F01623737011002181

Oates, B. J. (2006). *Researching information systems and computing*. SAGE

    Publications Inc.

Orford, J. (2008). *Community Psychology: Challenges, controversies and emerging*

    consensus. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Oxford. (n.d.). Cognition. In *Oxford learners dictionaries*. Retrieved June 10, 2021,

    from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/cognition

Patterson, K. A. (2003). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. *Dissertation Abstracts International* Regent University (UMI No. AAT 3082719).

Payne, W. L. (1985). A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear, pain and desire. *Dissertation Abstracts International. 47,* 203A. (University microfilms No. ACC8605928). http://geocities.ws/waynepayne/chap1.htm

Petrides, K. V. (2010). Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 3*(2), 136-139.

Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2000). On the dimensional structure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 29*(2), 313-320. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00195-6

Petrides, K.V., & Furnham, A. (2001). Trait emotional intelligence: Psychometric investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies. *European Journal of Personality*, *15*(6), 425–448. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1002/per.416

Petrides, K. V., Pita, R., & Kokkinaki, F. (2007). The location of trait emotional intelligence in personality factor space. *British Journal of Psychology*, *98*(2), 273-289. https://doi.org/10.1348/000712606x120618

Piaget, J. (1972). Intellectual evolution from adolescence to adulthood. *Human Development*, *15*(1), 1-12. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1159/000271225

Pitts, V. E., Wright, N. A., & Harkabus, L. C. (2012). Communication in virtual teams: The role of emotional intelligence. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, *12*(3/4), 21-34.

Praslova, L. (2010). Adaptation of Kirkpatrick's four level model of training criteria to assessment of learning outcomes and program evaluation in higher education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, *22*(3), 215-225.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-010-9098-7

Pringle, Z. I. (2019, August 7). *To be creative, be smart with emotions.* Psychology

Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/creativity-the-art-and-
science/201908/be-creative-be-smart-emotions

Punia, N., Dutta, J., & Sharma, Y. (2015). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical

framework. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, *6*(5),

967-1006. https://www.ijser.org/paper/Emotional-Intelligence-A-Theoretical-
framework.html

Quisenberry, W. (2018). Exploring how emotional intelligence contributes to virtual

teams: Interpretive analysis of a phenomenological study. *European Scientific

Journal*, *14*(5), 19-36. http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/esj.2018.v14n5p19

Rasmussen, P. R., & Watkins, K. L. (2012). Advice from the masters II: A

conversation with Robert L. Powers and Jane Griffith. *Journal of Individual

Psychology*, *68*(2), 112-135.

Reis, H. T., Collins, W. A., & Berscheid, E. (2000). The relationship context of human

behavior and development. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*(6), 844-872.

https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.844

Rey, L., Quintana-Orts, C., Mérida-López, S., & Extremera, N. (2018). Emotional

intelligence and peer cyber-victimisation in adolescents: Gender as moderator.

Comunicar: Media Education Research Journal, *26*(56), 9-18.

http://dx.doi.org/10.3916/c56-2018-01

Rousseau, D. M., & Fried, Y. (2001). Location, location, location: Contextualizing

organizational research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International

Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and

Behavior*, *22*(1), 1-13.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2007). The method chapter: Describing your research plan. In K. E. Rudestam & R. R. Newton (Eds.), *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (4th ed., pp. 99-136). SAGE Publications Inc.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *9*(3), 185-211. https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG

Samad, H. A. (2014). Emotional intelligence the theory and measurement of EQ. *Proceedings of the 1st Mediterranean Interdisciplinary Forum on Social Sciences and Humanities*, *European Scientific Institute, Lebanon*, *2*, 208-213.

Schiller, S. Z., & Mandviwalla, M. (2007). Virtual team research: An analysis of theory use and a framework for theory appropriation. *Small Group Research*, *38*(1), 12-59. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496406297035

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2013). Increasing emotional intelligence through training: Current status and future directions. *The International Journal of Emotional Education, 5*(1), 56-72. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar//handle/123456789/6150

Schwab, K., & Samans, R. (2016). The future of jobs: Employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution. *World Economic Forum,* 1-32. http://www3.webforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf

Shumer, S., & Rolloff, E. (2013). Integrating experiential education into the financial framework of the institution: Challenges and strategies. In G. Hesser (Ed.), *Strengthening experiential education: A new era* (pp. 182-203). National Society for Experiential Education.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook* (4th ed.).

SAGE Publications Inc.

Smith, E. R., & Conrey, F. R. (2009). The social context of cognition. In P. Robbins &

M. Aydede (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of situated cognition* (p.454-466).

Cambridge University Press.

Social psychology. (n.d.).

https://personal.us.es/einfante/uploads/DOCENCIA/PSYCH301-1.1.1-Social-

psychology-reading.pdf

Sparrow, T., & Knight, A. (2006). *Applied EI: The importance of attitudes in*

developing emotional intelligence (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Spradley, J. (2003). Introduction to qualitative methods: Asking descriptive questions.

In M. R. Pogrebin (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to criminal justice:*

Perspectives from the field (1st ed., pp.44-53). SAGE Publications Inc.

Spradley, J. P. (2016). *The ethnographic interview*. Waveland Press.

Sternberg, J. (2012). *Misbehavior in cyber places: The regulation of online conduct in*

virtual communities on the internet. Rowman & Littlefield.

Sternberg, R. J. (1985). *Beyond IQ: A triarchic theory of human intelligence*. CUP

Archive.

Sternberg, R. J. (2020). *Human intelligence. An introduction* (1st ed.). Cambridge

University Press.

Sternberg, R. J., & Sternberg, K. (2009). *Cognitive Psychology* (6th ed.). Wadsworth

Cengage Learning.

Steup, M., & Neta, R. (2020). Epistemology. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford*

encyclopedia of philosophy (Fall 2020 ed.). Stanford University.

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/#pagetopright

Stolorow, R. D. (2002). From drive to affectivity: Contextualizing psychological life. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, *22*(5), 678-685. https://doi.org/10.1080/07351692209349012

Supriatna, M., & Ervina, D. (2020). Personal-social guidance as an effective student emotional intelligence development. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, 4th Asian Education Symposium (AES 2019), (*438), 47-53. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200513.011

Terre Blanche, M., & Kelly, K. (2002). Interpretive methods. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 123-146). University of Cape Town Press.

Thoits, P. A. (1989). The sociology of emotions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *15*(1), 317-342. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.15.080189.001533

Thompson, J. B. (2011). Tradition and self in the mediated world. In J. K. Olick, V. Vinitzky-Seroussi, & D. Levy (Eds.), *The collective memory reader* (pp. 348-351). Oxford University Press.

Thorndike, E. L. (1920). Intelligence and its uses. *Harper's Monthly Magazine, 140,* 227-235. https://gwern.net/doc/iq/1920-thorndike-2.pdf

Tinajero, C., & Páramo, M. F. (2012). The systems approach in developmental psychology: Fundamental concepts and principles. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, *28*(4), 457-465. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-37722012000400011

Tolegenova, A. A., Jakupov, S. M., Chung, M. C., Saduova, S., & Jakupov, M. S. (2012). A theoretical formation of emotional intelligence and childhood trauma among adolescents. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *69*, 1891-1894. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.12.142

Van der Zwaard, R., & Bannink, A. (2014). Video call or chat? Negotiation of meaning

and issues of face in telecollaboration. *System, 44,* 137-148.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.03.007

Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, *37*(4), 1228-1261. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310380462

Van Oers, B. (1998). From context to contextualizing. *Learning and Instruction*, *8*(6), 473-488. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752(98)00031-0

Varga-Dobai, K. (2012). The relationship of researcher and participant in qualitative inquiry: From "self and other" binaries to the poststructural feminist perspective of subjectivity. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(93), 1-17.

http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/varga-dobai.pdf

Wagner, C., Kawulich, B. B., & Garner, M. (2012). *Doing social research: A global context.* McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Wan, K. (2009). A brief history of context. *IJCSI International Journal of Computer Science Issues*, *6*(2), 33-42.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41392298_A_Brief_History_of_Context

Wechsler, D. (1943). Non-intellective factors in general intelligence. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 38*(1), 101-103.

https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0060613

Wegner, D. M. (1995). A computer network model of human transactive memory. *Social Cognition, 13*(3), 319-339. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1995.13.3.319

What is contextualization? (n.d.). https://www.gotquestions.org/contextualization.html

Worthy, L. D., Lavigne, T., & Romero, F. (2020). *Self and culture.* Culture and Psychology. https://open.maricopa.edu/culturepsychology/chapter/self-and-culture/

Ybarra, O., Rees, L., Kross, E., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2012). Social context and the psychology of emotional intelligence: A key to creating positive organizations. In K. S. Cameron & M. G. Spreitzer (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 201-214). Oxford University Press.

Zammuner, V. L., (2014). Understanding and responding to interpersonal workplace situations. Assessing emotional competence, its relationship to traits and well-being, and its training. In K. Kaniasty, K. Moore, S. Howard, & P. Buchwald (Eds.), *Stress and anxiety. Application to educational, job, health, and traumatic life contexts* (pp. 185-196). Logos Verlag.

Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* Teachers College Press.

APPENDIX A

Neuro-Link Interactive cc
29-2 Ajax Avenue
Olympus AH
Pretoria
0081

Date: 25/06/2019

Letter of Consent

I André Vermeulen, CEO of Neuro-Link herewith give consent to Susan Jansen van Rensburg to access and utilise Neuro-Link's intellectual property, profiles and business model for her studies. We only wish her the best with this important project.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions at info@neurolink.co.za.

I trust that you will find the above in order.

Friendly Regards,

Dr. André Vermeulen
Neuro-Link CEO

Organisation Consent to Conduct a Research Study

University of South Africa

Good day

I, Susan Jansen Van Rensburg, am a College of Human Sciences student at the University of South Africa. I am busy with Doctoral degree studies in Psychology under Dr Elsje Cronjé. My topic of research is Contextualising Emotional Intelligence. I invite people who completed the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achievers Development Program to partake in this study. Clearance to obtain relevant participants for research purposes is now requested.

It is a qualitative research study. Therefore, participants who agree to take part will be involved in sessions of individual one-hour interviews. The number of interviews will be for the duration of the study during the year 2022, periodically and on an appointment until enough data is collected to draw a final trustworthy, credible conclusion. Participating individuals will not benefit from participating; however, the study's findings can contribute to understanding the psychological processes involved in using emotional intelligence skills. Expectedly information gained from this study will enlighten knowledge about participants' emotional intelligence experiences and might help academics, presenters of the Neuro-Link EI Program and other interested people to learn more about the relevance of applying these skills in different contexts.

The research was reviewed and approved by Dr André Vermeulen, CEO of Neuro-Link (Consent letter included as an attachment in email) and the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa, Reference Number: 2020-CHS- 32487843. The primary researcher, Susan Jansen Van Rensburg, can be contacted at susanvanrensburg@hotmail.com, Cell: 082 697 0785. The study supervisor, Dr Elsje Cronjé, can be contacted at elsjecronje50@gmail.com

Your kind cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely
Susan Jansen Van Rensburg.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
University of South Africa

Title of Study: Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

Researcher Name: Susan Jansen Van Rensburg   **Phone:** (+27) 082-697-0785

Introduction

- I am a student in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa, busy with Doctorate studies in Psychology. I am researching contextualising emotional intelligence and invite you to be part of this research.

- You were selected as a participant because you completed the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achiever Development Programme and apply skills daily in various contexts.

- I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The study aims to investigate how you apply learnt emotional intelligence skills daily in various contexts. You are invited to participate in this research because I expect your experience might help us learn more about the relevance of emotional intelligence in different contexts.

- This research may ultimately be published as research findings in a Doctorate in Psychology.

Voluntary Participation

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not.

- Your choice will not affect your job or any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Description of the Study Procedures

- This research will involve your participation in individual one-hour interviews. The time for participation will be one or more sessions of the above and for the duration of the study during the year 2022, periodically and on an appointment until enough data are collected to draw a final trustworthy, credible conclusion.

- For individual interviews:
  1. You will participate in an interview with me.
  2. The interview will take place via Zoom meetings.
  3. Intrapersonal and interpersonal questions will be asked, for example: Did the programme help you accurately understand your truth, emotions, motives, strengths, weaknesses, and

talents? Can you manage and control what you understand about yourself? Do you know and understand the truths of others? How did the programme affect your well-being? How did you develop through the process, and were the changes sustainable? Do you have healthy, constructive interactions, and how do you influence others, especially your colleagues?

4. Contextual questions will be asked, such as: How do you apply learnt skills in different contexts when associating, for example, with family, colleagues, and social groups; in person-environment settings, for example, in recreational, educational, occupational settings; the experiential context, for example, past and present experiences; and the Methodical Context such as face-to-face or virtual interactions.

5. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so, and we will move on to the following questions. You do not have to answer any questions or participate in the discussion or interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any questions.

6. No one else but I will be present during interviews unless you would like someone else to attend.

7. The entire interview will be recorded, and your identity will appear on the recording for transcription purposes only. The recorded information is confidential, and no one else will access the information documented during your interview. The recordings will be locked away until destroyed after the completion of the study.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- There are not reasonably foreseeable (or expected) risks; however, there may be unknown risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation will likely help us learn about the impact of emotional intelligence skills in different contexts, as indicated in the study.

Confidentiality

- This study is anonymous. Your identity will not be known to anyone outside of this research. Any information about you will be known to me as I will code it to keep your identity confidential.

- All information and records of this study will be kept private and confidential. Research records will be locked away, and all electronic information will be secured using a password-protected file. Only I can access recordings that will be listened to or watched privately. It will be used for data analysis only and deleted/erased once the research study is completed and signed off.   I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

- Your identity will not be disclosed in the material that is published either. However, you will be allowed to review and approve any material published.

Payments

- You will not receive any incentive to take part in this research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to take part in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse or stop participating in the discussion/interview without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or UNISA. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- You have the right not to answer any single question and withdraw entirely from the interview during the process; additionally, you have the right to ask that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.
- At the end of the interview/discussion, I will allow you to review your remarks, and you can ask to change or remove portions of those if you disagree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, please contact me, Susan, at susanvanrensburg@hotmail.com or by telephone at (+27) 082-697-0785. If you like, you can request a summary of the study results. The study proposal has been reviewed and approved by UNISA, whose task is to ensure that research participants are protected from harm. It has also been reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee of UNISA, which supports the study.

Consent

- I have read the preceding information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and any questions were answered satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.
- Furthermore, I agree that the interviewer take notes and allow all interviews to be recorded for transcription.

Participant's Name (print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

- I confirm that all questions asked by the participant were answered correctly and to the best of my knowledge. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Retrieved from: http://www.who.int/rpc/research_ethics/informed_consent/en/

CORPORATE TRAINING PROSPECTUS

neuro-link

WORKPLACE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS

1

1.2 THE 12 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETECIES PROFILE

The 12 Emotional Intelligence Competencies Profile is a simple tool to determine how skilled people are in terms of emotional intelligence. This profile also offers suggestions on how emotional intelligence can be developed further. It is an excellent tool for people to identify how they can develop themselves further and enhance their success factors as professionals and in their personal lives and become better managers and leaders. It assesses the following 12 Emotional Intelligence Competencies :
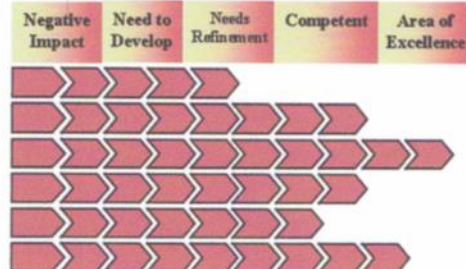
Intrapersonal Competencies:

	Negative Impact	Need to Develop	Needs Refinement	Competent	Area of Excellence

- .Emotional Self-Awareness
- .Accurate Self-Assessment
- .Self-Confidence
- .Self-Control
- .Adaptability
- .Self-Motivation

Interpersonal Competencies:

	Negative Impact	Need to Develop	Needs Refinement	Competent	Area of Excellence
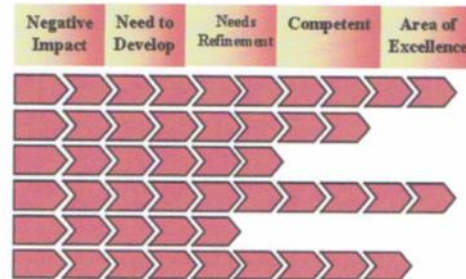
- .Empathy
- .Service Orientation
- .Organizational Awareness
- .Interpersonal Communication
- .Team Functioning
- .Servant Leadership

Benefits of this Profile

- Understanding of the competencies necessary to be well, happy and successful in life and work.

- A blue-print to develop the intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that determines a person's success and effectiveness in life.

5

2. BRAIN-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Neuro-Link offers the following brain-based learning and development processes:

HIGH ACHIEVER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Neuro-Link's Emotional Intelligence program is called "High Achiever". The purpose of this brain-based emotional intelligence development program is to empower workers with intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to enhance their personal impact in the workplace and create team effectiveness.

The High Achiever program consists of the following modules:

Module 1: Mental Literacy

- Understand the 12 Emotional Intelligence competencies, vital for success in life.
- Discover your unique neurological wiring - 8 brain profiles, 11 intelligence preferences and how food and stress impact the brain's performance.

Duration - 1 day

Module 2: Formulate Your Purpose

- Differences between purpose, vision, mission, meaning and passion
- Characteristics of on-purpose people
- Formulate purpose. Create vision. Formulate mission.
- 8 Mindsets that prevent people from being on-purpose
- Truths in a life guided by purpose.

Duration - 1 day

Module 3: Mind Power

- How your brain works.
- A brain-based tool to re-pattern the brain, change behavior and practice personal mastery
- 7 Brain basic principles for increased performance
- Use the whole brain more effectively by learning brain integration techniques, becoming more brain fit and integrated.

Duration - 1 day

This program is unique as the point of departure for development is from the specialized field of brain-based learning and development and all modules are unique with profound results

6

Module 4: Cope with Change, Manage Stress and Maintain Wellness

•Cope with change
•The psychological impact of change
•Identify stress levels and symptoms
•4 types of stress
•A holistical approach to wellness
•3 wellness stereotypes

Duration - 1 day

Module 5: Brain-Based Coping Skills

•Develop 6 strategies to become change resilient.
•Learn 11 brain-based skills to cope with stress and maintain wellness.

Duration – 1 day

Module 6: Social Awareness Skills

•Relevance of social awareness to business and society.
•Ingredients of social awareness
•Toxicity and detoxifying mindsets.
•Tune into others: Empathy
•Suggestions to increase service orientation.

Duration - 1 day

Module 7: Interpersonal Communication Skills

•Characteristics of 4 brain-based communication styles.
•Communication skills;
•Resolve interpersonal conflict through communication.

Duration - 1 day

Module 8: Team Cohesion

•Why teams work.
•Why teams don't work
•Establishing team values
•Develope a high trust culture.
•Suggestions to strengthen social bonds and create social cohesion.

Duration - 1 day

Module 9: Servant Leadership

•Basic principles of servant leadership.
•10 Characteristics of servant leaders
•How to influence others
•Values driven leadership.
•Alignment between personal and organizational purpose.

Duration - 1 day

TOTAL = 9 DAYS

Outcomes of this program:

•enhanced personal impact in society and the workplace;
•enhanced team effectiveness
•lead through inspirational example;
•accurate self-awareness and understanding;
•coping with change, managing stress and maintaining wellness;
•social-awareness and better understanding of others;
•healthy social interactions with others;
•strong personal foundations for leadership;

7

APPENDIX E

Grand Tour Questions – Participants

An outline of questions was emailed to each participant to allow them to prepare for their interviews:

1. I will ask biographical questions such as age, education, and occupation.
2. I will further ask questions about your experience of the Neuro-Link EI Program and its impact on you in various contexts (see Description of the Study Procedures 3 in the consent form).
3. Context questions will include whom you associate with, how you socialise with others, where you socialise with others, and your personal development throughout life (see Description of the Study Procedures 4 in the consent form).

However, questions prepared in advance for the interviews were only disclosed to participants during interviews to encourage spontaneous responses. Although structured as follows, interviewing was allowed to form a natural flow of experiential narration:

1. What is your personal and professional experience with the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence (EI) program?
2. Accurate self-awareness and self-management: How do you understand yourself – before and after the program? How do you manage your thoughts and emotions now compared to before you attended the training program? Did it change? If so, how and to what extent?
3. Social Awareness and Skills – healthy and constructive influence on and interaction with others: How do you maintain yourself? Did it change or not?
4. What aspects of using EI skills stand out to you? How does it affect your daily life? How have EI skills changed your behaviour? What changes has the acquisition of EI skills made in your life?
5. A Four-Dimensional Context Model emerged from the literature search in this study thus far. Keep the following contexts in mind when responding to the subsequent questions regarding the application of EI:
   Association context: The people you associate with, i.e., family members, peers, groups, and those you have a relationship with – friendships, parent-child

relationships, specific relationships such as with a spouse, and social network of relationships.

- Do you think your self-concept depends on with whom you associate? What influence do your EI skills have on this?
- Seeing that the family is regarded as the most influential context of child development, how does possessing EI skills influence your child-rearing skills? Particularly concerning the initial development of social interaction patterns of children in the relationship with you as a parent and eventually navigating to their larger social environment in which their peer networks are significant.
- It is in the family where the transfer of communication and the acquisition of skills takes place to establish and maintain relationships and where each member, as an active, integrated part of the family system, contributes to forming their social context. How do you apply EI skills when connecting with family members and reacting to them in everyday life, and how does it relate to your experiences and behaviours in other contexts?
- Just as interpersonal interactions occur within a specific relationship, relationships also function within an expanded social network. There are a variety of facets to relationships. These include the type of relationship, nature of each relationship, individual differences in orientations that each member nurtures regarding the relationship, the history of the relationship, the placement of a given relationship in the larger context of a person's network of relationships, the phase in which the relationship currently is, and the future expectation of each relationship. How do these influence your application of EI skills?
- Due to your involvement with multiple individuals, is it difficult to determine how constantly changing contexts may affect your thinking and behaviour regarding applying EI skills?

Localisation Context: This refers to the location where you socialise with people, such as the recreational, educational, or occupational context.

- People do not behave similarly in the kitchen, at church, on a sporting ground, in a committee meeting, or at a party. That behaviour varies with the character of the situation is what one would expect. How does this affect your application of EI skills?

- Recreational or leisure-like activities include traditional cultural events, sports, entertainment, religious gatherings, the constructive use of free time, and any form of leisure in a domain that people regard as valuable. Do you experience the recreational contexts as an essential regulator for developing emotional closeness and building strong family ties? What role do EI skills play in this?

- The presence of mediators in an individual's interaction in certain socio-cultural activities of which formal education is most likely the most important for developing a person's higher mental processes. How important is this in learning specific skills and abilities, such as EI skills, through different learning experiences they can apply in real life?

- Employees have certain things in common in the occupational context, such as tasks related to organisational goals. Essential skills can benefit the organisation, and their absence can lead to detrimental outcomes. How important are EI skills, and what role do these play?

Life Phase Context: Experiences, behaviours and personal development throughout life – past experiences, future aspirations and current perspective.

- Patterns of social information processing develop early in a young child's life. It plays an integral role in the way they experience the environment. Society considers children who often act competently in social situations skilled in processing social information. Peer relationships and friendships form a unique context where new behaviours of children and adolescents emerge. How has it manifested in your life, and how has it changed with acquiring EI skills? What role does the acquisition of EI skills play in processing social information at a young age?

- Our current situation in life defines our perspective on our past, and this perspective evolves as life goes on. We connect past experiences, current concerns, and future aspirations. The Life Phase Context, thus, encompasses important historical life events that contribute to past and personal development. What role do EI skills play in this?

Methodical Context: Methods involving face-to-face interaction where people are physically present or technology-mediated virtual interaction.

- Face-to-face interaction is vital to individual socialisation because it involves all the sensory organs during an interaction. All forms of communication

contain non-verbal messages that include gestures, eye contact, touch and body movement, leading this interaction to remain popular and widely used. Face-to-face interaction still yields more positive outcomes in transferring meaning than virtual communication, such as a video call. However, this form of interaction declined in popularity compared to mediated communication, especially where time and geographical distance are issues.

- Virtual context: The global pandemic event, Coronavirus disease (Covid-19), necessitated measures of movement restriction and enforced social and health behaviour adjustments, which potentially have a lasting effect on human interaction. Beyond this, geographic separation, emigration, international frontier disappearance in employment, and the progress in technology development, the evolution of technology-mediated communication became very popular. Online groups connect different individuals by forming social relationships through criteria that meet the group's basic needs.

Judging from the statements above, elaborate on EI skills' role in mentioned contexts. How do these affect the application of EI skills? How did it change, and what impact does it have on you as an individual?

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

21 January 2021

Dear Ms. A S Jansen Van Rensburg

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # :
2020-CHS - 32487843

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 21 January
2021 to 21 January 2024

Researcher: Ms. A.S Jansen Van Rensburg	**Email:** 32487843@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): DR E. M. Cronjé	**Email:** elsjecronje50@gmail.com

Title: Contextualising Emotional Intelligence

Purpose: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years and you may request extension afterwards.

The *low risk application* was *reviewed* by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **21 January 2021** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the

Open Rubric

confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(21 January 2024).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020-CHS- 32487843** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Dr. K.J. Malesa
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: maleskj@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 4780

Signature : PP

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298