Exploring the impact of emotional intelligence training in the workplace

by

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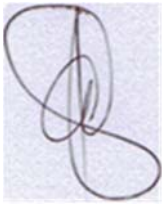CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF J M NIEUWOUDT

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Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
(KJV)
This is amazing Grace, this is unfailing Love. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude also to:

My dearest family: My husband and all our children, for your sustained love and support. Your unselfish dedication to me leaves me humbly grateful. I am blessed to have all of you in my life.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my dearly beloved parents who modelled a remarkable example of love, dedication, perseverance, and integrity throughout their lives. An example from which I could only benefit and learn. Thank you very much! I will always love you.

ABSTRACT

Exploring the Impact of Emotional Intelligence Training in the Workplace.

The complexity of mental development in humans together with human interaction in the social context presents itself to be a continued source of investigation and exploration. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is such a field of study in the discipline of psychology. Researchers emphasized the importance and value of emotional development ("soft-skills") equal to cognitive development ("hard-skills"). EI abilities are associated with key skills and competencies required for operating successfully in today's organizations. This study focused on this theme specifically and tried to determine how EI training impacted on the success of the individual who fits the modern working profile and how emotionally intelligent employees are beneficial to organisational success overall.

An ethnographic qualitative study (including an autoethnography) was performed on individuals of different participant groupings who completed the Neuro-Link EI Program. The aim was to assess if they showed increased growth in areas of EI, specifically addressed in the program namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. Findings indicated that EI training works with positive results. It was of great value to the individual having an immense impact on their personal lives. It further had a major positive impact on the group dynamics of individuals who attended the training. At companies where facilitators presented the program, EI training had a positive impact. A conclusion on the impact that such training had on the two companies whose staff members directly participated in this study, was not yet possible at the time of the study. The development of an awareness model for the promotion of EI training in the workplace is recommended. This may increase available knowledge regarding corporate EI training but also accelerates an emerging, but a too slowly growing movement.

Key Terms: Emotional intelligence; Self-awareness; Intrapersonal skills; Interpersonal skills; Self-reflection; Self-directed change; Social and emotional learning; Emotional intelligence training outcomes; Context; Autoethnography; Self-management; Self-understanding; Social understanding; Social awareness; Social cohesion; Relationship management; Soft-skills; Hard-skills.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal Background

During the early 1990's a radio talk about brain hemispheric dominance caught my interest. This, and a general curiosity about how people think, and why they behave the way they do, inspired me to study Psychology. Completing my Honours degree in Psychology during 2008 motivated me to further personal development and exploration into the different facets of the discipline of the human psyche.

The hemispheric dominance effect, still at the back of my mind, inspired me to investigate this phenomenon further. I came across several models regarding brain dominance, but the Neuro-Link Program seemed to be the most comprehensive at the time. I subsequently attended several different courses to become a Neuro-Link Licensee. This enabled me to use the program's brain profile- and emotional intelligence (EI) assessments. Through my involvement in the company, I also attended their Emotional Intelligence High Achiever Development Program (from here on referred to as the Neuro-Link EI Program). Enjoying this process thoroughly and discovering the benefit I personally gained from participating in the program and undergoing the training, lead to a predominant interest in the field of EI. To educate individuals to strive for optimal mental development is my field of interest, and equipping them with necessary intra- and interpersonal skills, I believe, prevent pathological thinking in a culture filled with negative input via the media and everyday circumstances. Observing the value this program adds to the lives of others, motivated me for further studies in this regard. Although the program is applicable to all individuals in general, it is especially successful when presented in the working environment as it could be beneficial to the organization as a whole in that it strengthens the workforce in their professional capacity as well as their private lives.

The present research will be conducted in order to put my belief in this program to the test. I am aware that I have a vested interest in the Neuro-Link Program.

However, I will do my utmost not to let this cloud my judgement and put my integrity at risk.

1.2   Historical Background

The roots of emotional intelligence can be traced to the ideas of various well-known persons:

- Darwin (1872) stated that emotional expression is essential for survival.
- Edward Thorndike (1920) described the concept of interpersonal intelligence (also known as "social intelligence") as the ability to get along with other people.
- David Wechsler (1943) suggested that affective components of intelligence may be essential to success in life.
- The humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943) described how people can build emotional strength in his theory of human motivation.

The idea of emotional intelligence first appeared in educational work in a paper written by Michael Beldoch in 1964 (Beldoch, 1964). Almost 20 years later, in 1983, Howard Gardner published a book called *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligence* (Gardner, 1983). Following his argument that the traditional intelligence quotient (IQ) cannot explain cognitive ability entirely, he developed the Howard Gardner theory of multiple intelligences that same year. This theory challenged the original understanding of a single general ability of intelligence. Gardner argues that every person's level of intelligence actually consists of many distinct "intelligences". He included seven intelligences in his theory: (a) Linguistic/verbal intelligence – the spoken and written language ability; (b) Logical-mathematical intelligence – the capacity to analyze problems logically, mathematically and scientifically; (c) Musical/rhythmic intelligence – the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones and rhythms; (d) Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence – using one's body to solve problems; (e) Spatial/visual intelligence – the use and recognizing of wide spaces and confined areas; (f) Intrapersonal intelligence – the capacity to understand oneself, appreciate one's own feelings, fears and motivations; and (g) Interpersonal intelligence – the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of others. Not part

of the seven distinct intelligences, Gardner (1999) later also added naturalistic intelligence – the ability to recognize flora and fauna and to make other consequential distinctions in the natural world, to the list.

The term, emotional intelligence, was officially used for the first time in 1985 when a USA graduate Wayne Payne mentioned it in his doctoral thesis *A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence* (Payne, 1985). The term was acknowledged in the academic world when it evolved and specific models started to arise. One of these, the Ability Model, developed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso in 1990 and revised in 1997, describes how the individual processes emotional information, uses this information to navigate his or her social environment, to reason about emotions and to promote personal thinking and growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). This model indicates that EI includes four types of actual abilities: perceiving emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions.

As opposed to the abovementioned ability-based model that refers to actual abilities, Konstantin Vasily Petrides developed another model named the trait model over several years of research (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Trait EI measured through self-report refers to an individual's self-perceptions of his emotional abilities.

The emotional intelligence concept as such, became a household name in 1994/5 after Daniel Goleman (1996) published his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. He realised that although we do not choose many of the events that happen to us, we certainly have a choice of how we will react to these. Extending research on EI, Daniel Goleman borrowed from the ability and trait models of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, and Petrides during his research. According to Goleman (1996, p. 34), EI consists of "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, to empathise, and to hope". These principal areas are to know one's emotions, to manage these emotions, to motivate oneself, to recognise emotions in others, and to handle relationships. He wrote a book entitled *Working*

with Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1998), and grouping capabilities into three categories, he indicated that EI accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders and that it mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ (Goleman, 2004). He defined EI as the combination of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance. In 2000 a distinction arose between trait- and ability-EI and Goleman's studies began to provide evidence of neural mechanisms involved in EI. He later developed the mixed EI model, a combination of the trait- and ability-EI models. The mixed model's focus is on a wide range of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance and support five main EI constructs namely self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy, and motivation. Within each of these constructs, Goleman included a set of emotional competencies. He speculates that individuals are born with a general EI that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. He, however, states that "these emotional competencies are not instinctive talents, but rather learned capabilities that must and can develop to achieve outstanding performance" (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

Besides the above-mentioned researchers who developed the concept, there were some other academics worth mentioning who also contributed greatly to the field of EI. Among them are Robert Sternberg (1985) who created the triarchic theory of human intelligence consisting of analytic intelligence, creative intelligence, and practical intelligence. Also contributing to current knowledge is the Bar-On Model of Social and Emotional Intelligence by Reuven Bar-On (2006) and Anabel Jensen's six seconds model of EI that she developed in 1997 (Jensen, 1997). The latter consists of the following three pursuits namely know yourself, choose yourself, and give yourself. These are subdivided into eight competencies and measured through the six seconds emotional intelligence assessment.

Although all previously mentioned researchers presented research to support their theories, they do not escape fierce criticism. For example, Eysenck (1998) criticised Goleman's description of EI in claiming that it contains unsubstantiated assumptions about intelligence in general, and that it even runs contrary to what researchers have come to expect when studying types of intelligence. Locke (2005) criticised misinterpretation of the intelligence construct, and Adam Grant

(2014) proclaimed that EI is a quality rather than a skill. In 2005 Landy claimed that EI has little predictive value and that a few incremental studies conducted on EI have shown that it adds little or nothing to the explanation or prediction of some common outcomes – most notably academic and work success (Landy, 2005).

For researchers who believed in the relevance of their theories, however, the importance to measure emotional intelligence became evident. In an article published by *Mensa Magazine,* Keith Beasley (1987) used the term "emotional quotient" for the first time. Two academic articles, one by Stanley Greenspan (1989), and the other by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), put more focus on the concept. They found that some people more than others are better at identifying their own feelings, identifying the feelings of others, and solving problems involving emotional issues. Several different tests started to see the light. Some examples are the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), the first assessment designed by Reuven Bar-On; a self-report test designed to measure a number of constructs related to EI (Bar-On, 1997); the MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), measuring emotional intelligence based on a series of emotion-based problem-solving items (Brackett & Salovey, 2006); and the MSCEIT V2.0 (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios, 2003).

Measurements based on the Goleman model, are available namely the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), which was created in 1999, the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), a newer edition of the ECI, developed in 2007, and the Emotional and Social Competency – University Edition (ESCI-U). These tools were developed by Boyatzis and Goleman and provide a behavioural measure of the emotional and social competencies (Boyatzis et al., 2000). The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal, which was created in 2001 is a skill based self-report and 360-degree assessment and was developed by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves (2009). The 12 Emotional Intelligence Competencies Profile developed by Andre Vermeulen (2002), is also a 360-degree practical assessment to determine how skilled a person is in terms of EI. This profile illustrates 6 intrapersonal- and 6 interpersonal competencies of EI and is used in conjunction with their brain profile. This brain profile is based on the neuroscience of learning and referred to as the Neuro Agility Profile (NAP).

Emotional intelligence, has been defined in several different ways. Among others are Reuven Bar-On who defines EI as an array of non-cognitive abilities – emotional and social abilities, competencies and skills that enable individuals to cope with daily demands that influence their ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures, to enable them to be more effective in their personal and social lives (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg, & Bechara, 2003). Colman (2015) describes it as the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour.

Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg and Bechara also contributed greatly when defining EI in terms of neuroscientific research in a 2003 article (Bar-On et al., 2003). Various other studies attempted to characterise the neural mechanisms of EI proclaiming that emotional intelligence is a valid construct that is neurally distinct from cognitive intelligence (Barby, Colom, & Grafman, 2012).

Described by the previously mentioned scientists, emotional intelligence involves us as emotional feeling and cognitive thinking beings in a social environment in that it relates to how we handle ourselves, and our relationships with others. Van Jaarsveld (2008) noted that EI does not only pertain to the emotional but also to the collective non-cognitive dimensions of intelligence that determine success in life. He stated that although the emotional dimensions are very important in EI, the total spectrum of the non-cognitive abilities including social intelligence is closely related. This belief resembles the way in which Thorndike (1920) first defined social intelligence as the ability to perceive one's own and others' internal states, motives, and behaviours, and to act toward them optimally based on that information. Because of the similarity between the concepts of social and emotional intelligences, some psychologists have suggested that they may relate to different aspects of the same construct (Bar-On, 2006).

But how does EI influence the employee, manager, or leader in the workplace? A research study performed by Goleman (2004), tracking over 160 high performing individuals in a variety of industries and job levels, indicated that EI was twice as

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important in contributing to excellence as intellect and expertise alone were. He based his performance-related research on top executives of the world's largest corporations and concluded that close to 90% of leadership success is attributable to EI.

The World Economic Forum predicts that to be able to thrive in the job market, an enormous change in the most desirable skills will be necessary (Schwab & Samans, 2016). On behalf of the Forum, Schwab and Samans (2016) claim that by the year 2020 the top ten rated skills in order of importance will be: (a) Complex problem-solving; (b) Critical thinking, (c) Creativity, (d) People management, (e) Coordinating with others, (f) Emotional intelligence, (g) Judgement and decision making, (h) Service orientation, (i) Negotiation, and (j) Cognitive flexibility. Social skills such as EI will be in high demand across industries, and strong social and collaborative skills will have to supplement technical and cognitive skills. These authors state that to simply reform the current educational systems to better equip today's students to meet future skills requirements, is not going to be enough to remain competitive. They wrote: "Ageing countries will not just need lifelong learning but will need wholesale reskilling of existing workforces throughout their lifecycle" (Schwab & Samans, 2016, p. 32) and "there is thus a need for bolder leadership and strategic action within companies and within and across industries" (Schwab & Samans, 2016, p.29).

To have a competitive advantage in the field of EI, training becomes increasingly a necessity in the workplace. This applies to the international as well as the South African workforce. Although several companies offer a variety of this kind of training programs in the South African context, scientific research evidence of the impact thereof, is still unavailable. Based on the ground-breaking work of previously mentioned scientists, especially the Howard Gardner theory of multiple intelligences, research in this study will therefore strive to investigate the impact of the South African developed EI program of Andre Vermeulen (2002), called the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achiever Development Program, to determine the impact thereof in the workplace. Up to date, no formal research study has been done on this program.

1.3   Literature Review

Most of the studies on EI link EI to job satisfaction, leadership, ethical work behaviour, aggression, commitment, performance, job involvement, decision making and adult learning. For example, research by Onuoha and Segun-Martins (2013) investigated the link between EI and job satisfaction of married female employees. They found a significant difference in job satisfaction of participants, in that those with higher EI experienced a higher level of job satisfaction than those with a lower level of EI.

Furthermore, Olannye (2013) assessed the effect of EI on leadership performance in local government administration in Nigeria and found that managing emotions through EI is a critical element to leadership performance and is therefore associated with successful outcomes that can drive employees' loyalty and commitment.

From Nigeria as well, Ojedokun (2010) did a study on the effort-reward imbalance and attitude towards unethical work behaviour among police personnel with EI as a moderator. He concluded that the inclusion of emotional training modules in the training of police personnel would create ethical workplaces devoid of favourable attitudes towards unethical work behaviour.

Another research study also indicated that aggressive behaviour in members when trained in EI skills, can be successfully reduced, remediated, and alleviated. This reflected in the findings of Animasahun (2007) who studied the measured effect of EI education in the remediation of aggressive behaviours among the members of the NURTW (National Union of Road Transport Workers) in the Ibadan metropolis of Nigeria.

The results of a study by Adeoye and Torubelli (2011) seeking to explain the interactive and relative effects of EI and human relationship management as predictors of organizational commitment of Nigerian civil servants indicated positively to EI intervention. Human relationship management programs were advocated in order to enhance the organisational commitment of civil servants.

At the University of Namibia, Akintayo and Babalola (2012) investigated the relationship between EI and workers' job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment. The findings of their study revealed the significant impact EI has on the behaviour of workers in industrial organisations.

When looking at the United States of America, research studies at FedEx revealed very large increases in performance, decision making, quality of life and major improvement in influence and link this to EI (Freedman, 2014).

Lastly, also in the United States of America, a study by Rude (2013) of the George Washington University, investigated experiences of the developing of EI in the United States federal government leaders, to contribute towards a greater understanding of the evolving relationship between EI, adult learning and leadership. The research findings supported this assumption.

Research regarding EI in South Africa include a study by Ramesar, Koortzen and Oosthuizen (2009) revealing that stress management is a component of EI and can be an inflow or outflow of EI or the lack thereof. Du Plessis, Wakelin and Nel (2015) found that EI training should form part of a necessary component in the development of servant leaders as indicated in their study. Lastly, Richards and Barry (2010), investigated the relevance of EI in project management for the aviation industry. It included the four clusters of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. This study found EI to be an important attribute for project managers in the aviation industry. All the quadrants were found to be of equal importance.

With the exception of the qualitative study by Rude (2013), all of the above studies were quantitative research, which necessitates some qualitative studies with a fresh approach, new terms, and key concepts. Evidence from the abovementioned research studies justifies the feasibility for a study in that they all proved the importance of EI. Furthermore, whilst some research dealt with EI training, these studies did not investigate the impact of EI training in the

workplace. There is also very little published about specific training programs in the workplace with regard to EI.

My personal interest, the belief in the need for and relevance of EI training in the workplace as well as the lack of a prior qualitative study on the Neuro-Link EI Program, therefore, drives this proposed study.

1.4   Research Problem and Objectives

The aim of the present study is to investigate if the Neuro-Link EI Program is beneficial for the individual firstly and subsequently for the company as a whole. The research problem is to explore the impact of the training program in the work context. This broad objective gives rise to the following specific research questions:

- Do individuals accurately know and understand their own truths, emotions, motives, strengths, weaknesses, and talents?
- 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 process and were the changes sustainable?
- Do the participants have healthy constructive interactions with, and influence on all people especially their colleagues?
- How did the participants experience the program?
- How did the program affect their personal wellbeing and working relationships with colleagues?
- How can the program be improved?

A detailed description of this program will be given in Chapter 3.

1.5   Research Design

1.5.1   Paradigm

This study will follow a constructivist-interpretive approach (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). Techniques and methodologies such as interviews in the form of open-ended but also quite specific questioning of the participants will be applied.

The "grand tour" (central question) questioning technique as described by Spradley (2003), will suit this study quite well. (This will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3).

1.5.2   Research Method and Design

An ethnographic qualitative research approach will be used in this study in order to gain an understanding of the personal and social experiences of those who participate in the study. In other words, I will try to enable the participants to tell coherent stories (Wagner et al., 2012) of how EI impacts on their lived lives in a work setting.

Rather than using a probability sampling procedure, I will be using purposive non-probability sampling, as the participants must meet the criteria of having completed the Neuro-Link EI Program.

Data will be collected through in-depth repeated interviewing in the form of a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews with some predetermined open-ended questions. Small groups will be selected to generate data-saturation that delivers a trustworthy and credible conclusion from their responses. A triangulation data gathering technique will apply to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the conclusion drawn from analysed data. Data will be collected during all observations and interviews by recordings or will be written up in field notes, and interviews will be transcribed. Recordings will ensure that no information gets lost during the conversations.

This study will make use of interpretative ethnographic analysis focussing on how participants make sense of their personal experiences but will also include how I as researcher make sense of and understand the data. The bracketing technique will enhance and ensure an open and empathic attitude towards the participants. Thematic analysis of data will be a continuous process simultaneously with data collection through the different steps of familiarisation, immersion, coding, and elaboration to finally interpretation of the data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012). As described by Silverman (2013), three concurrent flows of

activity of data analysis will be applied namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Connections through themes identification will be made to form a cohesive narrative to explain findings.

1.6   Ethical Considerations

I have obtained a written consent from the participating company, Neuro-Link, whose intellectual property in the form of assessments and the training program were used (Appendix A). Gatekeepers of the participating companies that will be observed, will be consulted to obtain written permission to enable me to conduct the research study (Appendix B).

An informed consent document was drawn up and will be presented to all proposed participants to obtain their signed consent to participate in the study. This will include information to inform participants that they may withdraw from the research process at any time, that their participation is voluntary and that they must understand that the research may affect them emotionally. The informed consent process will continue throughout the duration of the research project (Appendix C).

I will take care to establish and maintain a relationship of trust with all participants, to provide them with information for an understanding of the purpose of the study, and to explain the methodology that will be used. I will provide the opportunity to participants to give their ideas only, not to judge or criticise them, and never to argue or disagree with them. I undertake not to harm participants regarding time commitments, stressful topic discussions, and disclosure of information. Attention will continuously be focussed on the well-being of all participants.

I further undertake to not deceive participants in any way, but to convey the true purpose and results, the potential uses of the research, as well as 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 and will enter the study by maintaining a neutral stance in data collection and the analysis thereof without perceived ideas of bias. Vulnerable participants will be

protected, and an attitude of fairness and justice maintained at all times throughout the research process. This includes the recruitment of participants, the development of questions, interpretation of results as well as the conveying thereof.

I will assure participants of the privacy and confidentiality of their responses throughout observations and individual interviews. No information that will embarrass or harm them will be disclosed at any time. Information discussed in confidentiality will only be disclosed on consent and anonymously if at all necessary.

1.7   Presentation

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the study.

Chapter 2 – Reflects a literature research.

Chapter 3 – This chapter will focus on the Neuro-Link EI Program that will be investigated during this study. An explanation and discussion of the program follows in this chapter. A discussion of the qualitative investigative methodology that will be applied during this study will be followed by a detailed exposition of the paradigm, design, and research method. This discussion will include a description of sampling methods, interviews, data gathering techniques and data analysis.

Chapter 4 – In an autoethnography: this chapter will reflect on my own experience of EI training.

Chapter 5 – An ethnographic account of the impact of experiencing the emotional intelligence program by two facilitators of the program.

Chapter 6 – A discussion of the impact of the EI program on employees and the organisation.

Chapter 7 – The research findings will be discussed in this chapter, followed by

themes that emerged from the study, a summary of conclusions drawn from the investigation, and recommendations for future research.

1.8 Conclusion

The complexity of mental development in humans together with human interaction in the social context presents itself to be a continued area of investigation and exploration. This leads to the discovering and interest in areas of psychological functioning previously fairly unknown to researchers. As seen in the history of research, EI is such a field of study in the discipline of psychology. This study will focus on this theme specifically, and the development thereof in the professional capacity of individuals in their world of work. A qualitative study will be performed on individuals who participated in the Neuro-Link EI Program and aims to investigate the impact such a program has on working individuals and their professional environment.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Research

2.1 Introduction

The interest in EI has evolved into an enterprise comprising of a vast array of publications, testing, education, and consulting (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts (2012) have outlined the dramatic growth of the literature concerning EI. They argue convincingly that it is no longer an issue whether emotions have a place in the work environment, but rather that one should gain competencies and skills to use and manage these emotions and realise what impact such EI skills of employees have on the work environment.

What then is the link between EI and workplace outcomes? Research from different disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry, business, education, medicine, sports science, computer science, and the neuroscientific fields of study have all contributed to provide an answer to this question (Boyatzis, Rochford, & Taylor, 2015; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

This chapter will present literature on theories, models, approaches, and research on EI and the relevance of EI in the workplace. This will be followed with a discussion on how EI can be applied within the workplace.

2.2 Defining Emotional Intelligence

EI refers to the capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures that directly affect a person's overall psychological well-being; a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminating among them, and to use the information to guide thoughts and actions, as defined by Segen (2011).

Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) describe EI as: "The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and actions". Cherniss (2010) and

Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, and Cherkasskiy (2011, p. 532) define EI as "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotions in thought, understand and reason with emotions and regulate emotion in self and others". Emotions are "internal events that coordinate many psychological subsystems including physiological responses, cognition and conscious awareness" (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999, p. 267). Mayer and Salovey (1997, p. 10), describe EI as "the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth".

Bar-On construed EI as emotional and socially competent behaviour and qualities. He describes emotional and social intelligence as a multi-factorial array of interrelated emotional, personal and social abilities – non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's overall ability to actively and effectively succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures (Bar-On, 2006). Bar-On believes that to be emotionally and socially intelligent is to effectively understand and express oneself, to understand and relate well with others, and to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures. It is this aspect of human intelligence that governs our ability to recognise, understand, control, and use emotions in solving problems of a personal and interpersonal nature (Bar-On, 2006).

The competency-based model of EI rooted in the works of Goleman (1998) and Boyatzis (2008), describes emotional competence as the capacity for recognising our own and others' emotions and the ability to use this knowledge to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively.

In Goleman's (1996, p. 34) Personality Model, EI is seen 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 emphasize and to hope". In a following book, 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" (Khokhar & Kush, 2009, p. 2). He expanded on Mayer and Salovey's definition of EI by incorporating personal and social competencies. His conceptualization of EI closely parallels the earlier ideas of Thorndike (1920) on social intelligence and H. Gardner (1993) on personal intelligence but departs significantly from Salovey and Mayer's ability model. Thorndike defined social intelligence as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls and manage wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920, p. 228).

Petrides, Pita, and Kokkinaki, (2007, p. 287) define trait EI as: "a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies", as measured by the trait EI questionnaire. These authors claim this to be the only operational definition in the field that recognizes the inherent subjectivity of emotional experience (Petrides, 2010).

In conclusion, EI is considered as a set of abilities. Emotional competence is an acquired competency based on EI abilities and has an outcome of strong workplace performance (Goleman, 1998). Thus, despite the debates within literature whether EI follow from traits, ability and mixed models, the literature suggests that an individual with high EI will demonstrate the competencies that comprise self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

From the previous discussion it is clear that there are a myriad of definitions and points of view that attempt to define EI. For the purpose of this study I will define EI as follows: For an individual to be successful in intrapersonal (personal) and interpersonal (social) competence, requires accurate development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management skills, in that specific sequence. These dimensions are all vital for general contentment and well-being, improved performance, productivity, and success, and could be seen as aspects of EI.

2.3   Theories, Models, and Measurements of EI

I will discuss four conceptual models of EI. Each of these models presents

different perspectives of what could be included within the concept. After I have presented the models I will attempt to construe a mixed model based on the previous four models.

2.3.1 The Trait Model

Petrides (2010) developed the trait model of EI. According to this model trait EI refers to individuals' self-perceptions of their emotional abilities as measured through a self-report. Traits are deemed to be relatively stable over time, differ across individuals, and influence behaviour. Trait theorists are primarily interested in the measurement of traits, which can be defined as habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion.

Petrides (2010) identifies the following 15 traits that reflect facets of EI: adaptability, assertiveness, emotional perception of self and others, emotional expression, emotional management (others), emotional regulation, impulse control, relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, trait empathy, trait happiness, and trait optimism. Trait EI theory connects the construct to mainstream research on differential psychology and has been used as reference framework in diverse areas of which work is amongst them (Petrides, 2010).

There are many self-report measures of EI, including the EQ-i, the Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUEIT), and the Schutte EI model. None of these assess intelligence, abilities, or skills, but are limited measures of trait EI (Petrides et al., 2007). The most widely used and researched measures of self-report EI are the EQ-i 2.0 and TEIQue. Used in more than 200 studies, it proved to have the best norms, reliability, and validity of any self-report instrument. The TEIQue provides an operationalization for the model of Petrides, that conceptualizes EI in terms of personality (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). A number of quantitative genetic studies have been carried out within the trait EI model, which have revealed significant genetic effects and heritabilities for all trait EI scores (Vernon, Petrides, Bratko, & Schermer, 2008).

Although the trait model has contributed significantly to current knowledge, there is a lack of various aspects that form part of EI. These will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.3.2   The Ability Model

The ability model of Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) conceptualises EI as the ability to engage in information processing of one's own and others' emotions and to use this information as a guide to thinking and behaviour. The model proposes that individuals vary in their ability to process information of an emotional nature and in their ability to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition. Individuals high in EI has the ability to pay attention to, understand, use, and manage emotions. These skills serve adaptive functions that potentially benefit the person and others.

The ability model of EI has four underlying emotional abilities that describe how emotionally intelligent people function both intra- and interpersonally in workplace settings. These hierarchically organised skills are arranged from lower to higher levels into four branches/competencies/areas, each describing a set of skills woven together to create a more emotionally intelligent person (Carter, 2015). Branches include abilities to: (a) perceive emotions in oneself and others accurately, (b) use emotions to facilitate thinking, (c) understand emotions, and (d) manage emotions to attain specific goals. With each branch building upon previous abilities, this integrative model illustrates the concept of EI as a developmental exercise.

Ability models focus on one's capacity, such as emotional perception, emotion-facilitated thinking, emotional reasoning, or emotional management (Mayer et al., 2008), and constructs especially relevant to EI. Their stance is that individual differences exist in each of these abilities that can be measured and operationalized formally as a set of problems that should be solved. Excluded thus are certain personality traits such as assertiveness, neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, optimism, and so forth. These traits are not regarded as EI competencies.

A number of ability-based scales of emotional perception, emotional identification and understanding, and emotional integrative complexity are available (Mayer et al., 2008). An example is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), a renewal of the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), testing ability to perceive, identify, understand, and work with emotion. It consists of eight tasks, two for each of the four branches of the EI model. Substantial evidence indicates that the MSCEIT measures EI rather than other constructs (Mayer et al., 2008).

2.3.3 Emotional-Social Intelligence Model

Bar-On's (2006) emotional-social intelligence model (ESI-model) combines various intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, competencies, and facilitators to determine effective human behaviour. According to this model emotional and social intelligence implies the abilities to effectively understand and express oneself, to understand and relate well with others, and to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures. All of this requires that one is aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses and is able to express one's feelings and thoughts non-destructively.

On both intra- and interpersonal levels, this model includes one or more of five key components that individuals can develop to increase their EI. These five components are the ability to: (a) recognize, understand, and express emotions and feelings; (b) manage and control emotions; (c) generate positive affect and be self-motivated; (d) understand how others feel and to relate to them; and (e) manage change to adapt and solve problems of a personal and social nature.

The Bar-On model provides the theoretical basis for the Emotional Quotient Inventory Self-report assessment (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997). It indicates personal qualities that enable some people to possess better emotional well-being than others and plays an instrumental role by which this model is operationalized. It has been developed to assess and conceptualise various aspects of EI (Bar-On, 2006). The EQ-i is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent

behaviour. Each of the previously mentioned five components comprise of a number of closely related competencies. The questionnaire contains 133 items and is suitable for individuals 17 years and older. It includes the following scales and subscales: (a) Intrapersonal – comprising of variables of self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization; (b) Interpersonal – including empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship; (c) Stress management – that includes stress tolerance, and impulse control; (d) Adaptability – tapping areas of reality-testing, flexibility, and problem solving; and (e) General mood – including optimism and happiness. Above average EQ scores on the EQ-i suggests that the respondent is effective in emotional and social functioning. The higher the score, the more predictive is effective functioning in meeting daily demands and challenges, whereas a lower score suggests an inability thereof (Bar-On, 2006).

2.3.4   The Emotional Competence Model

Goleman's (1998) Emotional Competence Model combines physiological evidence underlying EI. This model is relevant to the workplace as it conceptualises EI as a "theory of performance" (Goleman, 2001a, p. 14). Behavioural aspects of EI proved to be crucial to workplace performance as he emphasised that these behaviours can be learned and developed (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Focussing on EI as a theory of performance, this model is based on competencies that have been identified in research on many corporations and organisations, distinguishing outstanding performers. Goleman (2001b, p. 41) hypothesised that EI explains which individuals would excel in any given job, and who would be an outstanding leader. He also contends that an emotionally intelligent organisation is better equipped to survive than one which is not.

This competency-based EI model integrates emotional and social competencies that have been linked to outstanding performance in the workplace (Goleman et al., 2002). Table 2.1 illustrates the EI competency model of Goleman, consisting of the four major cluster domains with twenty competencies.

Table 2.1: The Daniel Goleman Emotional Competence Framework of EI (adapted from Goleman, 1998, p. 26-27).

Dimension	Competence:	Purpose:
Intrapersonal Competencies:		
Self-awareness	• Emotional self-awareness • Accurate self-assessment • Self-confidence competencies	To recognise own strengths and weaknesses
Self-management	• Emotional self-control • Trustworthiness, • Conscientiousness, • Adaptability • Achievement orientation • Initiative competencies	Leads to superior performance in the workplace.
Interpersonal Competencies:		
Social Awareness	• Empathy • Organizational awareness • Service orientation competencies	Excel in the organization
Relationship Management	• Developing others • Inspirational leadership • Influence • Change Catalyst • Conflict management • Teamwork • Collaboration competencies • Building Bonds	Contribute to a positive working environment

The one important competency which is highlighted in this model is empathy. According to a study by C. B. Carter (2012), empathy bridges the gap between self-awareness and social awareness. To determine the emotional state of another, requires cognitive recognition skills known as empathic skills. It works toward understanding someone else's perspective and a different point of view than your own. Through this action, empathy is put into practice. To have the

knowledge and the skills is only half the ability, but to apply it in practice, is the full ability. Carter distinguishes three kinds of empathy namely: (a) cognitive empathy – understand how another person thinks, (b) emotional empathy – understand and feel how another person feels, and (c) behavioural empathic concern – feeling inclined to help with the needs of another. This forms the basis of compassion he claims. Martinuzzi (2009) notes that empathy is an ability worth cultivating in the business industry: soft skills tools that can lead to hard tangible results.

Based on his theory Goleman developed the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), a multi-rater instrument that provides report ratings based on a series of behavioural indicators of EI. The ECI provides self-, manager-, and peer ratings. Twenty competencies are measured and organized into four constructs namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills. Each respondent is asked to describe themselves or the other person on a scale from 1 to 7 for each item – where 1 represents slightly characteristic of the individual's behaviour, and 7 is very characteristic of the individual's behaviour. Items are composed into ratings for each of the competencies. This leaves the respondent with two ratings for each competency: a self-rating and a total other rating made up of an average of all other ratings (Stys & Brown, 2004). This instrument incorporates a person's self-assessment and others' assessment of him/her giving a 360-degree perspective (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013).

2.3.5   Construing a Mixed Model

Although the world of education uses EI skills in the general term of social and emotional learning (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), the EI model emerged as an influential framework in the discipline of Psychology and ranging over the entire spectrum thereof. Areas with the strongest connections seem to include industrial and organisational psychology (Goleman, 2001a, p. 15).

Active research and interest in this field of study has led to two main different approaches – the Mayer and Salovey's "ability" model, and the Goleman and Bar-On's "mixed" models. Both these approaches address a multitude of factors which include traits, preferences and abilities, but individually they do not provide a

comprehensive picture of EI. The ability and trait models are specific and narrow. Traits are considered to be stagnant and exclude the development potential of intelligence, abilities, or skills entirely, and it relies heavily on personality characteristics. Researched limitations of the Ability Model of EI indicate its low discriminant validity, and questionable construct and incremental validity in the standards of measurement (Fiori & Antonakis, 2011). Integrative "mixed" models on the other hand, represent EI as cohesive by integrating more abilities (Mayer et al., 2008). Bar-On (2000) makes a clear distinction between EI and social intelligence, considering EI as personal self-management capabilities, and social intelligence as relationship skills. Goleman's theory is specific to the domain of work performance (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003).

As approaches differ, equally so is there little consensus amongst researchers concerning how to best conceptualise and measure constructs in organisational research. They do agree however, that the higher the result of an EI assessment (called Emotional Intelligence Quotient [EQ] – and designed to quantify EI), the more competent the person is per skill set (Cherniss, 2000).

The foregoing discussion suggests that all perspectives have merit, and there is no evidence that any should be dismissed. Nor can any of the abovementioned characteristics be ignored when EI is being studied, despite the broad interest in EI with such diverse academic approaches. Aspects of all four models were therefore gathered, combined, and unified into one mixed model of EI. This adds value to the model because it includes all dimensions and levels considered as EI qualities and skills that is necessary to completely represent the construct, and that was originally not included in the individual models. A comprehensive description of the Neuro-Link model which will be used in this study follows in Chapter 3.

2.4   Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

2.4.1   A Paradigm Shift: Recognising the Importance of EI Skills

Traditionally the workplace was viewed as a rational, logical environment with the main purpose of merely completing specific tasks. The role of emotion was

consequently neglected and as a result, considered irrelevant or unnecessary for effective workplace performance (Briner & Reynolds, 1999). On the contrary, research indicated that employees are constantly required to engage in interpersonal interactions involving a range of emotions, and as they interact for the purpose of completing tasks or work, emotions such as gratitude, fear, anger, and frustration may surface, be experienced, and expressed (Van Oosten, 2013). As Ashforth and Humphrey (1995, p. 98) explained, "the experience of work is saturated with feeling".

Mitchell, Skinner, and White (2010) noted a paradigm shift for our future workforce, requiring employees to be well-armed with a variety of skills. These include "hard-skills" which are technical requirements for the job obtained from academic training, experience, and expertise, as well as "soft-skills", namely EI. They claim that the latter contribute up to 85% of the success rate. A study by Wilhelm, Logan, Smith, and Szul (2002) indicates that employers now rate soft-skills highest in importance for entry-level success in the workplace by recognising the value of both emotional and cognitive development. This clearly indicates the link between EI and workplace outcomes resulting in EI as an ever-increasing employment skills requirement.

2.4.2   Emotional Competence and Cognitive Intelligence in Job Satisfaction

To distinguish where emotions actually fit into the bigger picture of work, Fisher (2000) explains job satisfaction as an attitude with an affective component (emotions and feelings), together with a cognitive component (judgement, belief, and knowledge). Gardner (2005) mentions the sustained cognitive and emotional effort that a demanding job requires. This is due to the physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects their jobs are associated with, which has a psychological burden on individuals.

EI is distinguished from cognitive intelligence by its focus on feelings and behaviour rather than facts and knowledge and it represents a cluster of personal and social competencies. To acquire these competencies, the emphasis is on behaviour changes through intervention. Personal behaviour change focus on

inner-, other-, and outer awareness fostering stronger relationships, personal development, and work-family integration (Goleman, 2013). Goleman (2013) describes inner awareness as the ability to manage oneself, where other awareness indicates managing other people, and outer awareness has to do with the world system: strategic thinking and the understanding of how things work. He believes that a balance of all three of these competencies are needed.

2.4.3   Emotional Competence Through Behaviour Change

Present day organizations often face different obstacles as they are increasingly under pressure to complete complex projects faster and with fewer resources whilst still needing to remain competitive. This implies that both the organization and its members should adapt to change. Change is mostly part of any business and while organisations focus on deciding what to change to improve the organisation's performance and quality, the human element of executing these decisions are often left unattended (Conner, 1994). When emotional needs are in charge, a person becomes ineffective. The Institute for Health and Human Potential UK quoted a professor at Harvard Business School, John Kotter, who said, "because of the furious pace of change in business today, it is difficult to manage relationships, as it sabotages more businesses than anything else. It is not a question of strategy that gets us into trouble, but a question of emotions" (Maheshwari & Tripathi, 2003, p. 4). As team effectiveness is strengthened or weakened by the existence of trust and emotional competence amongst the members and their leader, change may be seen as an opportunity or a threat (Kanter, 2007).

Looking then at the inevitable occurrence of change in the business world, the need is to be a change-manager and not a change-resister. Not only does the EI of its members play a crucial part in the ability of an organisation to realise the need for change, but it also influences the pace of change and how quickly the members of the organisation can anticipate and adapt to change and still maintain a competitive advantage. Huy (1999) and Kanter (2007) noted that emotions in itself have an important effect on the fields of change management in dealing with diversity, teamwork, resistance to change and systems thinking. Regaining

balance after a major change initiative requires intellectual, emotional, and physical energy from all involved, and behavioural change of people requires adaptability, flexibility, and multiple perspectives, making EI competencies unmissable.

2.4.4 Working Relations and Team Effectiveness

In a social working environment, the significance of teamwork – what we give and what we receive – plays a crucial role. Open communication, articulating goals, building coalitions, acknowledging others, and creating effective partnerships are essential to sustain high performance, making teamwork the most important asset in the working community. The focus shifts from individual IQ's and trait abilities of group members to social effectiveness. EI competencies are valuable to individuals within groups as it contributes to building bonds, collaboration, cooperation, and team capabilities (Boyatzis et al., 2000). It has been proposed that EI constitutes the building blocks to these important interpersonal behaviours. EI may, therefore, be a useful contributor to our understanding of variables like effective networking, communication, negotiation, performance and leading, and motivation, says Goleman (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

In his study, Groenewald (2003) explained the concept of systems thinking – where the focus is on explaining how things interact within the system as a whole. It studies the interaction of the various parts, and whenever the tasks are more complex, the dependencies between the parts are even more crucial to be effective. The importance of the emotional development of the individuals that make up the system, should not be underestimated, he says. High performance used to be all about those who got the most sales and achieved profitability and delivered. Today's success is measured by the extent of performance in and amongst the team, as well as the task on hand. It involves a social and emotional developmental process. It is thus a reality that the quality of working relations and the personal wellness of employees and leaders nowadays are just as important to a successful business, as their product or service rendered.

2.4.5 EI Intervention for Job Satisfaction, Performance, and Career Advancement

The growing interest in the concept of EI has spurred an equally growing interest in intervention programs and the development of EI capabilities aimed at adults within organisations. This is to produce a positive influence on the important aspects of job satisfaction, career advancement, and job performance.

Research studies reflect a link between job satisfaction and EI (Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2008; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005), career advancement and EI (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005), as well as job performance and EI (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005; Law et al., 2008). Bond (2016), who investigated differences in trait EI of individuals between various stages of their career, also indicated that valuable desirable workplace outcomes such as job performance, are tied to EI. He added that training initiatives to develop EI in military service members are still missing in institutional programs. Because the challenges of today's occupations extend beyond cognitive intellect, employees need to be focused, creative, committed, and motivated. A study by Groenewald (2003) reflects that organisations started to take personal qualities such as initiative, empathy, adaptability, persuasiveness, communication skills, and interpersonal skills into account as essential for superior performance. It does not only require radical shifts in the ways employees interact, but leaders also discover that attention to emotions has shown to save time, expand opportunities and focus energy on better results.

A study by Engeser and Rheinberg (2008) tested the assumption that flow predicts job performance. Their study is based on the psychological concept of a Hungarian psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who claims that peak performance is achieved in a state of flow. It illustrates that in order to achieve a state of flow, or being "in the zone", a balance must be struck between the challenge of the task and the skill of the performer. Explained on a graph, the horizontal axis measures how challenging the activity is, and the vertical axis measures the level of skill at that particular task. The point where the level of challenge is high and the skills that you have to meet that challenge, are also high, is the point that you enter the flow state. Peak performance in the workplace, or

"in the flow"-performance, relies more than ever on interpersonal relationships, tolerance, adaptability and teamwork, all facets of EI.

2.4.6   Managing Occupational Stress with EI Skills

When considering occupational stress as yet another but important aspect experienced in the working setup, dimensions of EI are particularly important. This was pointed out by Gardner (2005) who conducted a study on EI and occupational stress. Organisational stressors like policies, procedural requirements and working relationships have a significant impact on well-being. Factors taken into consideration in the study were emotional recognition and expression, understanding emotions, emotional management, and emotional control. Findings revealed that those employees using EI were less likely to report feelings of stress, ill health and lower satisfaction and commitment. Some employees experience stress more intensely than others, and EI programs can be used effectively to improve employee well-being and decrease feelings of occupational stress and burnout.

A study by Bilich-Erich (2009), investigated and implemented worksite stress management intervention in the police force. The intervention was based on the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) model of Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson (1999). In his study, Bilich-Erich used the ACT intervention model primarily to influence change of behaviour based on increasing psychological flexibility. This differentiated it from other studies in that the focus was not on how participants handle emotional and social problems, but rather to promote proactive EI behaviour. It demonstrated emotional intelligent behaviour versus intelligence. The Mindfulness-based Emotional Intelligence Training (MBEIT) program was used. This program is specifically designed to promote well-being and workplace effectiveness and to improve interpersonal relationships (personal and work related). The training was done for four days over a period of four months. Everything was about intervening to help participants lead better and more vital lives. A significant improvement in the general mental health of participants was the result. The study found modest evidence for the effectiveness of the MBEIT intervention.

2.4.7 EI Skills can be Learned and Developed

Improved employee levels of EI provide support for the belief that EI can be learned and developed. The outcomes of studies indicate the development of EI abilities to make a positive and observable difference to employee performance in the workplace (Al Kahtani, 2013; Bajaj & Medury, 2013; Boyatzis, Good & Massa, 2012; Boyatzis, Rochford & Cavanagh, 2017; Gill, 2015; Korn Ferry Hay Group, 2017; Mahon, Taylor & Boyatzis, 2014; Miller 2015; Pittenger, 2015; Ryan, Spencer & Bernhard, 2012). It is thus desirable to develop EI skills. Carter's (2015) research indicates that the incorporation of EI training in the curriculum of college students prepares them cognitively and emotionally for work life, in all its facets. Van Oosten (2013) explored the impact of EI and executive coaching on leader effectiveness, with the sole purpose of improving leader effectiveness, cognitive flexibility, skill enhancement and behaviour change, all concepts of EI. Results from this study confirmed that both emotional competence and quality relationships do predict workplace outcomes related to leader effectiveness.

Empirical studies have thus shown that EI influences a range of workplace outcomes such as job performance, satisfaction, leadership effectiveness and stress management. This resulted in EI theory informing us that leaders and employees who manage emotions in themselves and others appropriately, will be more effective in their tasks and relationships (Van Oosten, 2013), confirming the studies of more researchers such as Gardner and Stough (2002), as well as Humphrey, Burch, and Adams (2016). It has been widely suggested then that EI and personal mastery should be incorporated into skills development training. This will benefit the company as well as all individuals, because with an emotional intelligent workforce, people will have knowledge of and live out what is fair and just behaviour towards self and others (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009).

Focussing specifically on the training process, EI training needs to produce outcomes that are seen as valuable to people in the system and by organisations that sponsor the training efforts. Gill (2015) explored perspectives of twenty-one EI trainers, working in New Zealand to identify variables that contribute to the design of successful training. An EI learning environment change confirms to be

one way of establishing the success of an EI training design. Change refers to an adjustment of attitudes, expectations, perceptions, and behaviour in people (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2009).

Further, is it important to apply learning practically. A sample of MBA students were investigated in a study by Clarke (2010) to determine the effects of attending a one-day EI training session followed by participating in team-based learning on ability-based measures of EI. Results showed that training alone had no effect but when followed by team-based participation and learning, positive effects were found. Findings suggest that greater participation in team-based learning may create stronger relational bonds that support the development of emotional abilities once individuals have gained personal insight into their own EI. These findings correspond with previous findings of Moriarty and Buckley (2003), where statistically significant improvements in EI were found after students attended an EI self-awareness session followed by participation in team meetings once a week. The improvement was only in one aspect – self and peer-assessed team-ability. Considering these factors, performing this current study could shed some more light on group cohesion when applied to more abilities.

As can be seen in the substantial number of research studies, the well-being of individuals plays a pivotal role in the well-being of the organisation they are working for. Incorporating personal and social development will be to the advantage of any organisation and its workforce. High EI correlates with better relationships in business settings (Mayer et al., 2008), cultivating productive working relationships with others. It reflects supportive behaviours such as goals of the organisation, guidance, mentoring and development of people, and clear communication (Mayer et al., 2008).

In conclusion, it is suggested that IQ is an effective predictor of the level of cognitive complexity to sort people into job roles according to their abilities. Excellence, however, becomes defined largely by things more than IQ. IQ and EQ are independent aspects of ability and they partake in various parts of the brain (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003; Emmerling & Goleman, 2005). This shows a difference between cognition and emotion. Emotion refers to the affective states,

always present in the individual. A certain level of EI is required to achieve emotional competence. To recognise, identify and measure an emotion or feeling accurately, enables us to develop the specific social and emotional competencies we need to improve performance. This current study will try to indicate how EI can affect the success of the individual who fits this modern profile within an organisation and how emotional intelligent employees are beneficial to organisational success overall. This will involve determining the level of EI of participants and how much training and the application of learnt skills affected their lives in a positive way.

2.5 EI Training: Methods, Theories, and Approaches

To maintain a level of confidence in our own abilities inspires an inherent desire to grow competence beyond novelty. Psychological concepts such as vision, hope, efficacy, optimism, and positive expectations motivate change and development to a hopeful and positive future. Much has been written about the importance of these aspects that drive our dreams and aspirations to grow (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). A growing body of research on emotional learning and behaviour change suggests that it is possible to help people of any age to become more emotionally intelligent at work (Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan, & Adler, 1998). Experts use different approaches and theoretical frameworks, as well as various methods and programs intended to encourage and bring about change and development of EI in employees. Besides the Intentional Change Theory and the Social-Emotional Learning Model discussed hereafter, counseling forms an integral part of emotional learning.

A clear definition of work counselling is difficult to find. The term overlaps related terms such as mentoring, coaching, and facilitation. Kultanen and Rytkönen (2002), describe work counselling as a regular and learning-oriented process of interaction, where an employee evaluates his work, analyses the dilemmas arising from it, and plans possible operations required for the future. They further claim that work counseling can be done in practice on an individual, a group, or the whole working community. The goals thus range from an individual employee level to that of an entire organisation.

At an individual level, the main objective is to help the employee learn something new and useful in relation to self and work. At a group level, the main objective is to learn from interactive relationships between group members. The primary focus is not only to improve their output by accomplishing primary work functions, but also to improve aspects such as work satisfaction, the prevention of stress and burnout, and the strengthening of professional skills. Skills such as effective communication abilities, conflict resolution, leadership, and empathy with colleagues. This is where work counselling and EI training overlap.

Facilitation and work counselling include training of EI knowledge and skills and experiential learning through active participation, to improve the behaviour of participants. Through trial and error, discussing, debating, thinking, reflecting, and gradually understanding, they learn valuable life skills. Hopefully participants will then apply the knowledge and skills in their work environment. EI training provides the tools to use in this process.

2.5.1 The Intentional Change Theory

The Intentional Change Theory (ICT) is often used in EI training. It involves thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. The ICT is a theoretical model of the "ideal self" proposed to be the driver of intentional change in one's behaviour, emotions, perceptions, and attitudes (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006).

Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006, p. 625) describe the ideal self as: "An evolving motivational core within oneself, focusing on a person's desires and hope, aspirations and dreams, purpose and calling". They claim that the ideal self is composed of three major components: (a) an image of a desired future; (b) hope (and its constituents, self-efficacy, and optimism); and (c) a comprehensive sense of one's core identity (past strengths, traits, and other enduring dispositions).

Describing the "real self" as who we are at a given time, the actual or true self with strengths and weaknesses, Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) continue by claiming that intentional change is activated when the individual notes discrepancies between

the ideal and real selves. Identifying the ideal self and mapping out a path towards it, individuals position themselves to have better control over their own destiny which is generally regarded as positive and leads to positive outcomes, such as better health, increased life- and career satisfaction, and greater fulfilment.

The program consists of five steps in the process to change: (a) Creating an ideal self or personal vision; (b) Activating a real self; (c) Creation of a learning agenda; (d) Experimentation and practice of new behaviours, thoughts and emotions; and (e) Creating a trusting relationship to support the change (Boyatzis, 2006; Goleman et al., 2002). For this targeted changed behaviour, Smith, Van Oosten, and Boyatzis, (2009) suggest that change must be internalised to be meaningful, desirable, attainable, and sustainable.

For some time, practitioners and academics alike have argued that the creation of a vision, be it at the individual, team, or organizational level, motivates people to action and inspires them to reach beyond their current state. Coaches employ different approaches to facilitate this kind of change in people. One such theoretical approach, called the Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA), was used by Boyatzis et al. (2015). Their study discusses personal and shared vision amongst members in management and organizational practices, arguing that arousing the PEA is critical when creating or affirming a personal vision (i.e., sense of one's purpose and ideal self). A study by Van Oosten (2013) argues that the more developed a person's "ideal self" is, the greater the possibility that optimal performance will be reached. Self-reflection expands self-awareness and leads to self-directed change, producing meaningful personal vision, resulting in positive work engagement and career satisfaction (Van Oosten, 2013).

2.5.2   The Social-Emotional Learning Model

Another reliable source of guidance for training of EI comes from research that examines social and emotional change processes, in fields of study such as sports psychology, psychotherapy and behaviour change, and personal development (Cherniss et al., 1998). Based on the integrative models, this approach suggests

a set of guidelines for the design of effective social and emotional learning. Cherniss and colleagues arranged the social and emotional training process in four basic phases: (a) Initial phase – involving preparation for change at organizational and individual levels; (b) Second phase – training that covers the change process itself; (c) Third phase – transfer and maintenance process that addresses what happens following the formal training experience; and (d) Final phase – evaluation, determining the effectiveness of the training program used. Each of these phases includes a certain set of guidelines/criteria.

The model suggests that the best assessment approach for initiating social and emotional learning is usually based on multiple ratings obtained from multiple perspectives. The 360-degree assessment is such a rating and include superior, peer, and subordinate assessments. Competencies identified by the outcome of the assessment, are intended to be the focus of training efforts that will follow. How participants understood feedback from the assessment, will have an important impact on the success of the planned training program. The training process requires motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice. The preparation as well as the transfer- and maintenance phases of the training process are especially important. Interesting to note is that the guidelines presented in this model may be applied to any development program where personal and social learning and emotional competence development is the goal and should ideally include all or as many of the elements identified in this model (Cherniss et al., 1998).

2.5.3 Applying Theories and Approaches

The Neuro-Link model, that I will be using in this study, draws significantly from the Intentional Change Theory and the Social-Emotional Learning Model. The model incorporates innate traits as well as learned skills and focusses predominantly on the neuroscience of learning. The Neuro-Link EI program is discussed in Chapter 3.

We can thus see that EI does not only develop passively with age through experience within individuals but enhances and further develops through

professional training programs. A research article by Clarke (2006) indicates the need to develop workplace interventions that target employees' EI – opening a new avenue for understanding behaviour and performance in the workplace. As an empirical study in actual time organisational settings with actual participants, investigating their real-life experiences, I intend (or hope) to provide some insight into the development and application of workplace EI programs with my study.

2.6 Conclusion

Success in the professional world of work depends largely on EI to supplement cognitive and trade knowledge. As the pace of change increases and the world of work makes ever greater demands on a person's cognitive, emotional, and physical resources, this particular set of abilities become increasingly important. Goleman (1998) indeed noted that employees are no longer being judged by how smart they are or by their training expertise, but rather how well they handle themselves and others. This yardstick increasingly applies in choosing who will be hired and who will not, who will be let go or be retained, who will be passed over and who will be promoted.

Moursund quoted Perkins who said: "Being proactive, we can become more intelligent through study and practice, through access to appropriate tools, and through learning to make effective use of these tools" (Moursund, 1996, p. 38). EI training provides these tools.

This chapter discussed the relevant literature concerning EI theories, models, and training in the workplace. The presented models suggest that EI is foundational to an individual's ability to function at a more productive and successful level. Given increasing evidence that EI abilities are associated with many of the key skills and competencies required for operating successfully in today's organizations, the focus of this research study is to assess whether training of employees in EI skills, can result in measurable improvement, higher productivity, happier dedicated employees, and a socially balanced organization. Moreover, to assess if employees/participants show increased growth in areas of EI, specifically addressed in the Neuro-Link EI program namely self-awareness, self-

management, social awareness, and social management, and to determine how successful the program is in achieving this.

CHAPTER 3

Method:

Exploring the Impact of the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achievers Development Program

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present a brief discussion on the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achievers Development Program – also referred to as the Neuro-Link EI program. A discussion of the method that I will use to achieve my purpose, namely by exploring the impact that this training program has on the working individual, will then follow.

The Neuro-Link EI program aims to empower people by developing their intrapersonal and interpersonal EI skills through training. The main purpose is to improve performance, create team effectiveness and develop emotionally intelligent leaders. The framework applies to workers, managers, and leaders who want to improve their performance at work and be happy, effective, and successful while maintaining healthy relationships with others.

Dr André Vermeulen, who developed this program, is the founding member and CEO of Neuro-Link, an international consultancy firm. He obtained his PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at Therapon University, USA. He gained credibility as an international motivational trainer and speaker and contributes through the talks and workshops he presents on platforms such as TEDx (Technology, Entertainment, and Design), The Conference and Exposition Association for Talent Development (ATD), and International Alliance for Learning conferences in several countries worldwide. The Golden Key International Honour Society recognised him as an honorary member and keynote speaker. The program he developed is currently being used in organisations locally and internationally, as well as in universities such as the University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University.

EI is my primary area of interest in the discipline of Psychology, and because I

believe that everyone can personally benefit from EI skills, I regard the education thereof a necessity. As explained in Chapter 1, I gained great personal insight in, and improvement on my own EI skills after undergoing training in this specific program and observing the value it adds to the lives of others, it motivated me to undertake the present study. This particular program appeals to me because it is comprehensive yet practical. Workshops are presented in a fun and interesting, yet meaningful way and skills learned can be easily applied in a practical way.

The companies that will be investigated in my study, have already completed this nine-module program. Through the interviews that I will be conducting, I hope to explore the impact that the program has had on some of the participants.

I will now give a brief description of the program. A more detailed description is presented in Appendix D.

3.2   The Neuro-Link EI Program: Curriculum Design

The program endeavours to develop intrapersonal (personal) and interpersonal (social) competence.

* Intrapersonal competence is framed as to be self-smart – to have personal strength, to manage your own emotional life, and function well, independently;
* Interpersonal competence is framed as to be people smart – to have the competence of perceiving and understanding other people's moods and desires, to have the willingness to interact, to be a team player, and to be skilful in relationships.

3.2.1   Dimensions of the Program

What distinguishes the performance of one worker from another, is the individual's ability in accurate self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). These dimensions as presented in Figure 3.1 are all vital for success, well-being, improved performance, and productivity. They are interdependent and to a certain extent sequential, starting with accurate self-awareness.
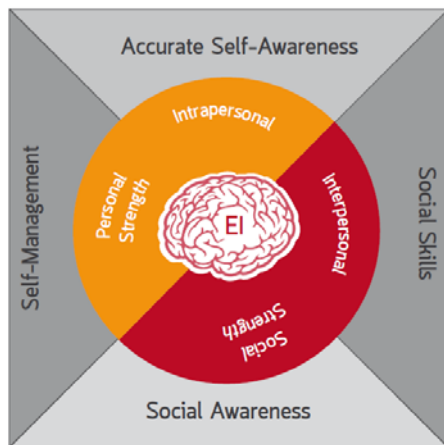
Figure 3.1. The framework of the Neuro-Link EI Program (Vermeulen, 2002).

3.2.2 Modules of the Neuro-Link Program

The program consists of the following nine modules:

- The Intrapersonal leg of the program:
    i. Accurate self-awareness – preceding the training program, the trainer may choose and make use of various assessments that can help participants to gain personal understanding. The Neuro-Link designed brain- and EI profiles, however, are compulsory. The purpose, scope and results of these assessments and the concepts and different dimensions of EI are explained to and discussed with participants.
    ii. Spiritual wellness – based on the outcome of the first module, participants now formulate their own individual purpose to create a vision.
    iii. Brain wellness and mind power – participants are guided to understand and apply various aspects that influence a healthy lifestyle and increase performance, such as the importance of sleep and rest, physical exercise, a healthy balanced diet, a positive mindset, and brain fitness exercises (brain gym exercises).
    iv. Mental literacy – gives participants a perspective on coping with change, managing stress and maintaining wellness.
    v. Mental wellness – as a follow-up on the previous module, this module provides pro-active coping and resilience skills to cope with change, manage stress and maintain wellness.

- The Interpersonal leg of the program:
  vi. Social awareness skills – participants gain perspective on understanding another's truth, caring for them in a sincere way, and accurately interpreting their behaviour.
  vii. Interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills.
  viii. Social cohesion and team functioning – a briefing on the requirements of leadership in the 21st century.
  ix. Values-driven and servant leadership skills.

These nine emotional abilities are specifically arranged in a hierarchical order, in the sense that higher emotional abilities draw upon the lower abilities. Because the modules follow each other, this program requires considerable time in between modules to enable participants to process information and practice the strategies they have learned by applying it daily. Modules are presented one day at a time per module. The full duration of the program is nine months if the modules are presented one per month, or four and a half months if presented one module fortnightly.

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

As the Neuro-Link program involves thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, and motivates intentional change, it relates to the Intentional Change Theory (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). The Neuro-Link program tries to promote a vision to enable a participant to generate purpose and calling, thereby creating an "ideal self" and building to achieve a desired future with hope, based on, and evolving from one's core identity ("the real self"). The Neuro-Link program intends to be the path between the "real self" and "ideal self". It is hoped that this will empower the participants to set a positive tone for better control over their own destiny which may lead to positive outcomes. The program indirectly applies the Positive Emotional Attractor theoretical approach (Boyatzis et al., 2015) whereby a personal vision is aroused to facilitate change and to enhance the internal desire for optimal performance. Thus, self-reflection expands self-awareness, producing a meaningful personal vision that leads to self-directed change, resulting in

positive work engagement and career satisfaction (Van Oosten, 2013).

Based on the integrative models of EI, this program intends to achieve the design for effective social and emotional learning that applies to all the phases of training as suggested by Cherniss and colleagues (Cherniss et al., 1998). This includes preparation for change at an individual as well as organisational level, providing training to implement such change and allowing for an in-house practice of the training experience.

3.4   Proposed Outcomes that will be Investigated

First of all, goals for this study were established. These objectives are based on the research question. It serves as a basis for outcomes from which certain themes emerged accordingly. Outcomes of the study will follow results from individual interviews and will eventually form a framework on which the analysis of the study could be built to make a conclusion.

The aim is to draw a conclusion on the experiences of the program participants and possible changes they have made as a result of the program. Changes and the experiences that will be investigated will include: acquiring accurate self-awareness and understanding, productivity, coping with change, managing stress and maintaining wellness, leading by example, the enhancing of personal impact in the workplace and society, positive attitude and relationships with colleagues, team effectiveness and competence, developing social awareness and the better understanding of others, creating social interaction with others, developing strong personal foundations for leadership, and the way in which participants use and integrate that.

Coming across various individuals who are confused, overworked, overwhelmed and demotivated, I came to the realization that little information regarding their situation is clear to them. Conducting this study may bring some clarity resulting in solutions to assist managers and workers to cope more effectively, manage stress and improve their productivity and happiness. The importance of an investigation is thus evident as it will provide workers with information guiding them to solution

based outcomes that can empower all involved.

3.5   Research Design and Methodology

Aiming to determine to what extent the Neuro-Link EI training program influences an individual in the workplace, I want to find out if it is worthwhile for workers and businesses to incorporate and undergo the training program, and whether the skills set learnt have changed their lives in a positive way. Objectives of this study are:

- Obtaining comprehensive information from participants as per the research question and proposed outcomes as mentioned in section 3.4.
- To analyse accumulated data that will enable me to give meaning to that information.
- To identify paradigm shifts and coping strategies of participants.
- To increase available knowledge regarding corporate EI training.
- To propose feedback to assist organizations and their employees to improve the quality of their working climate as a whole.
- To draw a conclusion and propose recommendations for further research studies.

Analytical objectives are to determine (a) the impact of the Neuro-Link EI training program on the individual who underwent the training, as well as the organization. I further want to investigate (b) if there is a shared understanding of the meaning of EI in the organisation, (c) what the current barriers or enablers towards EI training is, (d) if there is shared communication to enhance understanding and knowledge to support the entire process from beginning to end, and (e) the sustainability to expand the training.

To bridge the gap between the research question and implementation of the research, a research design serves as a framework, designed in such a way to provide answers to questions that arise from the research statement. The designed route this investigation will follow includes the following:

- The paradigm that informs my methodology;
- The research approach;

- The theoretical framework of the study including the sampling of participants, methods of data collection, and analysis of the data;
- Standards of credibility and trustworthiness the research findings will be based on; and
- Ethical considerations.

3.5.1   Research Paradigm

The paradigm is what will assist me in learning more about the impact that EI training has in the workplace: it will guide my investigation, determine the methods I will use, and also determine the conclusions I will come to (Durrheim, 2002). The interpretive research paradigm fits my beliefs about truth and will guide my methodology. This will bring previously investigated knowledge on this topic, theoretical proof, and assumptions drawn from the nature of the reality of participants together (Wagner et al., 2012). As paradigms may be associated with certain methodologies, choosing a qualitative method of investigating with an interpretive paradigm will give me the opportunity to explore, understand and describe the real-life experiences of the study participants. Reality is as unique to any person as his individuality, and assumptions will be drawn through this understanding. Individual realities draw from the ontology which indicates how assumptions about the nature of the participants' realities fit into this research process (Wagner et al., 2012). Selecting participants irrespective of their socio-economic class, ethnic or cultural background, gender or age, each with their own individual different values and truths, will provide multiple socially constructed realities.

Epistemologically speaking, the knowledge gained from this investigation will describe subjective truths that lie within each participant's experience as well as that of their organisation. These truths may be influenced by context, culture, and history, and are legitimate to each one's perspective. As researcher, I am not exempted from biases where the value-laden nature of my own values regarding this topic is concerned. This may interfere with and influence my neutrality (axiology) (Wagner et al., 2012). I will keep this in mind throughout the investigation process and undertake to be careful to minimise biases as far as

humanly possible. The main aim is still to understand the participants'
experiences. I will, therefore, strive to approach them with an empathic attitude to
establish a relationship of trust and comfortable communication to maximize
meaning and to "hear" their hearts. Ethical principles discussed later in this
chapter, will be adhered to throughout this study.

3.5.2   Research Approach

Recognised approaches used in social research studies are divided into two
categories namely quantitative and qualitative research (Delport & Fouche, 2005;
Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012). There are extensive
quantitative research studies on various programs regarding EI training (eg. those
of Al Kahtani, 2013; Bajaj & Medury, 2013; Boyatzis et al., 2012; Boyatzis et al.,
2017; Korn Ferry Hay Group, 2017; Mahon et al., 2014; Miller 2015; Pittenger,
2015; Ryan et al., 2012). Although the quantitative approach investigates limited
constructs per research study and specifically focusses on research questions or
hypotheses to produce evidence of quantified variables through empirical
methods, it will not provide us with holistic evidence of the real experiences of
participants (Delport & Fouche, 2005). It is the qualitative research method that
produces the rich evidence of meaning as people experience their own reality
(Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This explains why Lincoln and Denzin (2003, p. 4)
defined qualitative research as "the study of things in their natural setting
attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning
people bring to them".

Humans attach meaning to their own "self", their relationships with others, and to
the world they perceive. According to Marsen (2008), the complex operations that
characterize human cognition, carry this meaning-generating function on many
levels. Classifying phenomena according to selected criteria, attaching value to it,
and judging its aesthetic appeal, are all mental operations that, in one way or the
other, give meaning to a phenomenal world. This phenomenological tradition, that
sees meaning as inextricably linked with lived experience, claims that humans are
designed to give meaning to their experiences and that this meaning is influenced
by physical, emotive and social factors. People thus learn to draw distinctions

based on their activities, which are determined by their (a) epistemology – their knowledge (how do we know what we know?) and the rationality of belief, and/or their (b) worldview – a collection of beliefs about life which is shared by others. The term "epistemology" may be defined as "a set of immanent rules used in thought by large groups of people to define reality" (Auerswald, 1985, p. 1).

Experience furthermore has meaning in context and the participant acknowledges the context or framework within which the experience makes sense for him or her. Context should therefore always be taken into consideration. Context was taken into account to include participants who played different roles with regard to the study and I have tried to understand and describe the social context of all the participants I have studied. All of this happens within the metacontext, that is, the context of contexts which we live in, to generate these worlds of realities. Ethnographic interviewing of participants in different contexts reporting on their lived experiences of the EI training program can consequently contribute to a rich and comprehensive conclusion in this study.

To understand the meaning people attach to real-life experiences, their stories need to be heard, analysed and evidently transcribed. Gaining in-depth knowledge of how working individuals experienced the impact of the Neuro-Link EI training program, an investigation is required with an approach that analyses all facets of the working environment they find themselves in, including all aspects of their natural context. A qualitative research approach is therefore most appropriate to provide this evidence as it does not reduce participants to sets of variables.

By applying an ethnographic research method that is holistic and naturalistic, I will be able to observe participants in a meaningful way (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The participant's frame of reference and experience are what is important. A phenomenological perspective, explaining their subjective experiences, will be the most appropriate way to display their feedback. This applies to what they say, think, and feel, and to see things from their point of view (Wagner et al., 2012). I have decided to use my own experiences as much as the experiences of my participants in this study. Through this, I will attempt to produce meaningful

research grounded in personal and participant experience to expand and open up a wider lens on the topic by combining autobiography and ethnography.

Autoethnography as a research method is described by various academics as an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experiences (*ethno*) (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Although the term was originally more narrowly defined as "insider ethnography" (Hayano, 1979), Ellingson and Ellis (2008, p. 449) do point out that "the meanings and applications of autoethnography have evolved in a manner that makes a precise definition difficult". Maréchal (2010, p.43.) defines autoethnography as "a form or method of research that involves self-observation and refelxive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing". In this study though, I will follow the guidance of Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis (2015), who describe autoethnography as a research method that uses the researcher's personal experience to describe and critique experiences. A narrative is a way to remember the past, turn life into language, and disclose to ourselves and others the truth of our experiences (Bochner, 2001). In an investigation into my own experiences of the topic under discussion, I will, through introspection, reflect the interaction of experiences in a personal narrative.

Although social research is generally characterized by knowledge obtained by researchers who are objective and neutral and who detach themselves from the researched, autoethnography acknowledges the researcher and participants as having equal weight. Where the researcher engages self in the socio-cultural context, this unique and powerful methodological tool presents opportunities and challenges in an attempt to enhance the understanding of humanity (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010). As an ethnographic researcher, I attempt to eliminate the inclination of deep-rooted binary oppositions between the researcher and the researched. By including an autoethnographic discussion in the study, I want to highlight my own interaction with the EI environment in order to embrace my personal thoughts and experiences and to make it visible to my readers. I will, nevertheless, attempt to maintain a good balance by involving my own subjectivity, without prejudice to the EI culture.

3.5.3   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework includes the sampling of participants, methods of data collection, selection of data, data gathering techniques, and the analysis of the data (Durrheim, 2002).

3.5.3.1   Sampling

Names of gatekeepers at companies who recently completed the Neuro-Link training program will be obtained. Some of these companies may not be willing to participate, however, a minimum of two available companies will be researched.

I will make use of a non-probability (non-random) sampling technique. Individuals who meet the criteria of having completed the Neuro-Link program, and who are available and willing to participate will be sourced as participants to make up the sample. I will do purposive sampling and rely on my own experience and judgement to find suitable individuals who could contribute to deepening the understanding of the researched topic.

To ensure that the sample size is adequate, I will work repetitively (going back and forth) between data collection and analysis and continue with data collection up to the point of saturation – where no new data are forthcoming. My goal is to explore a range of views, experiences and behaviours, and by having too few cases or a too small sample size it would be difficult to achieve data adequacy. A too large sample size, on the other hand, can make it difficult to undertake deep and meaningful data analysis. Wagner et al. (2012) advise to collect 1-2 interviews, analyse those, then continue to collect more interview data, analyse those too, and carry on until a point of saturation is reached. In this way repetitive, less significant data will be evident and more important data could be identified and used. That will be kept in mind as well as non-response bias that is generally part of the process (Wagner et al., 2012). I will try to engage actively with the subjects in order to get them involved.

3.5.3.2 Methods of Data Collection, Data Gathering Techniques, and Selection of Data

Interviews are the chosen method of data collection that I will use during the course of this study by approaching participants individually in a series of one-on-one interviews. Throughout the process, rapport will be established to ensure a casual conversation where participants can open up and feel free to express ideas and feelings in their own way. To delve deep and obtain a holistic view of the progress experienced by participants, different facets of emotional and cognitive functioning will be explored. Employing in-depth interviews to obtain enough data of their experiences, guided by a flexible approach that is based on qualitative principles, will make it possible for me to draw a reliable conclusion. Interviews with regard to how the participants experienced the EI training, will be performed per individual in three different groups of participants, and data from all of these interviews will be used to present analyses. This multi-perspective approach includes an autoethnography, data obtained from independent program facilitators, and also interviewees from participating organisations.

As this type of research design – interviews and informal conversations – are difficult to formulate and structure in advance, focus will adapt to what emerges from interviews as it develops and unfolds, as long as it stays coherent to produce enough data that a valid conclusion can be reached (Wagner et al., 2012). I will nevertheless follow an interview guide consisting of the following:

- To initiate the process, an introductory session will include a brief session on the purpose of the study, ethical issues, informed consent and permissions to record. Some of these aspects will be repeated at the beginning of each interview.
- Then follows a questioning strategy in which questions to participants are formulated and put forward in individual interviews.
- Each session will finish off with a closing statement.

According to Wagner et al. (2012), this is an ideal method for ethnographic research.

I will make use of the open-ended but specific "grand tour" (central question)

questioning technique (Spradley, 2003, pp. 44-53). Spradley describes four types of grand tour questions, namely: (a) The typical grand tour questions where the ethnographer asks the informant to generalise about a cultural scene; (b) Specific grand tour questions: these questions seek information about the most recent or best-known event, location, activity, etcetera. Spradley notes that some informants may find it difficult to generalise about a typical aspect but can easily describe something that happened recently; (c) Guided grand tour questions, asking the informant to give an actual "grand tour"; and (d) Task-related grand tour questions: this is a request to the informant to undertake a simple task that could aid the ethnographic description. Making use of the specific grand tour questioning technique is a method of getting the respondents to talk, but in a fairly focused way. Using the EI program order as guide, participants will give a verbal tour by explaining their experiences of the entire process. This manner allows them to be the experts to inform the research in a semi-structured way. Encouraging informants to expand about their experience of the program will provide a large amount of data.

Based on the proposed outcomes of the EI program, interviews, thus, will initially start with some pre-determined non-intrusive questions. As the interview groups differ in types, I will mention their specific questions, applicable per group, separately in Chapters 5 and 6. (These interview schedules are presented in Appendix E). If repeated interviewing becomes necessary, it will be guided into a more in-depth semi-structured format by making use of basic questions compiled from feedback derived from initial interviews. This will apply the process of triangulation to ensure that data emerging from previous interviews will be used to explore deeper. As researcher, I will be attentive to responses to spot new emerging information. Prepared to possibly have more than one interview with each participant, appointments for individual unstructured formal interviews will be set and time limits of sessions will be communicated to all involved.

Data capturing will be in the form of note taking, recordings, and paying attention to non-verbal cues to ensure that a large amount of data is generated. Oral and observable data will then be combined. Data collection and analysis will happen concurrently and I will stop collecting new material at the point of saturation when

information becomes repetitive and no new information affects or changes the analysed outcome (Wagner et al., 2012).

As mentioned before, the triangulation data gathering technique will apply. This is to increase trustworthiness and credibility of conclusions drawn from analysed data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The material will be collected in as many different ways and from as many sources as possible and will be approached from various angles. For example, interviews will be combined with observations, and data from different sources will be compared to one another. I will apply listening and interpreting skills to accurately record data. Four types of triangulation will apply: (a) Data triangulation – where I will make use of various data sources; (b) Investigator triangulation – findings will be discussed with my supervisors, to get knowledgable and informed feedback; (c) Theory triangulation – I will make use of multiple perspectives to interpret data, such as different theories and approaches that I will consult as basis for the research; and (d) Methodological triangulation – several methods to study and evidence from different sources such as interviews, participant observation, available documents, case notes, and follow-up interviews, will be used (Wagner et al., 2012).

Understanding (*verstehen*) forms an essential part of accurate data transcription. *Verstehen* is understanding with empathy. The meaning of human words, actions, experiences, socio-historical and linguistic context can only be understood in terms of the personal and social context in which they occur. As mentioned before, context plays an important role in data gathering. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) emphasize that the principle of understanding human behaviour in context is fundamental to qualitative and interpretive research. Care will thus be taken not to disturb the context in which behaviour occurs. I will enter the data gathering setting with care and interact in an open and empathic way. Immersion is required to become thoroughly familiar with the subject being studied and to interpret with empathic understanding.

3.5.3.3   Analysis of Data

All qualitative researched data collected, whether written or verbal, and produced

in the form of audiotapes, videos, and field notes, are subject to textual analysis. Care will be taken to ensure that these data are kept in a safe place to adhere to ethical rules.

Before data can be analysed, it needs to be coded and categorised. Focussing not only on how the participants make sense of their personal experiences but also how I as researcher make sense of and understand the data, an interpretive ethnographic analysis method will be used.

As described by Wagner et al. (2012), thematic analysis, involving the identification of themes or patterns in the data, will be a continuous process. This happens simultaneously with data collection and the different analysing steps of familiarisation, immersion, inducing, coding, and elaboration to finally interpretation of the data. The purpose is to understand how participants experience the phenomenon under research.

Three concurrent flows of data analysis that I will activity apply, is described in Silverman (2013, p 247) namely: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involves coding, analysing, managing, simplifying and transforming "raw" data, where themes per interview are coded continuously in a comparative model and each new piece of data is compared with previously coded data and then categorised. To divide codes into conceptual codes, relationship codes, perspective codes, and contextual codes may help, although some more codes may occur. Assembling and displaying data information in an organised and understandable way, will make it possible to decide what things mean, to note patterns and causal flows, and to draw conclusions. Participant feedback will be analysed one-by-one until all data are included in the analysis. The connections I make through themes identification will then form a cohesive narrative to explain my findings. If necessary, participants will be asked to verify or substantiate the accuracy of my findings. I will follow, amongst others, the guidelines that Oates (2006) proposes to analyse results that give meaning to collected data:

• What do the results show?

- What does it imply?
- How does it relate to other reported research in literature?
- What is important in the results?
- What relevance do the results have?

3.5.4 Standards of Credibility and Trustworthiness

The rhetoric that stems from my paradigm will ensure the standards of credibility and trustworthiness that my research findings will be based upon (Kelly, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012):

- Data collected will be from a natural environment, a scene that is a non-disturbed, safe and non-threatening.
- The relationship between me as the researcher and the research participants will be open, unbiased, relaxed and trusting, adhering to ethical principles to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.
- Making use of triangulation in the form of multiple data collection methods like interviews and observation will enhance credibility.
- The bracketing technique, a process of setting aside my own personal experiences, biases, and preconceived notions, as well as knowledge of previous research findings and theories about this research topic, will enhance and ensure an open and empathic attitude towards the participants without letting it be influenced by preconceived ideas and prejudices. I do admit that I as researcher I am fallible, but will try my utmost best to stay objective, eliminate personal biases as far as possible and to simply listen to what the phenomena are telling me and to reproduce it critically.
- Description of internal processes of investigation: because I am as the researcher so deeply involved with the study, I will not be detached but become part of the research by immersing myself into the process to understand the hearts and feelings of the participants.
- Engagement with material: my empathic, close and trusting relationship with participants and the extensively researched information I gathered will give me a compassionate view of human experience to deepen understanding to increase trustworthiness.
- Iteration: I will continually use a cycling process between observation and interpretation to ensure that I understand correctly to prevent misinterpretation.

- Grounding interpretations will apply where interpretations, observations and interviews will be linked.
- Testimonial participant validation: The interpretation of the study will be presented to all participants in order to confirm its accuracy.

3.5.5   Ethical Considerations

As mentioned in Chapter 1, written consent from the participating company, Neuro-Link, whose intellectual property was used during the training program preceding this study, have been obtained prior to the commencement of this study (Appendix A).

Gatekeepers of the participating companies to be observed will be consulted to obtain written permission that will permit me to get access entry into the organisation to enable me to conduct the research study (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). Gatekeepers will also be consulted to gain the information regarding the culture of the setting where the study will be performed (Appendix B).

Consent: informed consent documents were drawn up and will be presented to all proposed participants at companies to obtain their signed consent to participate in the study. This will include information to inform participants that they may withdraw from the research process at any time, that their participation is voluntary and that they must understand that the research may affect them emotionally. The informed consent process will continually be applied throughout the duration of the research project (Appendix C).

Deception: care will be taken to establish and maintain a relationship of trust with all participants, to provide them with information for an understanding of the purpose of the study, what it is about, and why it is necessary, and to explain the methodology that will be used. Participants will be given the opportunity to give their ideas only, that they will not be judged or criticised, and never be argued or disagreed with.

Non-maleficence: care will be taken not to harm participants regarding time

commitments, stressful topic discussions, and disclosure of information. Attention will continuously be focussed on the well-being of all participants.

Reciprocity: participants will not be deceived in any way, but the true purpose and results will be conveyed to them, the potential uses of the research, as well as any risks and benefits that may arise during the research process.

Beneficence: throughout the process, ethical principles will be kept in mind to maximise benefits to participants. I understand that as the researcher it is my responsibility to provide care and support and to ensure that all participants will be treated fair and equal at all times.

Power and social justice: an attitude of fairness and justice will be maintained at all times throughout the research process. This includes the recruitment of participants concerning social class, race, and gender when selecting a sample, the development of questions, interpretation of results as well as the conveying thereof. Vulnerable participants will be protected. As the researcher, I will present myself as such, without exerting positional power over any participant but treating them as equal. I will enter the study by maintaining a neutral stance in data collection and the analysis thereof without perceived ideas of bias.

Autonomy and respect for the dignity of participants: participants will be assured of the privacy and confidentiality of their responses throughout observations and individual interviews. No information that will embarrass or harm them will be disclosed at any time. Information discussed in confidentiality will only be disclosed on consent and anonymously if at all necessary.

All these ethical principles (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002) will be kept in mind and applied throughout the study. Participants will be continuously assured thereof as it will be communicated to them whenever the opportunity arises or necessitates. As a researcher, I am aware that if I do not adhere to the above ethical requirements, I am guilty of misconduct.

3.6   Conclusion

Aiming to find out to what extent the Neuro-Link EI training program influences an individual in the workplace, the curriculum design, including its dimensions and a description of the nine modules and how the program applies to theories and approaches were discussed. Proposed outcomes were presented.

An interpretive research paradigm is what will assist me in learning more and guide my investigation. I will make use of qualitative methodology. This will give me the opportunity to explore, understand and describe the human nature and real-life experiences of the study participants.

The theoretical framework that includes the sampling of participants, methods of data collection, selection of data, data gathering techniques, and the analysis of the data were discussed. A non-probability (non-random) sampling technique of individuals who meet the criteria of having completed the Neuro-Link program, and who are available and willing to participate, will apply. The method of data collection that will be used in the study is interviews with associated observation, with an open-ended but specific "grand tour" questioning technique. Based on the proposed outcomes, interviews will initially start with some pre-determined non-intrusive questions. Repeated interviewing will be guided into a more in-depth semi-structured format by using basic questions compiled from feedback derived from initial interviews. As different questions apply to participating groups, they are separately presented in the appropriate chapters.

I will be interested to discover similarities in how the participants share a view, or not, of the reality in their experience of EI training and applied learnt skills. Therefore, doing thematic analysis will be the most proper chosen technique.

Applying a triangulation data gathering technique will increase trustworthiness and credibility of conclusions drawn from analysed data. I will continuously try to maintain a high standard of values to increase credibility and trustworthiness including ethical aspects which were discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4

An Autoethnographic Account of the Impact of Experiencing an Emotional Intelligence Program

4.1   Introduction

Growing up in a social world, generally presents challenges to any child. To compare yourself with your peers as I did, mostly unintentionally, is probably common among children. At an early age, I became aware how other children differed from me. I secretly admired some of them as their lives seemed so easy and nice. As an introvert, I experienced extrovert people as very intimidating, sometimes to such an extent that I dreaded being in the presence of some of them. I, therefore, tried to avoid them as much as possible. What I was unaware of, was that them being different, was due to their own temperament and personality. Failing to understand these abstract concepts, resulted in a debilitating effect on my emotional development which initiated my adulthood with a rather inferior sense of competency.

In terms of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, I experienced an identity crisis during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Berk, 2006). This truly was a very vivid experience in my life. The crisis I experienced, was thus brought about by unrealistic expectations of myself which resulted in a period of distress, extending my adolescent turmoil by far. Being confused and unsure most of the time, I always felt embarrassed and not good enough, subjecting myself to strict self-criticism, unrealistically striving for perfection. I adapted a rather severe motto of "I will make it, no one should underestimate me". I consequently developed an urge to define who I was and the direction I needed to pursue in life.

Growing up in a loving home, fortunately, kept me grounded by cherishing a healthy value system with an ambition to succeed despite my "shortcomings", as I perceived it to be. I learnt to accept a degree of "unhappiness" as a normal part of life. Ironically, the constant pursuit to be "better", turned out to be an excellent driving force, largely leading to a successful progress in life. In later years, my ambition and inquisitiveness to understand the complexity of human nature led me

to pursue a career in Psychology, which I presumed would offer answers to all my questions.

4.2. EI in my Capacity as a Student

As a student, I began to understand the enormous scope of Psychology as a discipline. Besides the professional knowledge I gained, out of pure curiosity I experimented with various psychological assessments. These included tests such as the MBTI personality test (Briggs, 1976; Myers & Myers, 1995), the Keirsey temperament test (Keirsey, 1984; Keirsey, 1998), and whichever other tests I regarded interesting or applicable. Without realizing that this would form an important basis for the forthcoming EI course, I, nevertheless experienced these assessments to be a very useful exercise gaining tremendous insight in, and understanding of my own psychological make-up.

But it was when I did the Neuro-Link assessment, the Learning Receptiveness Profile (LRP) – now called the NAP (Neuro Agility Profile Assessment) – that everything just really made sense. That was a defining moment that led to a turning point in my life. It was the most comprehensive assessment I have done, likewise serving to be the most significant. Answering questions honestly and according to preference, the assessment delivers feedback in the form of a report. With the completion of honours degree studies in Psychology and at the start of a counselling career, the LRP provided a clear outcome that revealed features and qualities unique to me that I was totally unaware of. Information crucially important to get at just the right time. Comparing my profile report with my other assessment results, confirmed important tangent points and similarities which gave me the confidence to trust the results as reliable and valid. This was a discovery of myself, contributing tremendously to the meaning of my personhood. This soul-searching process brought about a mature understanding of my identity in areas of my life where I lacked it most. Although it took much longer than my adolescent years, the crisis diminished, but the refinement process continued to form an organized perspective of my self-structure, identity and purpose.

Serving as the core on which their EI course is based, the NAP explains the

functioning of dominant factors in different parts of the brain and senses known as our neurological design (neuro-design). Combined with personality, preferences of various intelligence types, and specific aspects (called drivers: such as sleep, a healthy diet, stress management, brain fitness, etc.) that influence and optimize brain functioning, it gives a comprehensive explanation of the assessed's neurological genetic composition. Items of the questionnaire are developed to test a variety of aspects regarding the neurological functioning, solely on preference. This makes feedback more personal that enabled me to know how my neuro-design works, how the composition of the different parts determines my thinking, emotions and actions, and how the overall concept distinguishes how people differ from me. Comprehending these aspects about myself and others, brought significant understanding and clarity.

Vermeulen, (n.d.) notes that all people have a unique genetic coding which will influence a genetic predisposition towards which hemisphere and lobes in the brain, and which senses will lead (dominate) when processing information. We have two brain hemispheres, two ears, eyes, and hands, and use all to receive and process information. There will, however, always be the dominant brain hemisphere, eye, ear, or hand that takes the lead, dealing with information actively, while the other one follows more passively. Dominance is essential to our survival and how we think, learn, and behave, as it provides us with an automatic response in any given situation, especially stressful situations, Vermeulen explains.

This proved to be true based on various examples or incidents that I have experienced in my life. A specific incident happened a couple of years back when we, as a family, were involved in an unavoidable tragic vehicle accident whilst on holiday. We collided with a woman who suddenly swerved over the road on a bicycle. None of us was injured, but not wearing proper protective cycling gear, she suffered serious head injuries. To be in this extremely stressful situation, each of us reacted exactly as their individual brain profiles proved. Allow me to explain briefly. When our vehicle came to a stop, we all rushed to the injured woman. Witnesses called for emergency assistance and immediate attention of everyone was on the injured. Being an emotional person and extremely shocked, the driver

of our vehicle collapsed when seeing the bleeding woman lying motionless gasping for breath. He and the injured woman were assisted by paramedics to get the necessary medical attention and when stabilised, taken to the hospital. Being a rational analytical thinker, I immediately paid attention to logistics by arranging for late arrival at the resort we were on our way to. I further arranged for a replacement vehicle at the car rental company we hired a car from and for our luggage to be taken care of by someone. Another passenger of our vehicle – a rational creative thinker, immediately took pictures of anything that could assist us as proof for our police statements, something I did not even think about. For both of us, an emotional collapse followed only a day or two later. This illustrates the above claim that being rationally dominant we reacted similarly, but completely different from those who are emotionally dominant. During this extremely stressful situation, the different focus of the analytical versus the creative thinker also manifested clearly. Because we understood each others' unique neuro-designs, we could all effectively support each other with empathy, when going through the different motions of feelings and thoughts afterwards. Another example displayed my increased ability to guide my children in making informed career choices by understanding their neuro-design. After some of them were very uncertain about a suitable career, the emotional intelligent types preferences and strengths provided a clear guideline. Everyone is satisfied in careers of their choice today.

The most important aspects I learned from the different assessments, is firstly to accept, respect and cherish my genetic composition. Secondly, to distinguish between what I can not change (my genetic coding), and what I can change (learnt behaviour and perception), and to align these. I believe you can only change what you acknowledge, and you can only acknowledge what you understand. To understand and put everything in perspective was important for me. I acquired the ability to alter certain mindsets incongruent to my true self. Mindsets that were formed based on misconceptions and beliefs due to a lack of discernment, knowledge and skill.

Furthermore, I learned to move beyond the comfort of my genetic predisposition to test foreign waters without feeling intimidated and uneasy. Being an analytical thinker, I force myself to explore the creative side of me. I practice hobbies such

as wood carving, sewing, and interior design. Although I will never promote myself as any kind of artist, I do enjoy "swimming in their pond" sometimes. Something I never realised, before understanding my genetic dispensation. Understanding the outcome of the assessments, thus, provided an increased opportunity for self-understanding, social-understanding (<u>how</u> people are different, and how I fit into the bigger picture), and identity development. The assessments also form an indispensable basis for the EI course that would follow.

4.3 Being a Counsellor

Counselling provides effective and practical assistance to people who need it. Despite training and good intentions, professionals may find it difficult to deal with the disruption that out of control emotions cause their clients. And in some instances, this may even apply to their own lives. To contribute to this, a rigid prescribed scope of practice further limits counsellors to such an extent that at times, they may find themselves at a dead-end road during the counselling process. This was exactly what I experienced at the beginning of my professional career. I realised that to be able to offer lasting and effective practical help for people who are depressed and anxious; suffering from trauma, addiction, and anger disorders; and having relationship, mental or emotional problems, not only requires most effective counselling techniques, but also extraordinary skills.

But what makes a counsellor effective? Bernes (2005) sketches the components of an effective counsellor as follows:

Historical characteristics:

- Counsellors naturally demonstrate, from an early age, a keen and genuine fascination with human nature – being fascinated with people's discussions – constantly watching, questioning, and wondering.
- Counsellors are constantly trying to understand. The key issue is to "figure it out." In other words, to be able to describe what they have learned from the experiences and how that have positively impacted their perception of things. They are seeking for solutions. This gives them a sense of completeness.

Personal characteristics:

- Counsellors have the attitude that human nature is so complex that you can

never stop learning in this field – they want to learn everything about everything. The breadth of human nature needs to be explored.

- They recognise the importance of interpersonal skills.

Cognitive ability:

- Counsellors have the attitude that cognitive ability is "necessary but not necessarily sufficient". They want to gain specialised knowledge and skills for theoretical specialisation, assessment, and intervention.
- They know how to assess, conceptualise, and intervene confidently and congruently.
- "I am not perfect but am human just as my clients are". Counsellors display a need to gain skills by setting goals for personal and professional development – they have a propensity for ongoing learning and professional development.

These features precisely describe my aspirations. Given the above, plus circumstantial life experiences, early experiences as a psychology student, and the commencement of my professional career, all contributed to constructing my professional identity.

Wrestling with a lot of difficulties to get into the swing of counselling as a beginner, however, forced me to do serious introspection. I soon realised that successful completion of an academic degree and qualifying as a registered counsellor did not make a good counsellor of me. I still lacked valuable skills to impact the lives of people in a responsible manner. I needed something more! The NL profile helped me to understand people better, but what do I do with the information? How do I apply it in the counselling room? In search of the necessary skills, I furthermore attended several training programs including a variety of EI courses, a field of study which particularly interested me. But what is it about EI that intrigued me to such an extent that I specifically regarded it worthwhile for further investigation? When speaking of EI, I believe that it forms an integral part of the DNA blueprint of every human being. EI is not information wandering around outside. It is personal, intertwined in humanity with ingredients that cannot be separated from normal functioning.

In prior chapters of this study, I described how academics such as Goleman

(1998), Bar-On (2006), Petrides (2010), Boyatzis (2008), and Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined EI, attached certain features to it, highlighted the different components, and emphasised the necessity in the development thereof. Following what has been presented thus far, it is safe to generalise that even though each person is unique and has a personal purpose, all have common characteristics like a personality, temperament, and a set of intelligence types. These intelligence types, summarised as traditional, bodily, emotional, and spiritual, with subtypes each, vary from person to person in relation to personal preferences and strengths. Furthermore, everyone has to perform cognitively, maintain wellness, and cope with stress, emotions, and change. In addition, most people exist in a social environment where interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, social cohesion, and functioning in teams, set unique demands. These require emotional abilities and the more these abilities are developed, the better an individual will be able to control and manage positive outcomes, resulting in empowered and effective emotional and social functioning. Consequently, the question to ask is not if a person is emotionally intelligent, but rather, to what extent these skills have developed and are applied. A question that occurred in my mind about myself.

But getting back to what I previously mentioned: after completion of the compulsory internship to qualify as a registered counsellor, I experienced a variety of challenges. I was not sure how to counsel others, especially which counselling techniques to use. Becoming increasingly familiar with the psychological field of study, and realising that EI might be the solution to solve this problem, I came to the conclusion that I should focus on EI. I realised that, as a counsellor, I could apply EI successfully to the advantage of my clients. But to be able to incorporate these skills effectively in the counselling process, I regarded it vitally important to personally develop my own ability and knowledge first. I attended the Neuro-Link EI training program that specifically drew my attention. This was a significant breakthrough. Although I draw from all the approaches and methods I gained knowledge from, I specifically focus on the Neuro-Link and Goleman Models of EI when counselling people. My experience is that with these models I am able to address most clients' issues and problems, whilst still within my scope of practice, promoting wellbeing. This is because of the comprehensive structure that includes

self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. Once these areas are attended to, clients are generally empowered to apply learnt skills successfully in their lives. EI provides tangible tools to work with.

4.4   Personal Development

Completing the Neuro-Link EI program especially has had an impact on my life on many levels. My personal development and growth improved considerably. (The other EI courses I attended did not have this notable effect). Not only did my self-awareness improve significantly, but I practically learnt how to apply newly acquired knowledge in my personal as well as in my professional life simultaneously. Self-understanding enabled me to break limiting beliefs subsiding the previously mentioned incompetent mindset that crippled and hounded me for years. I allow myself to make mistakes and learn from it. To accept and embrace who I was created to be, was a liberating experience resulting in a substantially increased level of self-esteem. I discovered qualities unique to me and evidently realised that happiness is a choice, no matter your circumstances. Learning to accept my weaknesses and work around them, enabled me to focus on and enhance strengths.

Learning to manage stress, is probably the biggest favour I could have done for myself. Studies by Stojanovich and Marisavljevich (2008) and Zyrianova (2012) noted that stress is a major cause of autoimmune diseases. Deterred by a rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis, stress management has become an essential priority for me. Accurate self-awareness such as finding purpose, creating a vision, and improving ergonomic wellness, empowered me to investigate my own motives, consequently enabling me to understand my own truth. Gaining improved problem-solving skills led to reduced anxiety and stress. I am more relaxed, manage my time better, and enjoy life. Changing to a healthy diet not only contribute to remarkable weight loss, but a general feeling of well-being, satisfaction, and achievement. That involved the inclusion of nutrient-rich foods of all the different food categories in my diet, drinking lots of water, and excluding gluten, sugar, and the like. As this is an ongoing process that needed to become an altered lifestyle, together with sufficient sleep and rest, and brain fitness

exercises to improve whole-brain functioning, I developed a motivated positive attitude seldom feeling guilty of failing my health. Not very fond of it, physical exercise continuously remains a huge effort, but aqua aerobics a few times per week, makes it bearable and even enjoyable.

EI also requires of me to distinguish and identify internal conflict. This happens when circumstances and my natural neurological dispensation are conflicting, in other words when circumstances force me to act differently than my natural unique genetic coding "prefers" to. I learnt how to manage this and to let it coincide in harmony. A prior experience comes to mind. The chairperson of a company I was employed by, had the habit of randomly asking someone to open meetings with prayer. Public speaking, or praying in public for that matter, may be the worst nightmare for an introvert. I always feared the day that the verdict would befall me, and when it did, wished I could disappear, miraculously! Stretching my natural boundaries by forcing myself to move into the expressive side of my brain every now and again, helped me to overcome such fears. As it is not my natural preference, I often volunteer to do things that require me to be expressive. I am still not completely comfortable acting out, and might never be, but I don't fear it anymore. To know these aspects of myself, understanding how my brain functions, allowed me to know that if I could have done this once, I am able to do it again, no longer making this a daunting area for me. The debilitating mindset of "I can't", changed to "although it is somewhat difficult and uncomfortable, I can".

4.5   Social Development

The Neuro-Link program complies with my norms and values and enables me to try to maintain integrity as a person and as a counsellor. As I understand my social environment much better, I now maintain a healthy and constructive influence in my interaction with others. I experience that the efficiency with which I consult clients has increased considerably as I am better equipped to assist them. EI skills and knowledge provide tangible tools that I can use to work with. Improvement in the ability to identify my own thoughts and emotions equally influenced my social skills in a positive way. Crying with my client in a counselling session, for instance, does not necessarily reflect weakness, but implies sincere

empathy, I came to realise.

In this profession, I often have to work with people who are radically different from me. Having to attend to clients of a different culture, especially in the South African context with such a diverse society, is common. Social awareness taught me to be comfortable and accommodating despite any differences. Even though people differ on many levels such as background, upbringing, and religion, we all have common characteristics, a personality, temperament, and a combination of intelligence types. Focussing on these common characteristics and applying effective communication skills enable me to discover another's truth, as they are, and not how I presume they should be, but to meet them where they are, and to guide them with empathy. Applying EI skills during the counselling process promotes both interpersonal and intrapersonal competence that work in harmony simultaneously, backwards and forth, between me and my client. I experienced the entire EI journey as a learning curve I gained valuable life skills from. But, being emotionally intelligent, is an ongoing process of growth. Life is not static. People change, circumstances change, and adapting to change is a continuous process. Getting to know EI skills, is therefore just the beginning. The sustainability of learnt skills depends on how these skills are applied during one's life.

Applying EI skills and teaching these to clients, provide them with workable tools they can use to improve their own lives. This creates a sense of safety and empowerment, as they realise it is in their power to change their destiny. It also provides a sense of independence. Being the witness of several success stories, as a counsellor, I realise how important EI skills help to create a hopeful and positive outcome. Broken and dispirited, a client called "Mandy" contacted me requesting counselling after suffering a miscarriage at the age of 23. She felt hopeless, helpless, negative about life, and was totally demotivated. By applying the EI knowledge and skills described above, she could successfully work through the mourning process, and again develop a positive attitude to look forward to a future with expectation. A couple of years later, she opened her own beauty salon and became a very successful businesswoman. She married the man of her dreams and has a beautiful little girl.

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Equally so did EI skills create a positive outcome for me. I still hold the motto of "I will make it," with the difference that this is not based on a sense of incompetency or inferiority anymore, but it is rather seated in a healthily balanced vision, with a structured and well-planned mission. A motto I try to instil in all my clients as well. Gaining the EI knowledge and skills, therefore, enabled me to lead in the counselling room with confidence. Considering how much EI training improved my counselling skills, I, therefore, agree with Gliebe (2012) who likewise noted that the counselling profession requires, or rather, demands elevated levels of EI.

4.6   The Impact of EI on Psychotherapy – Applying EI as a Counsellor

In a small pilot study, Kaplowitz, Safran, and Muran (2011) assessed psychotherapists' EI to determine its relation to psychotherapy outcome and process. Therapists with higher ratings of EI achieved better therapist-rated outcome results and lower drop-out rates compared to therapists with lower ratings of EI. Findings offer preliminary support for the relevance of therapist EI to psychotherapy. Counsellors, therefore, play a pivotal role in implementing EI after successfully completing the training process themselves. Given all research findings noted thus far and the goal of making initial counselling sessions effective, the discussion will now focus on my own workplace and my experience as a counsellor. I attempt to provide some ideas on what I have found to be useful when applying EI in counselling.

Being inexperienced at the beginning of my career, and unconsciously trying to provide all the answers to solve my clients' problems, I experienced the counselling process to be an exhaustive process. It constantly felt as if I was not making any progress. The ancient proverb soon proved to be quite appropriate here: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and he is fed for a lifetime." Bending under a tendency to want to fix everything, the meaning of the proverb became very real and applicable as I realised that it is more worthwhile to teach someone to do something for themselves than to do it for them on an ongoing basis.

I, therefore, had to learn effective ways of raising the client's sense of competence. In a study Bernes (2005) performed, she noted that intervention techniques only count for 12-15% of counselling success. Effective therapy requires significantly more affirmation and nurturing behaviours and less management. The client must align with the process. To understand others, to show compassion and to constructively encourage and guide them, can, inter alia, be achieved by affirmation of their own efforts. This creates hope and expectation and accompanied by trust, patience, and enthusiasm, it brings relief, gives them a sense of empowerment, and let them feel in control. I realised that a change in my basic assumptions is what was necessary.

It is my experience that clients in my practice usually face issues such as brokenness, self-doubt, demotivation, despondency, regrets, an inability to deal with failed or troubled relationships and life's challenges, and an incapability of dealing with the floods of emotions. I regard it thus useful to implement EI in all aspects of the counselling process. This promotes a sense of belonging, self-awareness, self-confidence, positive attitudes on how they perceive self and others, to be motivated, to have courage, dreams, a vision, and to create constructive beliefs, and a better life for themselves. Hence, I strive to implement Ali's (2017) recommendation to use creative methods based on the four-branch model to facilitate EI. The Neuro-Link EI program includes this and is based on the Goleman emotional competence framework of EI as illustrated in Table 2.1.

At the start of the process, clients complete a variety of assessments. Feedback serves a dual purpose in that it enables them to gain personal understanding, but it also provides me with valuable information to understand my client. Accurate self-awareness, inform them of their personality type, temperament, behaviour tendencies and feelings. They now learn how to focus on their strengths and how to work around weaknesses. By formulating their purpose, they get the ideal opportunity to create a vision and mission and to compile an individual plan of action to reach their vision. A healthy lifestyle to cope with change, to manage stress, and improve personal wellness is encouraged. Issues such as the importance of sleep and rest, a brain-friendly diet, exercise, attitude, and the neurological impact thereof are included in therapy discussions. I have found

applying these EI skills in the counselling process, to be the most effective way of promoting the well-being of my clients. In this manner, I also break away from the stigma of psychopathology and psychotherapy.

During the counselling process, I, as a counsellor, have furthermore the responsibility to continuously investigate, evaluate and manage my own emotions, motives, and thinking skills, whilst guiding the client to do the same. The importance thereof is clearly illustrated in a case study very early on in my career. A couple contacted me for marriage counselling and although the wife initiated the idea, her husband "George" reluctantly agreed to participate eventually. By introducing themselves at their first session, he pushed his master's dissertation in philosophy in my hands, informing me that he is willing to speak only after I have read it. Amazed, I tried to be professional, without being biased or judgemental, but nevertheless noticed his very intimidating and pretentious attitude towards me. Although I initially understood that such an attitude may be a common occurrence in this profession, I felt somewhat irritated by this. The first session proceeded with the wife doing most of the talking. I had a fairly complete overview of the state of affairs when he suddenly demanded that I see them separately in future. I was even more annoyed because it felt like he was controlling the process. I nevertheless skimmed through his dissertation afterwards, to get as much information as possible. After his first individual session, my initial suspicion that he might have narcissistic and possibly also misogynistic personality disorder was confirmed, as he displayed all the symptoms of the disorder and the entire session turned out to be a conviction battle. I understood the symptoms and experienced that he treated me with the same contempt as his wife. I realised I was out of my depth and that this case was furthermore beyond my scope of practice. Although he spitefully protested, because he "just started to enjoy the process," as he put it, with great relief I at once referred them to a psychologist. Ever since I completed the EI course, I can now recognise feelings I may experience in any situation, and deal with it more efficiently. By applying EI knowledge and skills I furthermore understand the truths of others much sooner. This enables me to consequently recognise and manage occurrences of transference and counter-transference in the therapeutic relationship. I am ultimately better equipped to assist clients because I can maintain myself better.

The success of the counselling process, therefore, depends mainly on the independent but also interactive application and management of skills by both counsellor and client to produce a reciprocal sense of achievement and satisfaction. EI brought about valuable and fresh additions to techniques and tools that I use to generate solution-based outcomes for the client. Outcomes such as personal happiness, a positive attitude to cope with change, manage stress, and maintain wellness, and an enhanced relationship with others. Furthermore, it enables empowered competence to cope more effectively with difficult circumstances and to overcome emotions of confusion, demotivation and feeling overwhelmed. Over and above that, as any person is hardly able to outperform his or her self-image, a huge emphasis is placed on the clear understanding of self and the improvement of a sense of self-worth. All of these outcomes are clearly noticeable in the lives of clients such as "Mandy", mentioned earlier, who could, after the counselling process, take control of her life in a competent manner. Success stories like these, provide me with a sense of achievement because I know that the EI techniques I apply, are working, and leaving my clients empowered.

Before I complete the counselling process, it is important for me to determine the impact the counselling has had on my clients, and how sustainable it was. In a follow-up consultation, outcomes are measured. I use a range of pre- and post-counselling assessment results to determine the progress of EI growth. Some other factors taken into consideration throughout the process, are to monitor how faithfully the process is carried through by the client. In other words, do they attend all sessions from start to finish? Do they enjoy the process and are they excited about the future? The overall attitude of the client towards the process is continuously being monitored and noted with regards to coming into the process to completion with significant improvement. Fostering EI in counselling, therefore, not only benefits my clients and influence their lives in a positive way, but it also improves the quality of service I render to the public. This ensures that I can do my work with integrity.

4.7   A Notable Need for EI Among Students

In addition to be a counsellor, am I a part-time tertiary lecturer, involved with students primarily in their late teens to early adulthood stages of life. Since the content of the module I teach mainly focuses on self-reflection, I generally notice a definite gap in their level of EI competence, a low sense of self-worth, and a lack of self-esteem among a number of these students. From their perspective, most of them do not perceive (see) themselves as who they would like to be. Consequently, they exhibit a hunger for aspects such as a sense of belonging, self-awareness, self-confidence, motivation, how they perceive others, a positive attitude and emotions, to be able to manage weaknesses and be aware of their strengths. Yet, I do notice a lot of courage, dreams, vision, and determination to create a better life for themselves. Students like these are our workforce of the future.

A study by Kadison and DiGeronimo (2004) reveals that college students experience significant challenges in areas of identity development, sexuality, finances, and relationships, succumbing to unhealthy coping mechanisms – resulting in high incidences of depression, anxiety, and sleep or eating disorders. Gliebe (2012) quoted Coppock, and Liau, Liau, Teoh, and Liau, who found that depression, stress, loneliness, anger, smoking, drinking, drug abuse, impulsivity, and aggressive behaviours are common among students with poor emotional health. She mentions that a growing number of educators are considering EI skills indispensable to education at every level. In the educational context, EI skills can be introduced as a preventative strategy in the promotion of emotional health, preparing students for a successful career, and setting them up for success. A study by Farooq, Riaz and Javid (2017) to investigate if there is any positive relationship between EI and academic success of MA English students, reveals that there is an overall positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success. Students with high EI had high academic achievement while those who had low EQ-I performed low in academics. Contributing to this discussion, a study by Hagen (2012) claims that although there is an invaluable set of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills embodied in the EI construct necessary for succeeding in today's world, yet it is not taught in most schools.

Equally, a study by Umaru and Umma, (2015) recommended that EI skills such as emotional self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, should be embodied in the school curriculum. They further recommend that school principals, counsellors, psychologists, and subject teachers should be exposed to training in these skills, as well. The implications for EI in education is thus growing.

Although in this role as an educator I am exclusively teaching subject content, I cannot stand indifferent to the notable lack of EI skills I observe among these students. Mentioning it, is therefore to reflect my own personal perception, but also intended to contribute to an understanding of this autoethnography in my experience as a professional person.

4.8   Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter is a testimony that reflects my experience of the impact of EI training in my life as a person and as a professional. Acquired EI knowledge and skills have added enormous value to the way I manage my life, whether I am on my own, in a social environment, or in my working role as a therapist. Comparing the feedback of the first EI evaluation I did, with the follow-up sometime later, reflected a significant improvement on how I carry myself in any given situation. Besides having much more confidence in my abilities, I feel comfortable, content and at ease. Being an analytical thinker, I prefer order, rhythm, and a systematic course of circumstances. Chaos makes me feel uncomfortable and confused. Having the ability to understand, identify, and to manage this in order to get back into balance again, was a great victory for me. It saves me a lot of time, energy, and inconvenience because I recognise it much sooner than before. I cannot deny the value of any of the sources of training that contributed to the knowledge I have now, as all were necessary and valuable. Pursuing a career in Psychology to understand the complexity of human nature, indeed offered answers to my questions.

However, it is from the NL program that I learned the most of myself and my personal relationship with fellow human beings. I can apply all aspects of the

program to my own life and experience every day how successfully it contributes to a better life. Together with other tests that provided insightful information about myself, the assessments on which this program is based was the decisive factor, as it analysed and described my personal neurological composition. The program is very personal because of its self-discovery qualities, as it revealed characteristic features that I was unaware of, features unique to me only. Something I could fully identify with and make my own. Such a comprehensive analysis of my neurological attributes, I have not found in any other assessment before. To understand some basic aspects of the tremendously complex functioning of the brain and how it interacts with the sensory system has brought a renewed understanding of myself. This was dealt with in the first modules of the EI course. Together with the various aspects included in the remaining modules, it provides a well-rounded program based on the four legs of EI namely, self-understanding, self-management, social understanding, and management. As explained throughout this discussion, it equipped me with a workable knowledge that I positively incorporate into all aspects of my day-to-day functioning. Knowledge, without which I was definitely worse off. The social awareness modules offered valuable insight into the understanding of another's truth to accurately interpret their behaviour.

CHAPTER 5

The Impact of Presenting the Emotional Intelligence Program

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explained how I experienced the Neuro-Link EI training program and the impact it had on me as a person and in my professional capacity as a therapist. In this chapter I will present the experiences of two EI facilitators named "Annie" and "Ben." In doing so I will focus on the following:

- Their attitudes towards the program, from a personal and a facilitator's point of view.
- Their perceptions of the sustainability of learnt skills.

The participants' names in this chapter are pseudonyms, and as explained to them, their real identity will be kept confidential (see Appendix C).

As all my participants, in this and the following chapter, are Afrikaans-speaking the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. For the discussion in this study, interviews, and quotes were translated. Evidence from various sources such as interviews, documents, and case notes, were used.

5.2 Grand Tour Questions

As described in 3.5.3.2, I used the "grand tour" questioning technique (Spradley, 2003, pp. 44-53), by asking the following questions:

1. What is your professional background?
2. How did you get involved with Neuro-Link, and specifically with the EI program?
3. What was your personal experience of the entire Neuro-Link model, and in particular the EI program?
4. Why specifically the Neuro-Link EI program?
5. How do you apply the EI program: previously and now?
6. Your professional experience of the program:
    - How are you currently involved and in what capacity?

- To how many people and/or businesses have you already given training?
- Can you give feedback – positive and negative, if any?
- What aspects of the program are particularly significant to you?
- What shortcomings do you experience, or any recommendations you have regarding the program?

5.3   The Participants

Both participants are colleagues or trainers I met through my involvement with Neuro-Link about ten years ago. Their journeys are separately discussed, as they are independent practitioners in their distinct capacities.

5.3.1   "Annie"

5.3.1.1   Professional Background

Qualified as an industrial social worker, Annie started her career and gained experience where she worked in the financial corporate industry in the South African urban area of Gauteng, since 1998. Her responsibilities included counselling, recruitment and training, psychometric testing, and staff development from a leadership perspective. She became aware of EI and while doing her own research, introduced people to her own insights about the concept. But there was no specific EI program that she applied.

As her career developed, she eventually became an independent consultant doing therapy. She expanded to other areas of the industry such as government and more banking institutions, manufacturing companies, and the mining industry, where she focused on mentorship and leadership development. For some years she was also involved in the corporate world as a human resources manager.

5.3.1.2   Involvement with the Neuro-Link Program

Annie joined Neuro-Link in 2009 where she received formal training in their assessments and EI program. She gained most of her experience in EI when she started to consult and train individuals and groups of people. This included school

children, students, teachers, and corporate people. The Neuro-Link EI training program expanded to several types of organisations all over the country – urban and rural. Covering a broad spectrum, she was directly involved in training at many organisations in the mining and petroleum industry, car manufacturing, financial, insurance, and security services, government and agricultural organisations, freight, medical, holdings, and data solutions companies, and educational institutions such as universities and schools.

Except for children at some schools, facilitation and training were offered mainly to adults by taking diverse groups of people through the EI process, stretching over a six or nine-month period. Up to a thousand people per company, depending on its size, were involved, and training lasted for up to three years at some of these organisations. Through this long-term journey, she ensured trainees received, implemented, and applied information properly.

5.3.1.3   Personal Experience of the Program

On a personal level, the entire Neuro-Link process was a journey of discovery for Annie. "One has certain mindsets, certain beliefs, and what we believe about ourselves. I compared myself to people in the past. My older sister is very intelligent and did very well in school. I am totally different from her and I always felt that people compared us to each other. It made me feel as if I was not good enough." Annie explained that being exposed to the brain profile, helped her to perceive everything from a unique perspective. "You see yourself for who you are and whom you are made to be. So, to me, it set me free. It freed me to be just me, whom the Lord made me to be, and to find my purpose. Doing the profile, enabled me to focus more on that, without always having to worry about how I compare with others. Thereafter, through the EI process, I have grown and developed."

Annie realised that especially when working in the corporate environment, as a facilitator, you should practice what you preach, and you may have certain sensitivities and issues to overcome. "The EI process helped me to develop to first get to know myself better. But, I could further develop a greater sensitivity for

other people, to get to know them better, to communicate on a more effective level, and to handle conflict more effectively, without getting uncomfortable within the situation." She confirmed that EI is a continuous process, and anyone that says it is a once off event (when it is done, it is done) is actually not emotionally intelligent. "Going through the different seasons of life continuously confronts you with new experiences. You discover new things about self in the ways you act, and you should ask yourself: why did I react like that, where did this come from, and what triggered it?" That is why she feels it remains a continuous process of growth and development.

5.3.1.4 Professional Experience of the Program

During Annie's involvement in leadership development, as a professional facilitator, she concluded that some managers and leaders find it difficult to function as effectively as expected of them. Although these individuals might be highly intelligent and very competent at a technical level, they fail due to a lack of EI. At companies where she facilitated, she often came across technically competent people in their professional positions but with inadequate intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge and skills. Divisions, therefore, fall apart, and she noticed an obvious lack of EI that prevents them from growing within their organisation. This supports an observation by Wilhelm et al. (2002) that confirmed EI (soft-skills) as an ever-increasing employment skills requirement.

She ascribes this, among other things, to the fact that young adults often step into an occupation after completing their school education, or even qualifying with a university degree, without receiving training in these vital life skills. "Commencing a career at a large organisation is a huge leap for any young individual, and suddenly getting into the world of work to create a name for yourself, that is where 'to be emotionally intelligent' plays a very important role," she argues. "Training children EI skills already at senior school level will allow them to realize: 'I am the author of my own destiny', and it will send them off into their professional lives well equipped." This confirms what Groenewald (2003), Mitchell et al. (2010), Gliebe (2012), Hagen (2012), and Carter (2015) found.

Her involvement in the companies that she consulted and presented the EI program at, started with people such as those mentioned above that wanted to develop within the organisation. They participated in this self-development program to find out more about themselves, where they are heading, but also to establish themselves within their profession. "And it is EI that takes you to the next level in your profession," she claims.

To substantiate why it specifically is a lack of EI where the shortcomings of people lie, she argues that leadership forms an integral part of EI. Working for several years with leaders, managers, and those holding key positions, she realised how they are struggling to deal with conflict, to communicate effectively, get along with colleagues, and have empathy for their employees. The results tie up with the research study where Van Oosten (2013) confirmed that both emotional competence and quality relationships predict workplace outcomes related to leader effectiveness. Annie also found that the circumstances employees work in cause tremendous pressure and demands. The information people need to work through is readily available but are escalating rapidly. Besides feeling overwhelmed, they also realise that they need to perform to keep up and stay ahead. Living in a global world, further forces individuals not only to compete locally, but the boundaries of their competition have expanded in all respects, contributing to emotional pressure at a completely different level.

She furthermore found that a key area where EI training is of immense value is where organisations need to apply change management, especially when going through major changes such as affirmative action and employment equity adjustments. This is a common phenomenon in a country like South Africa. Aspects like diversity are often sensitive issues, but to approach it from an EI perspective, let all aggression fade. Yet again, as soon as you start talking about the brain, it is a universal topic that includes all people. No longer is diversity a matter of skin colour, ethnic background, social class, gender, or the like, but rather the uniqueness of the neuro-scientific functioning of the individual brain. This is something everyone can equally identify with, as it focusses on how people differ in terms of preferences, their individual brain preferences. Therefore, as the result of EI interventions, she witnessed how organisations succeeded in moving

through transformation with excellent results.

Although she is familiar with some other EI programs, Annie prefers to use the Neuro-Link model during facilitation and training. "It is a meaningful model in the way it was compiled, it is effective, and I have witnessed enough results of profound changes in the lives of people," she says. Forming such an integral part of the entire Neuro-Link model, the EI process basically develops from their brain profile assessment. "This profile provides the greatest source of self-knowledge and understanding. First, at an intrapersonal level, you get to know yourself, where your strengths lie, where your weaknesses are, what happens to you when you are stressed, and what your natural neural preferences are. It further helps you to understand other people more effectively. This broadens your knowledge and helps you in terms of your interpersonal skills," she explained.

5.3.1.5 Feedback

According to some employees, this "fluffy stuff" is not for them. Calling themselves hardened miners and strong technical people, they suppose EI training is unimportant and only meant for others. "But I can say, except maybe for a couple of them, all testified that this changed their lives." She attributes this to the neuro-scientific basis that everyone can identify with. As she mentioned before, when the lecture on the brain starts, they are suddenly interested and willing to open up. "I have seen how this program grips the essence of vital things that matter and really touches the core of man. It is hard to remain indifferent towards the program." Although several employees start off with great resistance, she nevertheless received predominantly positive feedback regarding the Neuro-Link EI program thus far. "Management staff, in general, gave feedback, recognising a vast difference in their team member, as it seems like they are working with a whole new person," she says.

She shared the case of a specific group of newly graduated engineers whom she had to take through the entire program within a week. Although being an experienced facilitator at the time, she felt terribly frustrated in the first few days of the program. "Just graduated, they thought they knew it all. So, this was quite

intense. There were some of these young people that made it extremely difficult with their nonchalant defiant attitude. It was clear that their arrogance annoyed their colleagues as well, hence the reason they were sent to do the course. But as we moved deeper into the program, I could actually see how their guards started to disappear," Annie said. "With their whole future ahead of them, it is crucial to manage it correctly. We received feedback from several of their managers where they complimented us on the way we invested in the lives of these young people. EI training brought them back to who they are and taught them how to build relationships within a corporate environment," she explains.

5.3.1.6   Aspects of the Program that Stand Out

According to Annie, the composition is definitely what compliments this program. The course of the program, starting with the intrapersonal aspects, by firstly getting to know and learning to manage yourself before moving to the interpersonal aspects where you get to know and manage others, is its strongest quality. As the program is so efficiently compiled, and delivers such satisfactory results, she never found it necessary to use any other EI programs.

This being said, she notes that assessments are indispensable for the overall success of the EI program. The brain profile forms the basis of the Neuro-Link EI program, and although using their own assessments, to add other assessments contributes tremendously. A variety of assessments is incredibly valuable as it equips the trainee to start the self-understanding process on a solid foundation to eventually move comfortably forward to social understanding and development. The rationale here is that each specific assessment tests something different, or it tests specific aspects in a separate manner. This may display commonalities or fill gaps that will contribute to a deeper self-understanding. Each assessment, therefore, contributes to bringing clarity from a different dimension, and especially when you see similarities, it is a confirmation of who you are. She consequently thinks it is important to use several of these tools. "I think assessments are a great tool to help people develop themselves at an intrapersonal level. And of course, when you understand where you fit in, you realise that some others are on the other side of the scale, and that is exactly what helps you to develop on an

interpersonal level," she explains. An example she used, is to find out why a person is stressed in, or maybe bored with his job. She continues to explain that the Neuro-Link assessment, for instance, can show that the genetic preferences of a person are not addressed in his current environment, whilst other assessments may otherwise display additional aspects of the person's functionality.

"A significant benefit of the EI program is the attitudinal change that it usually brings," she further explains. We form certain mindsets throughout the years and some may often be inaccurate. Such limiting beliefs can hold us back. "An example is somebody believing he cannot do maths because of the difficulties he experienced in the past. This is not that he cannot do maths, but rather because he believes he cannot. Such limiting beliefs prevent people from reaching their full potential," she says. Understanding their neurological preferences through introspection, allows them to discover these inaccurate mindsets. "This is a revelation when they realise they will only reach their goals with accurate understanding, and it encourages people to know they can choose to change their way of thinking. It brings relief when they discover: the effort that is put in is what brings results, and it's possible."

Another key factor she mentioned is stress management skills. As stress is a daily occurrence that affects everyone, this program, first, shows effectively how it affects the person. From a brain perspective, it explains what happens when you are exposed to stress. It continues to provide answers by giving managing skills (tools) to prevent the debilitating effects thereof. This brings it home for individuals, as it involves them on such a personal level, that they can apply it personally.

She furthermore found the program to be extremely valuable for team building. The communication, conflict management, and team effectiveness modules, combined with the four quadrants in the brain profile, especially reflects valuable information regarding the members of the team. One of the key requirements for an efficient team is the diversity in the neurological composition of its members, this program has proved. When doing feedback together, they share every individual profile with the whole team. This brings mutual understanding in the

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entire group. Here you experience how teams start to move closer, building relationships on a completely different level, a valuable exercise for team cohesion. She saw how ineffective teams, previously not getting desired results, usually benefit tremendously from the program.

5.3.1.7   Shortcomings and Recommendations

She never experienced any negative feedback. "There were some comments such as the video material used in the presentations may be a little out-dated, but no negative comments on the content of the program were evident," Annie confirms.

5.3.2   "Ben"

5.3.2.1   Professional Background and Involvement with the Neuro-Link Program

Ben, an educator, joined Neuro-Link about ten years ago. He facilitates and presents the EI program at various companies countrywide and a little beyond our borders – in some of the African countries. He was directly involved with training at organisations such as the mining and petroleum industry, car manufacturing, financial, insurance, and security services, governmental and agricultural organisations, freight, medical, holdings, and data solutions companies, and especially at educational institutions such as universities and schools. Training involved a variety of people in terms of age and post levels, including junior, middle, and senior management.

He established his own consulting services company a few years ago and uses the Neuro-Link program as the foundation during training. In addition, consultations include entrepreneurship and line management training, system changes, as well as training in Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accredited courses. So far, he has taken about seven thousand employees through the Neuro-Link EI process. As managing director, he uses strategic role players to present certain programs. They determine outcomes as per the need of, and as agreed with, the company where courses were presented.

5.3.2.2   Personal Experience of the Program

"With EI knowledge, I understand myself so much better and it remains relevant as it affects my functioning at all levels: self-reliance, self-control, self-motivation, self-confidence, and service orientation. However, it is good, you should always walk the talk. In the past, I was not aware of these truths, but now that I know, I apply it consciously and constantly. Thus, the program wants to create awareness of your true self, but also an awareness that other people are different from you", he explains.

Ben admits how this awareness brought him success. Previously, he was reluctant to approach people due to a constant fear of rejection. "For example, what if they say no, or what if they are not interested in what I have to offer?" But he learned to be objective and to understand that a person reacts in a certain way for a certain reason and receives information accordingly. So, you can choose to be upset or accept it for what it is and be smart about it. He explained how presenting EI courses for such a long time, created a constant awareness of when you deviate from these universal truths. "By applying it daily, you get to know yourself, and that enables you to manage yourself. For example, with the onset of any stressful situation, I am aware of the triggers, and because of that, I know the danger zone and how to manage it effectively. So, for me personally, it is that constant awareness, and the realisation that you can always make the right choices."

5.3.2.3   Professional Experience of the Program

As their services are focused on participants to start the program with a healthy self-esteem, their approach follows a specific direction to include a certain amount of emotional healing. At the beginning of the process, they encourage each participant to investigate their own sense of self-esteem. They identify and address emotional pain before continuing with EI training. "Trauma puts us back in life, and somehow some of our identity is 'stolen'", Ben explains. "During their first group sessions, therefore, the opportunity for individual sessions arises and although it is not compulsory, we arrange counselling for those desiring it." By the

third session, after establishing a relationship with the participants, an Industrial Psychologist discusses matters that require attention. Ben argues that the EI program will have a much greater impact when you address self-confidence to a certain extent. A degree of healing on a deep soul dimension promotes growth and the relief of emotional pain. This enables the person to process information more effectively.

A variety of assessments give participants a clear picture of themselves. Ben urges that it is indispensable for a person to understand his neuro design, and how it affects his natural behaviour. To be aware of certain destructive thinking patterns, triggers something. He, therefore, regards the Neuro-Link brain profile non-negotiable as it also complements any other assessments the participant may have completed.

He further agrees that there are several brilliant EI programs available for use. However, in his opinion, the neuroscientific approach distinguishes the Neuro-Link program. This program consists of compiled information researched for more than two decades. The components were compiled in a brain-friendly manner that produces excellent results. The process can thus be trusted. Essential EI themes are arranged in good order by starting off with the most important theme namely yourself: know yourself, love yourself, and learn to manage yourself. Thereafter it evolves to include the understanding of others. "It may sound selfish to start with yourself," he says, "but the principle is: you cannot give what you do not have. People experiencing emotional pain, often tend to focus on and put a lot of effort into others to escape their own pain but are neglecting themselves in the process. This program, on the contrary, forces the participant actually to focus on himself first, a responsible rather than a selfish action," he argues.

He claims that even if you have no background knowledge of the company where you present the program, you can definitely expect changes after completion thereof. The program is well developed and addresses approximately 70-80 percent of the general emotional human needs. The program is flexible and can be customised within the context of the life experience of any participant, as it addresses the unique neurological compensation of each individual. The rest is

tailor-made, according to the needs of the company.

5.3.2.4   Feedback

The general feedback they (Ben and other presenters of the program) received from companies where the EI program was presented, confirmed a radical difference between the individuals who went through the program compared to those who did not. Ben explains further: "Therefore, companies usually extend training to as many of their employees as they are possibly able to". Besides the improvement in their ability to manage their staff, management no longer needs to motivate employees with fear or incentives. They found, instead, that people come to work because they want to be there, as they motivate themselves independently, and that is the enormous difference. Being emotionally intelligent inspires people. They apply what they have learned. This affects their overall happiness at work positively, and it flows through to their home environment, resulting in a happier family life. Participants testified to this. "You know I always say we cannot teach you, you teach yourself," Ben pointed out.

Despite being backed by predominantly positive feedback, concerns sometimes arise when promoting the program to new clients. Management is afraid, thinking that since EI is a "soft skill," they will have to compromise on production and quality. According to Ben, evidence, however, proved that effective management eventually impacts the bottom-line in a positive way.

The ideal is that all employees, including the chief executive officer, complete the EI program. Ben admits that they are sometimes greeted with great opposition when approaching a company. Top management usually does not have time to go through the entire program and although they want their employees to do the course, they often choose to be informed only.

Some cases stand out when they receive feedback, Ben explained. At one of the companies where they offered the EI course, a manager was replaced by someone from another race. It was a bitter experience for the replaced manager and he developed a feeling of complete incompetence. Initially, he was extremely

negative, however, his response was that this course clearly pointed out his shortcomings as manager and enabled him to improve.

Ben further explains how people acknowledge that this program changes behaviour. Based on neuroscience, it establishes new thinking patterns that lead to new behavioural patterns with positive outcomes. And this is the intention. An interactive process attempts to involve all the senses in the learning experience, such as conversation, self-reflection, fun activities, and so forth. In other words, even though there is valuable information shared, it is not an academic lecture only.

5.3.2.5   Aspects of the Program that Stand Out

Ben acknowledges that every module is valuable as each focuses on qualities that are indispensable in EI. He explains the key factors per module as follows:

The very first module on mental literacy dealing with the two profiles is just the Aha!-moment when people learn so much about themselves. An example he mentioned is of a person that performed poorly at school and still, as an adult, clings to the failures of his past. The brain profile provides an understandable explanation confirming that it is not that they are "stupid", as they often think, but rather due to a school system in the past that provided limited opportunities for children with certain learning preferences and was not necessarily "academically friendly" for their specific neuro-design. This is a general occurrence resulting in a pleasant revelation for several participants. Despair immediately changes to hope. This program basically acknowledges your frustrations, and instead of focusing on who you are not and neglecting yourself in the process, it encourages you to accept who you are. It further teaches how to handle your unique composition and how to express it. In this module, they also discuss the impact of stress on the brain. "It reminds me of the guy that, within the first hour of this stress management module, wanted to speak to me. After the session, he confessed that his suicide letters were already written. He was on his way out. But it actually saved his life because this knowledge he gained helped him to understand what happens to him during stress and how he could learn to manage it better." This

first module brings a breakthrough in the restrictive thinking of people, Ben explained. However, the next two sessions specifically stand out for him, he says.

The next module digs deep on finding your purpose in life. Is what you currently do in line with the career you are meant to be in? If not, you will always feel frustrated, he says. This module confronts people to think about where they are, and where they are heading. But also, to be aware of what needs to happen to get you there, the practical steps. You are, therefore, forced into action, and not be a passive listener only. The module helps to formulate a vision and proceed with a well-structured mission. It explains what needs to change to get you where you are destined to be. Ben says he saw people making radical changes, some even changed their careers, with remarkable success.

The mind power module is significant as it challenges current debilitating thought patterns. It encourages introspection to adjust thinking and breaking away from limiting beliefs at all levels. You identify thoughts holding you captive and create new thinking patterns with liberating results. In addition, you learn practical life skills to organize your life. You learn how to find and maintain balance. Here again, it is not a passive lecture, but active participation delivers positive results as he has experienced repeatedly.

The coping with change and managing stress module focuses on how you handle stress. The impact of stress on the brain, as discussed in module one, ties with this module when learning how it affects your entire life, how to identify stressors, and how to deal with it. In other words, you identify stress, you give it a name, and learn what skills you can generally apply to prevent or cope with it. As stress is probably the number one cause of illness nowadays, this module becomes indispensable, he claims.

People differ from one another, and at all levels, they think and communicate differently. Everyone looks at life through his own lens. Who, then is right when they differ? Both, Ben alleges, it is their personal experience. Now how do you bring these together when tempers are starting to flare up? He mentioned an example where four people of different race and religious beliefs sat next to each

other in one session. The only way to get those four people to work in harmony was to teach them to respect their differences and focus on the common goal. He continues, "we successfully achieved this in the social awareness module."

Even if you are a successful individual, you would not have been able to do it without others. Interacting successfully with others makes you a team player. That requires effective interpersonal communication and leadership skills. The focus of effective communication is undeniably effective listening skills, he says. Listen with the intention to understand. They address these important skills in the social management modules.

5.3.2.6   How do they Determine the Success of the Program?

They use various methods to measure the success of the program, Ben explains. Depending on the initial motivation for the program, and in collaboration with management, they use surveys during and after programs to determine the overall attitude of the participants towards the program and their experience in the workplace when applying skills actively. In addition, they monitor variables such as the amount of ore mined, attendance of staff, employee productivity, and the profitability in terms of the bottom-line of the company. Customer complaints and the like are also considered. At the end of the program, they do follow-up assessments such as the EI profile and compare it with previous results to determine the general improvement in the EI skills of the individual. A limited version of the brain profile follows to determine progress regarding the drivers that influence functioning.

5.3.2.7   Shortcomings and Recommendations

"I would like to add more practical experience exercises to the program such as games with applicable outputs," Ben concluded.

5.4   Conclusion

Annie and Ben's long-term commitment to EI training speaks for itself. It is obvious that they believe in the EI concept, supporting theorists and researchers like Goleman (2013), Boyatzis (2008), Mitchell et al. (2010), who highlight the

ultimate importance of incorporating such training in the workplace. Although there are a variety of EI programs available, they still choose to use the Neuro-Link program. Reasons being the positive feedback they received from the various institutions where they have already presented this EI program, the evidence of attitudinal and behavioural change that they observed in thousands of participants, as well as their own individual experience, on a personal level, of the program.

CHAPTER 6

The Impact of the EI Program on Employees and the Organisation

6.1 Introduction

The preceding two chapters reflect my own and the experiences of EI facilitators of the Neuro-Link EI training program. In this chapter, the focus shifts to the experiences of senior staff members at two organisations who completed the Neuro-Link EI program. I investigated their individual perspectives of and attitudes towards the program, their perceptions of the sustainability of learnt skills and the impact of this training program on their respective organisations.

The participating organisations come from a dissimilar spectrum in the industry, namely a holding company and a vehicle tracking and fleet management company. Four people named "Connie," "Devon," "Eleanor," and "Francis" agreed to participate in the study. With headquarters in Gauteng, both companies run their business from regional offices nationwide. A discussion of each participant per company follows.

As in the case of the participants who were facilitators of the program (see Chapter 5), the participants' names in this chapter are also pseudonyms, and as explained to them, their real identity will be kept confidential (see Appendix C).

6.2 Grand Tour Questions

I used the grand tour questioning technique as explained in section 3.5.3.2 (developed by Spradley, 2003). Questioning focused on the outcomes of the program, although participants expanded freely as the conversation developed. I have sent a framework of the following questions to each participant in advance to give them the opportunity to prepare for their interviews:

1. 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?

2. Social Awareness: Your perception of your social environment, your colleagues, and how did this training influence your work environment and the culture of the organisation you work at. Has it changed?

3. Social Skills – healthy and constructive influence on and interaction with others: How do you maintain yourself? Did it change or not? What impact did EI training have on the organisation?

6.3   A Vehicle Tracking and Fleet Management Company

With their headquarters based in Gauteng, this company employs 1700 people in regional offices nationwide. Consisting of a workforce of regional managers, operational managers, sales managers, installation managers, and general employees in their service, the company is among others responsible for client service, sales, installation, and activation of tracking equipment, but primarily for the tracing of stolen vehicles nationwide.

Since it is a company that operates in a highly tense environment, the Human Resources Director of the company, who was responsible for training and focused primarily on leadership development, was looking for a training program to address leadership skills. EI skills, to be precise. The goal, however, was to improve the intrapersonal skills of their leaders, team communication and cohesion, and mutual support. Boyatzis and colleagues suggest in their study that EI competencies are valuable to individuals within groups as it contributes to building bonds, collaboration, cooperation, and team capabilities (Boyatzis et al., 2000). Results from the study by Van Oosten (2013) exploring the impact of EI and executive coaching on leader effectiveness focussing on improving leadership effectiveness, cognitive flexibility, skill enhancement and behaviour change, indeed confirmed that both emotional competence and quality relationships do predict workplace outcomes related to leader effectiveness.

Although previous training at this tracking company included various assessments, programs, and a senior management course, these ventures were more business oriented and did not focus sufficiently on the individual as such. They, therefore, needed a program that could change people's behaviour, with skills they could

apply more effectively in the business. Considering various programs, they decided on the Neuro-Link program due to its strong claim on behavioural change, influenced by learned EI skills. During 2015/16 thirty officials completed the Neuro-Link EI training program. Designated employees to participate in the program consisted primarily of senior managers at head office and some middle management staff. The majority of those who volunteered to participate were Johannesburg-based managers. Training was one session per month for a period of nine months. Both participants in this study, "Connie", and "Devon", are senior executives, and were among those who attended the EI program. In addition, Connie is also one of the members of the Executive Committee (Exco) of the company.

6.3.1 "Connie"

Being involved in the business for seventeen years, Connie is currently chief executive of customer services with three hundred and sixty agents in five call centres reporting to her. They are involved in client services, product support and sales. Because of her interaction with people on a full-time basis, she considers interpersonal skills as essential. To better understand others, she realises, you need to understand yourself first. She acknowledges that participation in the Neuro-Link EI training program has enabled her to improve her intrapersonal skills.

Knowledge and skills that she gained from this program proved to be valuable when she was a second-time victim of a hijacking and armed robbery. The first incident was a few years before the completion of the EI course, and the other was just recently. Comparing her experience with that of her friend, a passenger in the vehicle during the second attack, she could highlight many defining factors confirming her natural neuro-design. Considering how calm and rational she remained throughout the incident, how she never heard the hijackers hit the car windows as her fellow passenger had, but being more aware of what she visually observed, are some of the aspects standing out. With this awareness, she realised how people react differently in similar circumstances, and could precisely relate to the brain and sensory dominances as explained in her profile.

By comparing the two events, Connie believes that she dealt with the second situation and the aftermath considerably better. This she attributes to a combination of factors, such as being involved in a comparable situation before, being much older and more experienced, and not having her children involved this time, but especially that she was more aware of her own natural reactions. With more insight into and recognition of her natural reactions in stressful situations, Connie managed to handle the situation with much more ease and even assisted her friend during and after the incident. During the previous incident, to help her children through the process was a priority, consequently neglecting herself totally. This time, however, she realized that she had to take care of herself and went for counselling. The exposure to the EI course was a pivotal contribution to understanding her natural response, Connie believes. This made the processing of the trauma significantly easier. She applied many of the EI skills during aftercare, as she understood what you could control and what not, and how to process it. "It was mostly an inconvenience and violation of my humanity and privacy, compared to the previous incident where I felt extradited to circumstances and the perpetrators and had to go through all the separate phases of trauma. I feel more empowered and prepared for possible similar situations in the future. This confirmed that external factors may cause a situation, however, your neurological composition determines how you will act or react in a crisis, but the extent to which you understand your neurological composition determines how you will handle it," Connie said.

The brain profile was eye-opening, she explains: "Over time, you form an opinion about yourself. But when you are confronted with the results of a report, from data you provided about yourself, and it differs from what you expected, you need to do introspection to realize who you actually are." It initially caused confusion, but she figured it out and grew from it. This encouraged the idea to look for more. Through self-study, she sourced additional information that contributed to self-understanding that enhanced her EI even further. By studying the Johari Window model (Luft & Ingham, 1961), feedback from others contributed to discovering more about her blind area that has improved her self-understanding greatly. Especially the interpersonal leg of the program was very informative to her as she has to work very closely with people.

Additionally, the order of the entire program is very important, Connie argues. After completing the course, she realized how few people understand themselves, and therefore probably misinterpret how others respond to them. "In Leadership, it is imperative that everyone appreciates the otherness of people, to understand the reactions of others and where it originates from. A leader can only flourish in his position when he first understands himself, and then every member of his team. The responsibility of leaders is not only to ensure that employees comply with duties but also for the wellbeing of the worker who must do the job. To have satisfied team members, will increase their performance. The Neuro-Link program is practical and simple to understand and implement," she explains. On occasion, she organised a team building event with her workers and brought in some EI training. This drew her team together and made team functioning more streamlined because they understood one another. If the company would allow it, she believes that all new managers as well as those who did not have the opportunity previously, should do the program.

Connie believes that the EI training impacted greatly on her. Besides her experience of how positive these principles contributed to her personal life, she has become aware not only that people are different, but how we differ. "EI skills brought upon me a sense of empowerment in the workplace, as diversity necessitates innovative ideas." The interaction of a diverse group of people who attended the program together, and their perceptions, understanding and experience of the various aspects, contributed to the value they gained from the training. "Particularly significant was what occurred at the beginning of the course. The presenter began the training with a strong personal religious impact which offended some of the participants. He adjusted, but immediately an awareness of the diversity of people arose, people who really differ from you, with regard to cultural, religious, and other beliefs. However, the content of the course remained relevant to everyone regardless of these differences. It emphasized the importance of respecting diversity. You are so trapped in what you know and believe that you do not really consider and respect different opinions for what they truly are and mean to others," she said. "To understand the context with all the dimensions surrounding the diversity of another's truth regarding culture, religion,

and so on, was the 'wow' factor for me," Connie explained. She learned to respect the differences of people. "When working with others, one must be aware and careful that personal preferences, unrelated to the content, do not create a barrier between effective relationships."

Besides everything she learnt, she enjoyed the course very much. However, everyone is not as open, in the right frame of mind, or at a stage and place to be equally receptive. Connie believes that where you are in your life, will determine what you are going to do with the information. She has seen this, in particular, with the younger technical staff compared to older people who showed more interest. Many people appreciate that the company invests in them, but equally so some do not really care. Everyone gains from it, no matter who or where, but some will definitely get more value. Many people benefited greatly, and it came out in meetings where there was more boldness towards each other.

In succession, Connie implemented learned skills in her divisions, followed by team building meetings. However, people are busy, life continues, and they do not continue applying the content of the EI course fully. The main reason for investing in something like the EI training, is to get full value from it, and it is especially the company that invested time, effort, and money, which wants to benefit from this. Therefore, to justify the expense thereof, Connie emphasizes the importance of some sort of follow-up. Although she feels it is primarily the responsibility of the individual to ensure that he or she preserves the sustainability of acquired skills, this should happen in conjunction with the company. From a longevity perspective, she, therefore, believes that mentoring arranged by their company for about six months after training and at least one feedback session from Neuro-Link's side, would have been good.

Connie found that feedback from those attending the course was predominantly positive. No negative feedback was given related to the content of the course, but rather to logistical issues such as the amount of time spent to attend the program. The impact of attending the program, in comparison with nonattendance, is clearly visible. Certainly, some challenges in the company were the original motivation for the training and the purpose was to eliminate these types of problems.

Unfortunately, some engineers and senior executives did not support the initiative, and this was precisely areas where problems existed. EI training would have added undeniable value to skills that would provide an excellent opportunity to address these issues, Connie argues. A senior management group of attendees of the EI program, nevertheless, gathered once a month to talk about these challenges and invited the abovementioned managers to partake. They, however, were not interested, and the Exco did not encourage participation either. The ideal was to pass acquired knowledge on from senior to junior employees, but all chief operating officers of the company are not on the same page. When all do not operate in synergy and apply principles consistently, it is problematic, and attempts fail, she says.

Except for herself, neither of their company's top management, namely the Exco, has for the past seven years attended such a program. "Employees generally follow the example of their senior whom they report to. The process should therefore actually start at these seniors so that they can appreciate what it offers, recognise shortcomings in their departments, and address it. Repairing such issues will lead to improved results and the program may eventually have a significant impact on the next level of employees", says Connie. The foundation of EI knowledge and skills in the company is still lacking, resulting in unrealistic expectations to deliver, miscommunication, and the like. These are problem areas that would not persist if Exco attended EI training, she believes. As a part of Exco, Connie gave feedback to the Chief Executive Officer as well as the Human Resources Director (who in the meantime is another person than the one who originally initiated the training) on issues that surfaced. Exco, however, is not as involved as she believes they should be and Connie feels that this is where EI training is needed most.

In conclusion, she added: "I believe they should implement EI education already at school-level. The earlier young people gain EI skills the sooner they begin to appreciate themselves, and the easier they will adapt to the world of work. The average age of individuals who start working here is in their early twenties and they had no previous exposure to EI. The tremendous pressure that young people have to handle therefore leaves no time to master an emotional backlog before

they can become top achievers."   This corresponds with a variety of previously mentioned studies: Mitchell et al. (2010) noted a paradigm shift from employers, requiring employees to be well-armed with "hard-skills" (technical requirements for the job obtained from academic training, experience and expertise), as well as "soft-skills" (EI). Equally so, Wilhelm et al. (2002) indicate how employers rate "soft-skills" as an ever-increasing entry-level employment skills requirement. The study by Carter (2015) consequently noted that the incorporation of EI training in the curriculum of college students, prepares them cognitively and emotionally for work life, in all its facets. Success in adulthood is dependent on cognitive skill, intellectual ability, and the ability to maintain healthy relationships and regulate emotions, Carter further claims. The suggestion for EI in education, therefore, is growing as Gliebe (2012), Hagan (2012), and others, imply.

6.3.2   "Devon"

As an employee for the past twenty years and stationed at headquarters, Johannesburg, Devon is the head of operations with 375 people from regional offices nationwide reporting to him. Interacting with people across various levels, from management to ground level, Devon regards himself as the link that motivates and acknowledges employees for their importance in the company. He helps co-workers to feel part of their unit, especially as these units are widely spread throughout the country. To motivate people to perform in this type of business is important, but it is also necessary to consider their personal well-being and job satisfaction.

Devon considers emotions necessary, "You need to handle it effectively and manage it well when it fluctuates. The various frustrations and challenges you face when working with such a large group of people make EI from a leadership point of view, indispensable."

He further explains: "The initial idea of EI training was to teach people techniques from which they can grow, and which they could implement in their work environment." The Neuro-Link program has an integrated approach: addressing what is good for your brain, and what is good for your body. The team leadership

module was very valuable, and Devon still applies what he learned even though the training was three years ago. He found that it works and is relevant when coaching staff. Confronted with unique situations as a group, they met regularly to discuss strategies to solve these types of issues. Although they still apply these skills, meetings have stopped since people move from departments, and new staff members are appointed.

In general, Devon experienced the attitudes of the participants to be very positive, because, at that time, they needed this training. As a result, most of the participants were looking forward to the sessions and for most of them, it was a pleasant experience. After the team functioning session, the attitudes of employees among themselves have improved significantly. That is why they decided to follow-up with regular meetings. Working together and supporting each other would result in success for them as a team, they realised. There was definitely a need in joining forces amongst members who were part of the program, and he could see the change in those who attended the training. This corresponds with findings of a study by Moriarty and Buckley (2003), where significant improvements in EI were found after students attended an EI self-awareness session followed by participation in team meetings once a week. After completion of the program, Devon and the other participants met with the Executive Committee for a feedback session. All the attendees had praise for the program and declared that they had seen a change and were positive to implement more such programs. Devon notices that those who are serious about self-development still implement and use EI skills.

This is a business which is highly technical, with a call centre that is strong sales driven, that is, consisting of departments with completely diverse types of activities and employing diverse types of people to fulfil these duties. As the functioning of their teams was quite a challenge to the business, it was Devon's experience that the team functioning session drew people well together. Further, from the nature of their work, it is an industry where emotions tend to run high. Due to this type of environment, conflict will therefore always be present. Al-Kahtani (2013) points out that workload, tension, anxiety, agitation, irritability, or depression in the workplace, all relate to the different dimensions of emotional intelligence. It is

consequently Devon's view that individuals using EI skills handle conflict situations more effectively, unlike those who do not apply these skills. In addition, stress is a major obstacle in this type of business. "The stress management skills module was of immense value and together with the brain profile, the lecture pointed out important aspects of stress with certain techniques to reduce it. However, as employees attended the course quite a while ago, skills will fade over time if they do not apply it regularly and people may fall back into their old habits," Devon insists.

Devon welcomes training that improves self-development. From the beginning, he was very optimistic about the EI program and experienced the process positively. Especially outstanding to him was the order in which they presented the program. The composition flowed comfortably. The whole program offers skills that he could apply to his own life, which was a great advantage as it significantly improved his personal life. The overall concept of the program creates a full circle. Starting with self-development, it provides a good foundation. From Devon's perspective, it was particularly interesting to discover himself, to see where he fits into the bigger picture compared to others, and who he associates with. "When you are in a place of growth and you take care of yourself, accurate self-awareness allows you to team up with colleagues easier. It is, therefore, particularly the brain profile which is valuable as it identifies and focuses on strengths, but also raises awareness of weaknesses. In this way, people with different strengths will complement each other when brought together," he said.

Considering it very important to present such a program, Devon believes that the process should stay alive and attractive for the company. He suggested incorporating follow-up sessions into the package and cost of the program. "People are involved in many things, and failing to keep EI alive, especially for those who do not regard personal development a priority, will result in it to fade and die. In other words, the link between the client and Neuro Link should remain active. It is difficult to resume negotiations and rebuild the partnership after three years when contact was first lost." He would further like to see the majority, or all members of the Exco involved in the program, expanding it to ground level and new appointments. "With regard to sustainability, it should be policy to link the

program to the company's future training strategy thus remaining part of the organisation's training objectives," he suggests.

6.4   A Holding Company

At the second company participating in this study, "Eleanor" and "Francis", are employees at the head office of a holding company in Gauteng. This organisation delivers a central service to 120 different companies with five hundred business units distributed nationwide and has an employee base of approximately twelve thousand.

Due to the complexity of an organisation such as this, the holding group is responsible for creating a common value system and language for the 120 companies which forms part of the organizational structure. Although these companies are dissimilar in nature, they need to be able to collaborate and train and develop in the same type of methodology. Furthermore, as the company grew, work increased, but staff numbers in central services did not necessarily expand accordingly, resulting in stress levels to escalate. This required attention. From a training development and HR perspective, it was time to start looking at the moral of their people and to decide how they can drive this "giant engine". Not only did they observe their competencies from a delivery point of view, but also how individuals handle situations, how they manage internal relationships, relationships with clients, and how they bring this all together. The focus shifted from merely profit and targets, to include the well-being of their employees. They identified EI as a critical issue that necessitated training.

Six years ago, they started a self-leadership program that turned out to be very successful. That was when they realized that to make a difference, you need to start with each individual. By influencing your staff positively, they developed pride to maintain themselves while simultaneously conveying a respectable image of the company. The company presented various workshops on time management, self-leadership, and the like. This turned out to be a long journey, but that is where they began. They furthermore searched for tools they could use to develop a methodology, through in-house training.

Several programs are available, and the company used some of these such as the DISC, Meyers-Briggs, and Enneagram. The depth and facets thereof, as well as the profile of the Enneagram, was very valuable but did not exactly meet all their requirements. A health services company that was a part of the organisation at the time, did coaching and mentoring as part of their HR portfolio. Their manager introduced the Neuro-Link program. The profiles and EI training this program offers, added the component of genetic makeup, and combined with the previously mentioned programs delivered results which made an impact with an immediately visible difference.

On the recommendation of the Human Resources Department at the organisation, they decided to send a group of employees through a trial run of the Neuro-Link EI training program. Customising and expanding the process, however, the company included coaching sessions in addition to the nine e-Learning EI modules. After each module, trainees individually attended these coaching sessions. Assessments started in December 2015 and about seventy employees, varying between the top five post levels, completed the program in September 2017. This excluded executive committee members though.

Being very pleased with the success thereof, the Divisional HR Director then decided to register a fifteen months program as a national qualification. As the Neuro-Link EI program already complies with the National Qualifications Framework's (NQF) Unit Standards of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), they added additional modules and implemented it as a uniquely named program on a Level 4 qualification. This qualification containing the EI modules and also including official management training modules, was recognized with Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accreditation. Candidates who comply with the admission requirements may apply and if approved, they can enrol. Employees of the company can therefore now obtain a qualification during in-service training. EI education is a costly program, but by converting the program into a national qualification, costs are shared between stakeholders, making it more accessible to interested parties. Their first official intake was in January 2018.

Although the two participants of this company did not share an equal amount of information, they both responded in a willing and cooperative manner. One shared freely whilst the other responded actively to questions. The above discussion is derived from information from both interviews – some of which overlap as well as individual information, but applicable to the company in general. Their individual experiences of the program as well as their perspectives of the impact the program has on the organisation are now discussed separately.

6.4.1 "Eleanor"

As a qualified teacher, Eleanor specialises in adult education since 1990 and presents among others management training. Currently, she is a consultant and management coach and participated in the pilot program.

Although she was the head of development and training at the time, she did not foresee a specific purpose for attending the program personally other than being commissioned to partake and provide feedback for further implementation. "And it sounded interesting," she decided. However, the further she progressed, the more she realised the value such training could have for other people and the company. "It's just remarkable how I developed. Gaining this knowledge, assisted to create a new vision in my life and I grew emotionally, but this is a continuous learning process," was her opinion. The coaching sessions in between lectures as well as the partnering with a coach were a highlight for her. The training brought about the understanding, the implementation, and application of skills in the workplace. Together with her coach, they addressed certain challenges, and during this step by step coaching process, they strategically found solutions. "It is an ongoing work in progress," Eleanor says. "I do not think I can ever say I am emotionally intelligent and I know it all. This is something that develops with personal experience in everyday life, and especially at work. This program is important in the organisation firstly for the individual self. The training equips you with an improved understanding of yourself, your weaknesses as well as your strengths. It provides strategies to improve on your weaknesses and how to share your strengths for the benefit of others. To treat fellow human beings with respect,

dignity, and kindness, is only possible when you are more aware of and appreciate your own worth", she said. Participants in the pilot group all agreed that the training was a life-changing experience.

Working in the HR department and with staff, she notices quite a difference in today's corporate people compared to earlier and emphasised the need for EI training. Eleanor eventually participated in implementing the qualification program. Although she participated in the interview with enthusiasm, the conversation about her own personal experience was much more limited compared to the other participant of this company. In addition, she has significantly expanded with regard to general information about the impact of the program on the company, as mentioned earlier in the introduction of this company.

6.4.2   "Francis"

Being the company's skills development manager for the past eight years, Francis oversees skills development of employees from a Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) perspective, a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) perspective, as well as the Employment Equity (EE) point of view. Her duties involve the compilation of compliance reports, planning of training, designating of participants, and reporting back to the appropriate governmental departments such as The Department of Labour, Department of Trade and Industry, and The Department of Higher Education and Training.

For Francis personally, was the entire process, the program from beginning to end, a revelation. She did several other personality and business-oriented analyses, but this program, starting with yourself and seeing so many different facets of yourself in one report, was a great realisation. "It was insightful to realise which triggers motivate or demotivate you and to understand why you 'click' with some people and not so well with others. At a certain level you know yourself, although you do not necessarily realise, and the moment a summarised report such as this reveals your true self, it is as if you knew facets of yourself all along but could not connect the dots. It just makes sense when someone breaks it open," she explained. The Enneagram that determines your stress levels and

other functional limitations, Francis did in 2015, and again in 2016. With elevated levels of environmental, vocational, physical, interpersonal, psychological, and happiness strain, she realised she was working in the wrong place. Finally, after the brain profile, she chose to move to another department. Still responsible for skills development, although narrowed down to staff only, her stress levels on the Enneagram plummeted within a year. Fortunate enough to be able to move within the company, made an incredible difference.

Starting with their own department, many of the HR members were in the pilot group. During and after the process, they created opportunities to share their experiences in teams. "It was fruitful, feedback was positive, and the respect and understanding it created, made an unbelievable difference," Francis explained. Lasting over a year, the program allowed time to enhance understanding, internalise information, and practice and implement acquired skills. This changed people's lives, their perspectives of themselves, and their perspective of their colleagues, and showed how a modification in behaviour can have an enormous impact. There was empathy and also an awareness that created a safer environment. "Going through the coaching process at the same time, created a feeling of togetherness even though each was on his or her own journey. Conflict in the team flattened a bit as they began to create space for each other," Francis said. This confirms findings in a study by Clarke (2010) that suggests that greater participation in team-based learning may create stronger relational bonds that support the development of emotional abilities once individuals have gained personal insight into their own EI. Mayer et al. (2008) indeed mentioned that high EI correlates with better relationships in business settings and consequently cultivates productive working relationships with others.

Within the organisation, however, conversations began. "Although we are different, we all have the same goal. But how are we going to achieve it?" To maintain social cohesion and cooperation, the pilot group realized that they should regularly re-visit. New people, new branches, and new clients are joining continuously. By holding team meetings every quarter, they look at the dynamics of the team first. This prevents the value of EI training from becoming faded and lost, and to keep the momentum, they bring it back all the time. "Since all of us did

this course, it is the responsibility of management to make sure we do not fall back into the same old habits," she explains.

It was due to the success of the program on the pilot group that the idea arose to convert the program into a qualification. "We have seen this works well. If it was not the case, we would not have continued," Francis explained. "We did the pilot study of ourselves by starting with the Enneagram profile. Then we brought in the Neuro-Link program, and we saw the difference in our team. This initiated the registered qualification in leadership. The first module starts with the compulsory Neuro-Link and Enneagram profiles. The leadership's qualification still contains content addressing organisational issues like change and time management, teamwork, planning, and the like. Beginning with the profiles, however, will establish a solid foundation. Throughout the process, they will frequently refer to the profiles. That is how serious we are about it since we saw the difference," Francis said. Of the 150 students that started the qualification this year, each has a trained personal coach. Together with teaching theoretical content, they will practice and apply learnt skills continuously. On completion of the program, they will do the NL and Enneagram assessments on trainees again to determine changes. "We experienced the success in ourselves, and we observed the change in others, and I believe we will eventually see a transformation in the entire organisation," she said.

Francis, however, explains that though this is a leadership program, management needs to understand what it is all about before they train more teams. The initial plan was to begin their first program with senior level staff members – some senior managers, middle and line managers, and then some junior managers that show potential. It is important that these delegates understand and see the value of the program, take lead, drive it, and get conversations going. The success will be to continue coaching and to start creating servant leadership. Planning this for two years now, they realize it will be a lengthy process. For the first time, they have taken the bold step of implementing a full qualification. They tested the program with a small group, and with this long-term vision, they will introduce as many employees as possible to the program.

Francis further mentioned the high demands on workers. The purpose of systems in a digital landscape, with tools and the like to ease work, and to support you to work faster and more efficiently, is a reality. Technology is not new to the younger generation as they grew up with and are used to it. For older generations and professionals, however, it is imperative for them to understand their purpose as a person, to be comfortable in their working environment, and to know that technology can never replace people. By living in a digital and technological world, Francis believes that it is EI that will let you survive, stand out, and be empowered, to understand what is happening around you, to connect the dots, and move forward. "Exposure to this EI program creates awareness of your value, how to handle situations and reduce the overwhelming feeling of emotion. Therefore, for our workforce at this company, to be emotionally intelligent is critical, or they will feel threatened by technology, especially certain age groups", she explains.

Providing an example, Francis said: "By understanding my personality, I learned to stand back in an overwhelming situation, because in silence is where I regain my thoughts. The moment there is silence, I get perspective to maintain myself and handle situations effectively. EI skills and the understanding of your Neuro-design, determine how you handle situations and I learned to dig deep inside for resources." She continuous: "The lower your EI, the easier you will feel overwhelmed, I presume. A higher level of EI, not only contributes to consider myself, but also the entire environment around me, influencing my micro as well as my macro environment. To equip our people with EI skills is therefore essential as the overwhelming factor is threatening."

Francis points out their greatest and most difficult need and challenge, namely to get their top management involved. The two highest levels of management are not yet included in this program. By being successful and at the peak of their careers, they consider it unnecessary to go through such a program. "In successful companies with equally successful managers, I often see their employees 'bleed' due to their struggles with managers, oblivious or indifferent to their emotional needs." By saying this, she by no means suggests that they are not emotionally intelligent at all, but their drive for success, profit, new clients,

etcetera, may dominate their ability to be emotionally intelligent. Francis suspects that their biggest challenge will therefore be to motivate their top management to do the program by convincing them that success does not necessarily guarantee emotional intelligence. They will nevertheless approach it carefully and regard it as their greatest achievement when these people get involved in the program within the following three years.

6.5   Conclusion

The descriptions of the four participants suggest that the EI training program had a significant positive impact on their personal lives. They unanimously agree that when EI skills developed into a lifestyle, they have a positive impact on people whom they associate with, at home and especially at work. This is consistent with Goleman's (2013) statement that balanced skills of inner and outer awareness are essential. However, influence is restrictive and does not replace training. The sustainability of acquired skills is limited to those who did the training and only for as long as they maintain it. To ensure that the entire initiative of implementing EI skills in the organisation does not fade or die out, they further agree that they need to apply these skills constantly and expand training in the company.

Problems arise which affect cohesion negatively and cause imbalance when there are people in the workplace that do not function from the same value system in this regard. As a result, the program may not have optimal value for the organization in which it is offered. However, when they expand EI training throughout the business as is the case at the holding company, overall uniformity and cohesion may develop with a natural operating language that everyone participates in.

From these interviews as well as previous research mentioned in this study, it is clear that as awareness in the so-called "soft skills" increases, education in EI becomes necessary and more popular. However, the dilemma arises when the most influential staff of the company such as the CEO's, COO's, Exco members, and the like, are oblivious and indifferent towards it. This appears to be a common tendency as seen from all interviews and is a source of concern for those who

invest time and energy in the program.

CHAPTER 7

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

Employees are constantly required to engage in interpersonal interactions involving a range of emotions whilst completing tasks or work. Recognising the importance of EI skills, researchers such as Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), Wilhelm et al. (2002), Mitchell et al. (2010), and Van Oosten (2013) emphasized the importance and value of emotional development ("soft-skills") equal to cognitive development ("hard-skills"). The growing interest in the concept of EI capabilities has spurred an equally growing interest in the development of EI intervention programs within organisations. Experts use different approaches and theoretical frameworks, as well as various programs intended to encourage and bring about change and development of EI in employees. This current study tried to determine how EI training impacted on the success of the individual who fits the modern working profile, within the system, and how emotionally intelligent employees are beneficial to organisational success overall.

Among the various programs currently available, the Neuro-Link EI program was chosen for this research study for several reasons, namely:

- No such study has yet been done on this program;
- Personal preference due to my involvement with the program;
- To put my belief in this program to the test.

The focus of the study was to assess whether the training of employees in EI skills can result in improvement, delivering happier dedicated employees, and a socially balanced organization. Moreover, to assess if employees/participants show increased growth in areas of EI, specifically addressed in the Neuro-Link EI program namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. In other words, I wanted to determine how successful the program is in achieving this. Broad objectives served as a basis for outcomes of the program and the study and gave rise to some research questions. In this chapter I will attempt to provide answers to these questions:

- Did the participants learn to accurately know and understand their own truth,

emotions, motives, strengths, weaknesses, and talents?

- Can the participants manage and control what they understand about themselves now?
- Do the participants know and understand the truths of others?
- Do the participants have healthy constructive interactions with and influence on all people especially their colleagues?
- How did the participants develop through the process and were the changes sustainable?
- How did the participants experience the program?
- How did EI training affect their personal wellbeing and working relationships with colleagues?
- Is it worthwhile for workers and businesses to incorporate and undergo EI training?
- Have the skills set learnt changed their lives in a positive way?

Although extensive quantitative research studies on various programs regarding EI training exist (eg. those of Al Kahtani, 2013; Bajaj & Medury, 2013; Boyatzis et al., 2012; Boyatzis et al., 2017; Korn Ferry Hay Group, 2017; Mahon et al., 2014; Miller 2015; Pittenger, 2015; Ryan et al., 2012), it does not provide holistic evidence of the real experiences of participants (Delport & Fouche, 2005). Following a constructivist-interpretive approach, an ethnographic qualitative method of investigation thus gave me the opportunity to explore, understand and describe the real-life experiences of the study participants (Wagner et al., 2012). This produced meaningful evidence of lived experiences and own reality, displaying their subjective experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Feedback was explained through a phenomenological perspective. I used purposive non-probability sampling, as all participants met the criteria of having completed the Neuro-Link EI training program.

An interpretive ethnographic, including an autoethnography, analysis approach focussed on how participants, in different contexts, make sense of and report on their personal lived experiences of the Neuro-Link EI training program. Two independent facilitators and two organisations, with a couple of representatives each, agreed to partake in the study with me. I made use of the open-ended and

grand tour questioning technique, and although I followed interview guides as presented previously, I gave participants an opportunity to share freely and adapt to what emerged as interviews developed and unfolded.

Hoping to display data from a broader perspective, I explored the ways in which different participant groupings attach immanent and explicit meanings to the EI learning process we took part in. An explanation of how each participant (including myself) experienced the entire journey, our attitudes towards the program, and perceptions of the sustainability of learnt skills, were analysed. Results from individual interviews formed a framework on which the analysis of the study was built. Additionally, certain themes emerged from the personal experiences of participants that formed a cohesive narrative to assist in drawing a conclusion and explaining findings.

I am well aware that my study should be seen as an exploration. The small number of non-random participants curtails any generalizations. The findings presented below are therefore not generalized to a larger population and pertain only to the participants of this study.

7.2   Most Important Findings of this Study

7.2.1   Rationales for Participation in the EI Training Program

Besides personal reasons, Annie (one of the participants who is a facilitator – see Chapter 5) drew attention to the enormous need for EI training, especially among the management staff of today's professional environment. From an experiential perspective by working for several years with leaders, managers, and people holding key positions, she claims that these people find it difficult to perform as effectively as expected of them. It is her view that although they are highly intelligent and very competent at a technical level, most of them are lacking intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge and skills. Divisions fall apart, and this obvious lack of EI prevents them from growing within their organisation.

Furthermore, several participants mentioned how young adults, some even in their early twenties, often step into an occupation without having any previous exposure

to or received training in these vital life skills. The tremendous pressure that these young people are exposed to and must deal with in the work setting, therefore, leaves no time for an emotional backlog to master which impedes normal workflow. When working with these people, the various frustrations, and challenges leaders face, make EI indispensable. Although emotions are necessary, as Devon mentioned, you need to manage it effectively when it fluctuates (see Chapter 6).

Participants have mentioned general challenges that often arise, indicating that it specifically is a lack of EI where the identified shortcomings of leadership and employees lie. Problems occur such as struggling to deal with conflict, ineffective communication, failing to have empathy for colleagues, and fluctuating emotions, to name a few. All aspects that form an integral part of EI.

The pursuit of effective leadership, however, was largely the motivation for which the facilitators and both organizations that participated in this study, included the EI program in their training programs. Noticing quite a difference in today's corporate people, they wanted to adapt to the demands, namely to focus more on soft skills, which is becoming increasingly challenging. Initiated by the HR departments of both companies, the rationale was to get their leadership team proficient first, so that they could lead the rest of the staff.

The management of the holding company in particular, regarded it critical for its workforce to be emotionally intelligent. The companies incorporated to the holding company are dissimilar in nature, they grew, and work increased, but staff numbers in the central services of the mother company did not necessarily expand accordingly. From a training development and HR perspective, they observed escalated stress levels and realised that the morale of their people required attention. Not only did they consider their competencies from a delivery point of view, but also how individuals handle situations, how they manage internal relationships, relationships with clients, and how they need to bring this all together. Survival, to stand out, be empowered, and move forward, required a consistent methodology, and the focus shifted from in addition to making profit and reaching targets, to also include the well-being of their employees.

7.2.2 Feedback – Participant Experiences of the EI Program

Feedback from participants was positive. Their combined feedback contains a similar expression of views and is summarised in this discussion.

From their subjective experiences, without exception, all the participants declared that the program has had a positive impact on their lives and added value to it. Personal development improved. The ability to identify own thoughts and emotions assisted them to form an organised perspective of their self-structure, identity, and purpose, to create a new vision and grow emotionally. This equipped them with an improved understanding of weaknesses and strengths, provided strategies to break limiting beliefs of self, improve on weaknesses, and share strengths for benefit of others. Acquired EI knowledge and skills assisted in managing their lives, whether alone, in a social environment, or at work.

The participants agree that this training stimulated a continuous soul-searching process. They also believe that if EI skills develop into a lifestyle, it will have a positive impact on people whom one associates with. The entire NL process was a journey of discovery and all participants enjoyed the program.

7.2.3 Feedback – from an Organisational Perspective

EI training brought about the understanding, implementation, and application of knowledge and skills in the workplace. The most prominent feedback indicated that the participants believed that there was a marked difference between individuals who completed the program, compared to those who did not.

The holding company's participants stated that the program was fruitful, feedback from attendees positive and the respect and understanding it created amongst co-workers, made a positive difference. Certain challenges were addressed, and they strategically found solutions. The program changed people's lives, their perspectives of themselves and colleagues. This created a feeling of cohesion even though each was on his or her own journey.

7.2.4　How do Findings Relate to Existing Research

To address the need for EI programs as a good example of employee workplace interventions (Clarke 2006), Moursund quoted Perkins who said: "Being proactive, we can become more intelligent through study and practice, through access to appropriate tools, and through learning to make effective use of these tools" (Moursund, 1996, p. 38). The Neuro-Link EI training program and assessments were used as such tools by companies that participated in this study as well as by those participants who facilitated at various institutions with diverse audiences.

Richards and Barry (2010) found the four quadrants of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management equally important. Du Plessis et al. (2015) found that EI training should form part of a necessary component in the development of servant leaders. These four dimensions, which include a module on service leadership, receive equal attention in the EI training program used. (See discussion in 7.3.2 and 7.3.3).

Van Oosten's (2013) findings state that self-reflection expands self-awareness and leads to self-directed change, producing meaningful personal vision, resulting in positive work engagement and career satisfaction. Gardner (2005) further mentioned the sustained psychological burden their jobs have on individuals that requires personal and social competencies. To acquire these competencies, EI intervention that focusses on feelings and behaviour brings about behaviour changes. Personal behaviour change focuses on inner-, other-, and outer awareness fostering stronger relationships, personal development, and work-family integration (Goleman, 2013). In addition, Maheshwari and Tripathi (2003, p. 4) quoted John Kotter, who said, "because of the furious pace of change in business today, it is difficult to manage relationships, as it sabotages more businesses than anything else. It is not a question of strategy that gets us into trouble, but a question of emotions." This current study provides rich data relating to attitudinal, behavioural, and organizational change of participants from which a theme has emerged about changes brought about by the EI training. All participants have experienced and witnessed attitudinal and behavioural changes during their EI training. (This is discussed in 7.3.4).

Studies by Clarke (2010) and Moriarty and Buckley (2003) suggested that greater participation in team-based learning may create stronger relational bonds that support the development of emotional abilities once individuals have gained personal insight into their own EI. Furthermore, Boyatzis et al. (2000) said that EI competencies are valuable to individuals within groups as it contributes to building bonds, collaboration, cooperation, and team capabilities. Considering this, group cohesion in the participating companies of this current study has improved between members who have undergone EI training. The group draws together and strengthens the company provided that members understand one another, are acknowledged for their unique individual qualities, and allowed to participate with their own strengths, as discussed in section 7.4.

7.3   Themes

Data from interviews of all participants were used in the analysis. I used an Excel spreadsheet to code and categorize data as it occurred and expanded on it as I completed every interview. The themes described below are prominent aspects highlighted by participants in all interviews, without exception. This, therefore, reflects each participant's subjective experience and perception of the EI training process. The connections I made through the identification of these themes, formed a cohesive narrative that I explained in my findings and personal reflection.

7.3.1   Pre-Training Assessment

Assessments appear to be indispensable for the overall success of the EI program. A variety of assessments equip the trainee to start the self-understanding process and to progress into social understanding and development. The rationale being suggested is that each specific assessment tests something different, or it tests specific aspects in different ways. This may display commonalities or fill gaps that will contribute to a deeper self-understanding. Each assessment, therefore, contributes to bringing clarity from a different dimension. Forming important tangent points and similarities are confirmation of who you are and proves the reliability and validity of results. Participants emphasised the importance of using several of these tools seeing that

a variety of assessments give a clear picture of themselves.

Foxcroft and Roodt (2006) describe the necessity of psychological assessments as a help to identify strengths and weaknesses, assisting in making informed decisions regarding training and development, identifying intervention and therapy needs, measuring the effectiveness of intervention programs, and so much more. No matter what tools we use, whether it is profiles, tests, measures, or assessments, the sole purpose is to gather a wide array of information to produce understanding. This mainly focuses on the understanding by professionals of their clients, whether it be individuals, groups, or organisations.

This study, however, points out the importance of assessments as a source of self-understanding for participants. Forming an integral part of the entire Neuro-Link model, the EI process develops from their own assessments namely their brain profile and EI assessment. It complements any other assessments the participant may have completed. The first module on mental literacy deals with the two profiles consequently establishing a solid foundation. Ben urges that it is indispensable for a person to understand his neuro-design, and how it affects his natural behaviour and the profile provides the greatest source of self-knowledge and understanding. Throughout the EI training process, they frequently refer to the profile, resulting in the profile to be a prerequisite for the program.

Participants unanimously agree that combined with other tests that provided insightful information about themselves, the Neuro-Link assessments were the decisive factor, as it provided an increased opportunity for self-understanding, identity development, and social-understanding (how people are different, and how one fits into the bigger picture).

7.3.2   Program Composition and Sequence of Presentation

Emotional and social intelligence implies the ability to effectively understand and express oneself, to understand and relate well with others, and to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures. This requires that one is aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses and can express one's feelings

and thoughts non-destructively.

Bar-On's (2006) emotional-social intelligence model (ESI-model) combines various intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, competencies, and facilitators to determine effective human behaviour. Goleman states that these emotional competencies are learned capabilities that must and can develop (Boyatzis et al., 2000). His competency-based EI model integrates emotional and social competencies (Goleman et al., 2002). As illustrated in Table 2.1 Goleman's model consists of four major cluster domains with twenty competencies. The dimensions illustrated in his model include the intrapersonal competencies of self-awareness and self-management and the interpersonal competencies of social awareness and relationship management.

The Neuro-Link model leans strongly towards the "mixed" model with regard to the program composition, in that it included the two major cluster domains and four dimensions of Goleman's model. However, these four dimensions contain nine emotional abilities, unique to this model, arranged in a specific order, and presented in separate modules. These modules are interdependent and to a certain extent sequential, starting with accurate self-awareness. The systematic order of the program provides logic to the process, as experienced by all participants:

- The Intrapersonal leg of the program:
    i. Accurate self-awareness
    ii. Spiritual wellness
    iii. Brain wellness and mind power
    iv. Mental literacy
    v. Mental wellness
- The Interpersonal leg of the program:
    vi. Social awareness skills
    vii. Interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills
    viii. Social cohesion and team functioning
    ix. Values-driven and servant leadership skills.

Because the modules follow each other and are/were presented one day at a time per module, considerable time was allowed in between modules to enable

participants to process information and practice the strategies they have learned by applying it daily. This was received well.

Participants stated that the program appealed to them as it is comprehensive yet practical. Workshops were presented in a fun and interesting, yet meaningful way and skills learnt can be applied easily and practically. This program achieved the design for effective social and emotional learning that applies to all the phases of training as suggested by Cherniss et al. (1998). This includes preparation for change at an individual as well as organisational level, providing training to implement such change and allowing for an in-house practice of the training experience.

7.3.3   Program Content

Rated as one of the most desirable skills and becoming more in demand across industries in the job market (Schwab & Samans, 2016), EI aims to empower people by developing their intrapersonal and interpersonal EI skills through training. Focussing specifically on the training, the program needs to produce results that are seen as valuable to people in the system and by organisations that sponsor the training efforts. Exploring the perspectives of twenty-one EI trainers to identify variables that contribute to the design of successful training, Gill (2015) discovered that an EI environment change confirms to be one way of establishing the success of the training design. Change refers to an adjustment of attitudes, expectations, perceptions, and behaviour in people (Robbins et al., 2009).

Improving the well-being of their members, promoting team effectiveness, and developing emotionally intelligent leaders, was the main purpose why the companies of this study participated in the Neuro-Link EI training program. To bring about such change, the quality of the program plays a key role as it must attract the attention, curiosity, and interest of the participants. With its neuro-scientific approach that distinguishes it from other similar programs, each module of the Neuro-Link program provides workable tools to the learning experience, and practical steps force participants into action, which should necessarily lead to behavioural and attitudinal changes. Changes in the companies of this study

where the program was presented were expected and derived from participants' feedback.

7.3.4   Change

The specific aspect that motivated the implementation of EI training at one of the participating companies was to establish change. The acquisition of EI skills proved to play a key role and is a definite factor in change. This entails not only attitude and behaviour changes of employees, but also organizational changes the company faces at times.

All participants in this study have experienced and witnessed attitudinal and behavioural changes during their EI training. One example mentioned is the debilitating attitudes with limited beliefs of self that often forms part of one's frame of reference. This prevents us from reaching our full potential. Understanding their neurological preferences allowed people to discover these negative mind sets, resulting in a revelation when they realise that to change their way of thinking is a mere choice. This happened to most of the participants and others they observed during training.

Changes in attitude and behaviour are precisely the intention of EI training and are, therefore, inevitable. Ben explains from a neuroscientific perspective that new information creates new thinking patterns that lead to new behavioural patterns with different outcomes. Changes at companies where the program was presented were therefore expected as each module offered workable tools in the learning experience.

In addition, for organisations going through major transformational changes such as affirmative action and employment equity adjustments, a common phenomenon in a country like South Africa, diversity may often be a sensitive issue. Addressing this from an EI perspective, Annie witnessed how organisations succeeded in moving through these changes effortlessly. Approaching diversity from a universal viewpoint such as the functioning of the brain as the common denominator, includes all people as it is something everyone can equally identify with. Although

people differ in terms of their uniqueness of the neuro-scientific functioning, diversity is no longer a matter of skin colour, ethnic background, social class, gender, religion, or the like. Connie confirmed the impact thereof at their company's training sessions.

7.3.5   Sustainability

Annie and Ben's long-term commitment to EI training speaks for itself. It is obvious that they believe in the EI concept, and they have experienced the results. This supports theorists and researchers like Boyatzis (2008), Goleman (2013), and Mitchell et al. (2010), who highlight the ultimate importance of incorporating such training in the workplace.

It was due to the success of the program on their pilot group that the idea at one participating company arose to continue with the EI training process. They registered the fifteen months program as a national qualification specifically incorporating the Neuro-Link EI program. As one of the participants explained: "We have seen this works well. If it was not the case, we would not have continued. That is how serious we are about EI training since we saw the difference. We experienced the success in ourselves, and we observed the change in others, and I believe we will eventually see a transformation in the entire organisation."

Participants agree that they need to apply these skills constantly. To maintain social cohesion and cooperation, the pilot group of the holding company realised that the entire initiative of implementing EI skills in the organisation should not fade or die out. Therefore, they established a solid foundation with the presentation of the course over an extended period of time as well as coaching sessions as support. By keeping team meetings every quarter, momentum is retained. This prevented them from falling back into the same old habits.

As influence is restrictive and does not replace training, the sustainability of acquired skills is limited to those who did the training and only for as long as they maintain it. However, people are busy, life continues, and they may not continue

applying the content of the EI course fully. The main reason for investing in something like the EI training is to get full value from it, and it is especially the company that invested time, effort, and money, which wants to benefit from this. Therefore, to justify the expense thereof, Connie emphasizes the importance of some sort of follow-up. Although she feels it is primarily the responsibility of the individual to ensure that he or she preserves the sustainability of acquired skills, this should happen in conjunction with their company. From a longevity perspective, she believes that mentoring arranged by their company for about six months after training and at least one feedback session from Neuro-Link's side would have been good. Considering it very important to present such a program, Devon believes that the process should stay alive and attractive for the client. He suggested incorporating follow-up sessions into the package and cost of the program. In other words, the link between the client and the presenting company should remain active as it is difficult to resume negotiations and rebuild the partnership after several years when contact was first lost. They would like to see the majority, or all members of the executive committee involved in the program, expanding it to ground level and new appointments. With regard to sustainability, he suggests it should be policy to link the program to the company's future training strategy thus remaining part of the organisation's training objectives.

Participants, nonetheless, unanimously agree that EI remains a continuous process of growth and that the development and sustainability of learnt skills greatly depends on how these skills are applied throughout one's life.

7.3.6 Participation

As far as participation in the program is concerned, a general trend emerged from most interviews. This study, as well as previously mentioned research, indicate that as awareness in the so-called "soft skills" increases, education in EI becomes necessary and more popular. The ideal is that all employees, including top management staff, complete the EI program. However, Human Resources Officers generally recommend training, and it seems that the most influential staff such as CEO's, COO's, and Exco members do support the idea, but are unwilling to participate or sometimes even to get involved in the training. This appears to be

a common tendency and is a source of concern for those who invest time and energy in the program. Several reasons seem to be the cause:

- Ben explains that they are sometimes greeted with great opposition when approaching a company to promote the program. Although evidence proved the contrary, management is afraid, thinking that since EI is a "soft skill," they will have to compromise on production and quality;
- Top management, furthermore, usually does not allow themselves the time to go through the entire program and although they want their employees to do the course, they often choose to be informed only;
- All chief operating officers of the company do not work together in synergy, apply principles from a similar value system, and regard such training as equally important;
- By being successful and at the peak of their careers, they consider it unnecessary to go through such a program.

7.4   Personal Reflection

This study strengthened my belief in the EI concept, which I have a passion for. But what exactly did I learn from this?

EI training works indeed, with positive results. For any individual exposed to EI training, it is as if he or she becomes more aware of suppressed emotions. In particular, the uplifting effect of the Neuro-Link approach stands out for me. By guiding trainees through a process of introspection, they discover their true identity to develop with confidence. It brings together the dimensions of mind, body, and soul, so that equal recognition can be given to each dimension, to understand its characteristics and needs, and to give it appropriate attention, respectively. The value of self-understanding and self-management that adds to one's life, is priceless.

EI training brings freedom just to be. To be who you are, emotions and all, and to respect the next person for who he or she is. To pay attention to the "soft skills", the emotions of its members, EI training brings change in the behaviour and attitude of employees. It encourages servant leadership and empathy that

consequently improves mutual respect. Improved social understanding establishes cohesion amongst team members.

No business can exist without its employees and where cohesion occurs among colleagues, it creates a healthy atmosphere, which is comfortable and enjoyable for everyone to work in, and then it goes well with the staff of the business. The characteristics with which people differ intrinsically brings a diverse dynamic to the table with a versatility that favours and compliments the organization. By acknowledging each member for their unique qualities and to allow them to participate with their own strengths, draws the group together and strengthens the company. This is only possible if all members of the group understand one another's strengths and weaknesses and allow participation of all because everyone has something significant to offer. This study suggested that the Neuro-Link EI program teaches people to develop awareness, understanding and acquisition of skills, to succeed.

The Neuro-Link program succeeds in retaining the attention of participants. Unlike programs I personally attended previously, where some participants quickly lost interest. In this program, however, participants engage even more as it progresses. This may be attributed to how they identify with the content, or the feeling of "this is for me personally" that participants experience.

Although the value of the Neuro-Link EI program is not controversial, the problem remains with its implementation in the company's training strategy, as well as the selection of participants in the program. Ideally, as many as possible employees of a company should undergo training. But most important is that it should start at the very highest level. Participants in this study are all of the opinion that this training will have a much greater impact on the company if it is hierarchically implemented beginning at top management. Furthermore, it is important to maintain the sustainability of learned skills.

7.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A strength of this study is that all the individuals who participated were very willing

to share their personal experiences of the EI program with me. This may be due to their positive experience of the program. The grand tour questioning technique seemed to be a reason for obtaining rich information from the participants. Because a framework of questions was sent to them in advance, they could prepare in detail and therefore the interviews flowed smoothly. A relaxed atmosphere prevailed during interviews, the participants were very open, at ease, spoke freely, and consequently provided rich data.

However, a sample size of only two companies and six participants was quite small. Further was the program at one company still in progress and the other company did not continue with the program. This limited me to make a definite conclusion about the impact of the EI program on these companies.

And lastly, although I tried to remain objective during this study, I acknowledge that my own involvement in the program could influence my evaluation. This could also be seen as a limitation of the study, however, I tried my utmost to keep my enthusiasm at bay. Be that as it may the study seems to have strengthened my belief in the value of the program.

7.6   Recommendations for Promoting EI in Future

As mentioned hitherto, the impact of EI training is positive, on the individual as well as on groups of people who participated in the training and indirectly on the organisation. The ideal, however, is that the business as a whole should benefit from this. This can only happen if this training is acknowledged, accepted, and incorporated at the highest level of management, to develop a systems-thought process where everyone is aware of the importance of the EI concept.

Unfortunately, the highest level of management I came across in my study is not yet willing to get involved. To fill this gap and to raise awareness of the importance of EI training, research already provides us with a treasure of evidence for a valid argument in favour of the crucial role that EI plays (Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010; Wilhelm, Logan, Smith, & Szul, 2002). Backed by such research findings, the aim is to create a workable model to promote the concept of EI as well as the

training thereof. Following current trends in the marketplace, the primary goal is that all people recognise and accept the importance of EI skills and training. The choice of a specific training program is secondary.

7.7   Recommendations for Further Research

Since the new training program of the holding company only started early this year, a follow-up study is recommended to monitor the impact of the program on the organisation when more employees complete the training. The proposed outcomes of the program may assist the organisation in determining a possible improvement in the quality of their working climate as a whole.

Secondly, I recommend the development of an awareness model for the promotion of EI training in the workplace. This may increase available knowledge regarding corporate EI training and can also accelerate an emerging, but a too slowly growing movement.

Thirdly, of all the literature I consulted relating to this study, qualitative studies, specifically ethnography, are really few. Apart from some related studies, autoethnography with regard to EI is even scarcer. Investigating people's experiences through ethnographic qualitative research will enable an in-depth view of EI, its implementation and impact on the organisation, and can be of great value. Such an ethnographic qualitative research method, including autoethnography, can unveil certain experiences during research that other research methods fail to cover. Furthermore, by stepping into the research process as an outsider, the ethnographer can close up the distance between an outsider's perspective and the real meaning of life experience of those being studied. Therefore, in contrast to the many quantitative studies available, more qualitative studies could give more valuable information.

7.8   Final Reflection

This research study is an exploration of my journey in broadening my understanding of EI. Rated by the World Economic Forum as amongst the top ten most desirable skills by the year 2020 (Schwab & Samans, 2016), I have learned

that being emotionally intelligent is a requirement that is escalating rapidly. The acquisition of EI knowledge and skills is indeed possible through training and as shown in this study, gaining these skills has a huge impact on the emotional well-being of working individuals. This can escalate by influencing the greater environment in which these individuals find themselves.

I further believe that the general mental health of mankind, of which EI forms an integral part, begins with each individual. It is first of all, our own responsibility to learn and apply knowledge and skills, and by mastering that, it is then our responsibility to convey this to others. By applying reflexive self-examination through autoethnography, a method of qualitative research, I had the opportunity to do introspection and to dig deep into my own life in order to explore my subjective and personal experience, and to assess, evaluate and gain insight into my position regarding EI. Connecting this autoethnographic study to a wider social arena by adding ethnographic data, hopefully contributed by enhancing meaning and understanding, expressing a credible reality, and having both an emotionally and intellectually aesthetic impact on the reader of this report on my research study.

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APPENDIX A

Date: 20 September 2016

To whom it may concern

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.

Sincerely

Andre Vermeulen
CEO Neuro-Link

Neuro-Link

CEO Dr. André Vermeulen

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Organisation Consent to Conduct a Research Study

University of South Africa

Good day

I, Susan Jansen Van Rensburg, am a student in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa. I am busy with Master's degree studies in Psychology under the supervision of Dr. Elsje Cronjé and Prof. Johan Nieuwoudt. My topic of research is the impact of emotional intelligence training in the workplace. People who completed the Neuro-Link Emotional Intelligence High Achievers Development Program are invited to partake in this study. Clearance to obtain relevant participants, as well as conditions and procedures required by your institutions regarding access to staff for research purposes is hereby requested.

This is a qualitative research study, therefore participants who agree to take part, will be involved in a few sessions of individual one-hour interviews. The number of interviews will be for the duration of the study during the year 2018, periodically and on appointment, and until enough data were collected to draw a final trustworthy credible conclusion from. Participating individuals will not benefit from taking part as such, however, it is envisioned that findings of the study can contribute to understanding of psychological processes involved in the Emotional Intelligence training process. It is expected that the information gained from this study will enlighten knowledge about participant experiences of the program and might help to learn more about the relevance of emotional intelligence training in the workplace.

The research was reviewed and approved by Dr André Vermeulen, CEO of Neuro-Link (Consent letter included as attachment in e-mail) as well as the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa, Reference Number: PERC-16035. The primary researcher, Susan Jansen Van Rensburg, can be contacted at susanvanrensburg@hotmail.com, tel.: 012 546 2128 or Cell: 082 697 0785. The study supervisors, Dr Elsje Cronjé and Prof Johan Nieuwoudt, can be contacted at elsjecronje50@gmail.com and nieuwoudtjm@telkomsa.net.

Your kind cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Your Sincerely
Susan Jansen Van Rensburg.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
University of South Africa

Title of Study: Exploring the Impact of Emotional Intelligence Training in the Workplace

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Introduction

- I am a student in the College of Human Sciences, at the University of South Africa busy with Master's degree studies in Psychology. I am doing research on the impact of emotional intelligence training in the workplace 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.
- 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 purpose of the study is to investigate the impact this programme had on you as a working individual in your professional environment. You are invited to take part in this research because I want to know more about your experience of the programme, and because I feel that your experience might help us to learn more about the relevance of emotional intelligence training in the workplace.
- This research may ultimately be published as research findings in a Master's degree in Psychology.

Voluntary Participation

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not.
- The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on 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 length of time for participation will be one or more sessions of the above and for the duration of the study during the year 2018, periodically and on appointment, and until enough data are collected to draw a final trustworthy credible conclusion for the study.
- For individual interviews:
  1. You will participate in an interview with myself.

2. The interview will take place in a comfortable private place at the office.

3. Intrapersonal and interpersonal questions will be asked for example: Did the programme help you to accurately know and understand your own 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 personal wellbeing? How did you develop through the process and were the changes sustainable? Do you have healthy constructive interactions with, and influence on other people especially your colleagues?

4. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and we will move on to next questions. You do not have to answer any question or take part 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.

5. No one else but myself will be present during interviews unless you would like someone else to attend.

6. The entire interview will be voice-recorded, and you will be identified by name on the recording for transcription purposes only. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to the information documented during your interview. The recordings will be kept locked away, until destroyed after completion of the study.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study may have the following risk: the research may affect you emotionally.

- There are no reasonable foreseeable (or expected) other risks, however, there may be unknown risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about the impact such a program has on the health of the entire organization in the sense that it strengthens each individual in their professional capacity as well as their private lives.

Confidentiality

- This study is anonymous. Your identity will not be shared with or given to anyone outside of this research. Any information about you will be coded and will not have your name. Only I will know what your code is, and such information will be kept 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 will have access to audio recordings, in that it will be listened to or watched in private. It will be used for data analysis only and will be 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 given the opportunity to review and approve any material that is published about you.
- I will ask you and others in the group not to talk to people outside the group about what was said in the group. I will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that we cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.

Payments
- You will not be given 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 at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or UNISA or your employer. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- Choosing to take part or to withdraw will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way.
- You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to ask that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.
- I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to change or remove portions of those if you do not agree 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 and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Susan at susanvanrensburg@hotmail.com or by telephone at 082-697-0785. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. This proposal has been reviewed and approved by UNISA whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. It has also been reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee of UNISA who is supporting the study.

Consent
- I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked were answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Participant's Name (print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

- I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. 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

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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 :
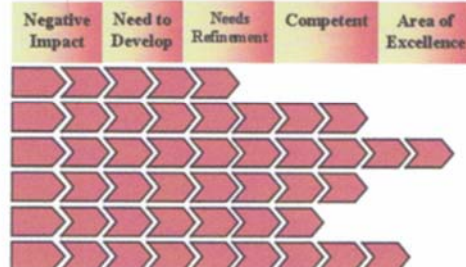
Intrapersonal Competencies:

- . Emotional Self-Awareness
- . Accurate Self-Assessment
- . Self-Confidence
- . Self-Control
- . Adaptability
- . Self-Motivation

Negative Impact	Need to Develop	Needs Refinement	Competent	Area of Excellence
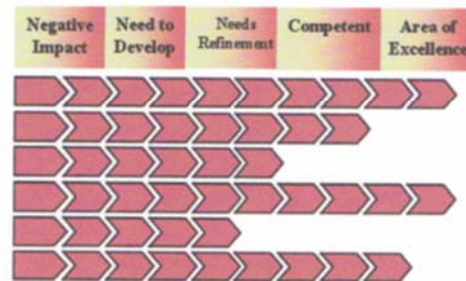
Interpersonal Competencies:

- . Empathy
- . Service Orientation
- . Organizational Awareness
- . Interpersonal Communication
- . Team Functioning
- . Servant Leadership

Negative Impact	Need to Develop	Needs Refinement	Competent	Area of Excellence

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.

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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

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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;

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APPENDIX E

Grand Tour Questions – Facilitators

I have sent a framework of the following questions via e-mail to each participant in advance to give them the opportunity to prepare for their interviews:

    i.   What is your professional background?

    ii.   How did you get involved with Neuro-Link, and specifically with the EI program?

    iii.   What was your personal experience of the entire Neuro-Link model, and in particular the EI program?

    iv.   Why specifically the Neuro-Link EI program?

    v.   How do you apply the EI program: previously and now?

    vi.   Your professional experience of the program:

- How are you currently involved and in what capacity?
- To how many people/businesses, etc. have you already given training?
- Can you give feedback – positive and negative, if any?
- What aspects of the program are particularly significant to you?
- What shortcomings do you experience, or any recommendations you have regarding the program?

Grand Tour Questions – Participants

I have sent a framework of the following questions via e-mail to each participant in advance to give them the opportunity to prepare for their interviews:

4. 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?

5. Social Awareness: Your perception of your social environment, your colleagues, and how did this training influence your work environment and the culture of the organisation you work at. Has it changed?

6. Social Skills – healthy and constructive influence on and interaction with others: How do you maintain yourself? Did it change or not? What impact did EI training have on the organisation?