

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leaders' Decision-making



Bachelor's thesis

Valkeakoski International Business

2022 Autumn Semester

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Year 2022

Subject Role of emotional intelligence in leader's decision-making

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Emotional intelligence is becoming more recognized from organizations in order to overcome competition in the fast paced business world of the 21st century. Leadership and decision-making are vital parts of the business world, and emotional intelligence shows great potential to enhance these aspects of business. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the effects emotional intelligence has on leaders' decision-making in order to expand research in the field of emotionally intelligent decision-making and possibly enhance leaders' decision-making processes and quality of decisions. The commissioner of the thesis is a Hungarian company which asked for extended autonomy.

The theoretical background thoroughly explores well-known emotional intelligence concepts and their importance, and emotional intelligence's role in effective leadership and decision-making. The research was done using a qualitative methodology in the forms of semi-structured interviews and an emotional intelligence assessment tool.

The findings and analysis shows that leaders utilize emotional intelligence to remain objective in decision-making, gather vital information in the decision-making processes, communicate decisions in a professional manner, and reflect on their past decision to enhance quality of their present decisions.

In addition, the research confirms that emotional intelligence positively affect leaders decisions and decision-making processes and the thesis provides recommendations for leaders and companies to enhance their decision-making processes. This research potentially expands the field of emotional intelligence in decision-making as available research regarding this topic is limited.

Keywords emotional intelligence, leadership, decision-making

Pages 40 pages and appendices 4 pages

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1 Introduction

Emotional intelligence witnessed exceptional interest among researchers in the fields of psychology, education, and business as it affects one's personal and professional life. In the global world of competitive business environment, organizations grab every opportunity to enhance their performance and overcome competition. Emotional intelligence could be an essential formula as research has shown that emotionally intelligent individuals can utilize emotional information for the benefit of the organization. (Afroz et al. 2017, p. 132) (Goleman, 2019)

Various definitions of intelligence have led to different concepts of emotional intelligence. Ability models, mixed models and trait models are the most influential constructs of emotional intelligence. A large body of controversy exists regarding emotional intelligence and its models as there is a lack of consensus of definitions in the scientific community. Therefore, the author explored each model and their validity to clarify the perspective on emotional intelligence. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 1-2) (Cherniss, 2010, p. 110-113)

Leadership is a process converting company goals into visions while influencing a group of people to work towards the established visions. Influencing a group requires social interactions, thus emotions. As emotions are involved in the leadership process, the importance of emotional intelligence in effective leadership substantially increases. It is argued that emotional intelligence plays a way bigger role in leadership effectiveness than conventional intelligence or technical skills. In this thesis the author further describes leadership, emotional intelligence and its relation to leadership effectiveness, the characteristics of an emotionally intelligent leader, and leadership styles which utilize emotional intelligence. (Kelvin, 2018 p.) (Goleman, 2019)

Decision-making is a vital part of business success. The point of decisions to identify an opportunity or solve a problem. Information gathering from the right sources in order to achieve excellent decisions. Decisions are altered by emotions; thus, emotional intelligence has a considerable influence on decision-making. Decision-makers utilizing emotional intelligence tend to make more quality decisions as they consider emotional information in

the decision-making processes. The author was challenged to find relevant studies to describe phases of emotionally intelligent decision-making process, therefore he proposed a unique concept which involved theory of emotional intelligence, leadership, and decision-making. (Eby, 2018) (Lerner et al. 2015) (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011)

The research was commissioned by a Hungarian company but management requested extended anonymity, therefore the reasons for the commission is disclosed. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to determine the effect that emotional intelligence has on leaders' decisions and decision-making processes. Emotional intelligence, leadership and decision-making are well researched topics but research regarding emotional intelligent decision-making processes is limited. Furthermore, this research has potential to expand and confirm available theory in this field and potentially enable leaders to enhance their decision-making processes utilizing emotional intelligence. To reach such goals, the author aims to answer the following research question: How does leaders' emotional intelligence affect their decisions and decision-making processes? The author provides necessary literature to understand the concepts of emotional intelligence, emotional leadership and leadership effectiveness, and the emotional decisions and decision-making processes. The author provides his findings and analysis from interviews in order to answer the research questions. Hence, he presents recommendations for leaders and companies.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

The earliest mentions related to emotional intelligence were as early as 1920 when Robert Thorndike, an influential psychologist who established multiple types of intelligence, created the term 'social intelligence' which he viewed as the ability to understand and manage others. David Wechsler in 1943 described that non-cognitive intelligence may be essential for one's success in life. In 1950, Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, explained that people can build emotional strength. In 1983, Howard Gardner introduced the theory of multiple intelligences where he described seven separate aspects of intelligence in humans including intrapersonal intelligence which is the capability to consider one's own feelings and emotions, and interpersonal intelligence which is the skill to understand others' intentions, behaviors, and attitudes. The first actual mention of the term emotional intelligence was in 1985 by Wayne Payne in his doctoral dissertation. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 1; Mehta & Singh, 2013, p. 343; Dhani & Sharma, 2016 p. 135)

Gardner's view of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence contributed as foundation for the first detailed concept of emotional intelligence. The first detailed description of the term 'emotional intelligence' (EI) was established in 1990 by two psychologists Salovey and Mayer, and it was described as a social intelligence which is distinguished from general intelligence and furthermore involves the ability to understand, use, guide, and voice one's own and other's emotions. EI was further developed and popularized after the publication of 'Why It Can Matter More Than IQ' by another psychologist Daniel Goleman in 1995, after researching Salovey's and Mayer's approach to emotional intelligence. Goleman found that EI determines 80% of success at the workplace while traditionally viewed cognitive intelligence quotient (IQ) factors contribute only 20%. Since these findings, workplaces started to more widely adapt and practice emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence in the view of Goleman is a collection of abilities and skills which facilitates one's understanding of one's own and other's emotions that are crucial in professional settings. Reuven Bar-On, another pioneer researcher of emotional intelligence and the creator of the term 'emotional quotient' explains EI as a mixture of social and emotional skills, competencies and facilitators which concludes one's understanding and expression of

oneself, one's understanding and capability to relate to others and one's ability to cope and adapt to daily environmental demands. (Lubbadeh 2020 p. 40-41; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 1-2; Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 343)

There are many available approaches of emotional intelligence but at least one or more is applicable on each concept from the following statements:

- The ability to understand, manage and express one's own emotions
- The ability to observe, process others' emotions and communicate appropriately.
- The ability to use these skills and competencies accurately, which enables the individual to manage difficult situations, cope with stress and frustration, and decide accordingly while utilizing emotional information.

(Lubbadeh 2020 p. 41)

2.2 Models of emotional intelligence

As different definitions were established it led to a variety of diverse perspectives of models. According to Salovey's and Mayer's definition: "Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth." (Akley 2016 p. 271) Goleman points out that emotional intelligence is any fundamental personal attribute which is not connected to cognitive intelligence. Bar-On describes emotional intelligence as a set of non-cognitive skills, capabilities and competencies that affects one's ability to appropriately cope with environmental needs effectively. However, Petrides and Furnham argue that emotional intelligence is a trait, and it is defined as a pattern of one's emotional view of oneself based on lower levels of personality hierarchies. These current models classify emotional intelligence as personal (intrapersonal) and social intelligence (interpersonal). (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 1-2)

The variety of definitions supported the development of the three main categories of emotional intelligence models known as ability model, mixed model, and trait model. Salovey and Mayer view intelligence as an ability to solve problems based on Gardner's concept of personal intelligence, furthermore it falls to the category of cognitive intelligence. Other scholars such as Goleman, Bar-On and Petrides classified EI as a non-cognitive form of intelligence. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 2; Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 345)

Concepts which focus on cognitive aptitudes of emotional intelligence are the ability models. Mixed models include a wide variety of behaviors, abilities, and personality traits within the framework of emotional intelligence. Mixed models view emotional intelligence as an inborn trait and focus on individuals' perspective of their own emotional abilities. (Kerr R., et al. 2006 p. 266; Petrides 2011 p. 660)

2.2.1 Ability model of emotional intelligence

The ability model was developed in 1997 by Salovey and Mayer which consists of four emotional problem-solving dimensions. First, how one perceives emotions, which is determined as the most basic ability. Second is one's ability to use emotions to facilitate thinking. The third is one's ability to understand emotions and the fourth is the ability to manage emotions. The author described each aspect of the ability model in a hierarchical order from the most fundamental to the more complex emotional intelligence abilities. (Mayer et al. 2016 p. 4; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 3)

The first dimension, which is the ability of emotional perception, appraisal and expression, ranges from basic level to advanced level, in the following order:

1. One's ability to determine one's own emotions by physical signs of oneself, thoughts, and inner awareness which is further suitable for development by self-experience.
2. One's ability to perceive other's emotions by monitoring other's emotional information
3. One's ability to appropriately convey feelings while monitoring other's emotional information

4. One's ability to recognize and distinguish between genuine and false or accurate and inaccurate feeling expressions.

(Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 3; Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 345)

The use of emotions to facilitate thinking is the second area of this model which is described as one's capability to enable emotions to guide the cognitive system to foster thinking. First, the individual prioritizes surrounding emotions to focus on important matters. Subsequently, the individual can develop emotions to aid one's own reasoning, perception, knowledge, and memory processes which enable the person to examine and alter their own emotions to execute decisions. Following that, one can take advantage of their own mood swings, therefore process emotional information depending on their mood. Good mood facilitates optimistic thinking and bad mood leads to pessimistic thinking. Additionally, the individual develops the capability to utilize mood swings while planning or making decisions. Finally, at the most advanced level of this dimension, one is capable of reasoning according to different emotional states. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 3; Mayer, 2004 p.4)

The third dimension, understanding emotions, is explained as one's ability to understand and label emotions. At the most basic level, the individual can identify and categorize emotions. Hence, the person develops the capacity to locate the origin of emotion and translate it into different perspectives. After that, one can understand complex emotions, and the relation between simultaneous emotions at once. At the highest level, the individual can understand and identify transitions from one emotion to another. For instance the transition of anger into satisfaction. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 3; Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 345)

The last branch of Salovey's and Mayer's ability model is emotional management. It is defined as one's ability to manage one's own and other's emotions. The fundamental level enables one to acknowledge pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Succeeding that, an individual is capable accordingly connect or detach from emotions. Eventually, one can monitor and consider the emotions of oneself and others. Finally, one is able to strengthen pleasant and control unpleasant emotions. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 3; Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 345)

As research accumulated the Salovey, Mayer and Caruso decided to renew the original four-branch ability model to enhance its efficiency and implications. They added more instances of problem-solving to the original model. They explain that some areas were overlooked such as 'understanding emotions' which originally included abilities to identify emotions, understanding the origin cause of feelings, and understanding blend and complex emotions. Emotional appraisal and forecasting have been added to the branch as a direct relation has been determined to emotionally intelligent reasoning. In the extended four branch ability model (See Figure 1) each dimension ranges from the most basic abilities to the most advanced skills, from bottom to top. Moreover, new abilities have been added which are marked with 'c' at the end of the row in Figure 1. Some of the original abilities have been divided into two or more different abilities for reasons of clarity marked with 'b' at the end of the row in Figure 1. Furthermore, the branch 'facilitating thought using emotions' could be separated into two new areas. One area could be categorized as 'generating emotions to facilitate thought' which consists of two abilities; 'generate emotions as an aid to judgement and memory' and 'generate emotions as a means to relate to experiences of another person'. Another area could be called 'tailoring thinking to emotions' which included the remaining three abilities namely: 'Select problems based on how one's ongoing emotional state facilitate cognition', 'Leverage mood swings to generate different cognitive perspective', and 'Prioritize thinking by directing attention according to present feeling'. (Mayer et al. 2016 p. 1-5)

The Four Branches	Types of Reasoning
4. Managing emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively manage others' emotions to achieve a desired outcome^b Effectively manage one's own emotions to achieve a desired outcome^b Evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce, or intensify an emotional response^b Monitor emotional reactions to determine their reasonableness Engage with emotions if they are helpful; disengage if not Stay open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings, as needed, and to the information they convey
3. Understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions^c Understand how a person might feel in the future or under certain conditions (affective forecasting)^c Recognize likely transitions among emotions such as from anger to satisfaction Understand complex and mixed emotions Differentiate between moods and emotions^c Appraise the situations that are likely to elicit emotions^c Determine the antecedents, meanings, and consequences of emotions Label emotions and recognize relations among them
2. Facilitating thought using emotion^d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select problems based on how one's ongoing emotional state might facilitate cognition Leverage mood swings to generate different cognitive perspectives Prioritize thinking by directing attention according to present feeling Generate emotions as a means to relate to experiences of another person^c Generate emotions as an aid to judgment and memory
1. Perceiving emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify deceptive or dishonest emotional expressions^b Discriminate accurate vs. inaccurate emotional expressions^b Understand how emotions are displayed depending on context and culture^c Express emotions accurately when desired Perceive emotional content in the environment, visual arts, and music^b Perceive emotions in other people through their vocal cues, facial expression, language, and behavior^b Identify emotions in one's own physical states, feelings, and thoughts

Figure 1: The refined ability model of emotional intelligence. (Mayer et al. 2016 p. 4)

2.2.2 Mixed models of emotional intelligence

Mixed models of emotional intelligence view EI as non-cognitive intelligence and can include a wide variety of behaviors, personality traits and abilities. Bar-On's and Goleman's models are the two biggest known mixed models of emotional intelligence. (Kerr R., et al. 2006 p. 266)

According to Bar-On's model, emotional intelligence is a combination of emotional and social skills, competencies and capabilities that determine one's ability to understand and express oneself, understand others, and cope with environmental demands. It includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood dimension and fifteen related skills or competencies. The intrapersonal dimension contains self-regard, emotional self-awareness, self-actualization, assertiveness, and independence. Interpersonal branch consists of empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships. The following dimension is stress management which involves stress tolerance and impulse control. Adaptability includes reality-testing, flexibility and problem-solving. Finally, general mood that incorporates optimism and happiness. Figure 2 shows Bar-On's mixed model's five dimensions and description of each skill or competence. (Bar-On, 2006 p3, 21)

Intrapersonal	Self-awareness and self-expression:
Self-Regard	<i>To accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself.</i>
Emotional Self-Awareness	<i>To be aware of and understand one's emotions.</i>
Assertiveness	<i>To effectively and constructively express one's emotions and oneself.</i>
Independence	<i>To be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others.</i>
Self-Actualization	<i>To strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one's potential.</i>
Interpersonal	Social awareness and interpersonal relationship:
Empathy	<i>To be aware of and understand how others feel.</i>
Social Responsibility	<i>To identify with one's social group and cooperate with others.</i>
Interpersonal Relationship	<i>To establish mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others.</i>
Stress Management	Emotional management and regulation:
Stress Tolerance	<i>To effectively and constructively manage emotions.</i>
Impulse Control	<i>To effectively and constructively control emotions.</i>
Adaptability	Change management:
Reality-Testing	<i>To objectively validate one's feelings and thinking with external reality.</i>
Flexibility	<i>To adapt and adjust one's feelings and thinking to new situations.</i>
Problem-Solving	<i>To effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature.</i>
General Mood	Self-motivation:
Optimism	<i>To be positive and look at the brighter side of life.</i>
Happiness	<i>To feel content with oneself, others and life in general.</i>

Figure 2: Bar On's mixed model's dimensions and competencies (Bar-On, 2006, p. 21)

Goleman described emotional intelligence as one's capacity to identify one's own and others' emotions, motivate oneself, and manage one's own and other's emotions. The original Goleman mixed model contains five dimensions and twenty-five competencies. Later it was refined into a four-branch model with eighteen competencies. The first branch is self-awareness which is one's capability to identify one's own emotions, understand the effect of emotions while using intuition to influence decisions. Self-management, the second dimension, is described as one's ability to manage one's own emotions, impulses, and appropriately adapt to change. Third, social awareness is defined as one's capacity to recognize, understand, and act accordingly to other's emotions while considering social networks and relationships. Relationship management, the last construct of the model, is categorized as the ability to manage, influence, inspire, and flourish others, and manage conflicts. Goleman furthermore argues that every individual has a learned level of emotional intelligence which increases with age, but it can be further learned and developed to achieve excellence. Figure 3 illustrates Goleman's refined mixed model's four branches and competencies clustered into intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects and emotional recognition and regulation aspects. . (Mehta & Singh, 2013 p. 345; Akley, 2016 p. 273-274)

	Self (Intrapersonal)	Other (Interpersonal)
	Personal competence	Social Competence
Recognition	Self-Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional awareness - Accurate Self-Assessment - Self-Confidence 	Social Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empathy - Organizational Awareness - Service Orientation
Regulation	Self-Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional Self-Control - Transparency - Adaptability - Achievement - Initiative - Optimism 	Relationship Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing Others - Inspirational Leadership - Change Catalyst - Influence - Conflict Management - Teamwork & Collaboration

Figure 3: Goleman's refined mixed model Source: (Mehta & Singh, 2013, p. 345-346; Wolff, 2005, p. 2-3)

2.2.3 Trait model of emotional intelligence

According to Petrides, trait emotional intelligence is categorized as non-cognitive intelligence and focuses on individuals' perspective of their own emotional capabilities. The model consists of fifteen facets that are clustered into four factors. The four factors are emotionality, sociability, well-being, and self-control. Emotionality describes one's capabilities to perceive one's own and others' emotions, express feelings, understand others' perspective, and maintain genuine relationships. Sociability is related to one's capacity to influence others' emotions, develop broad social networks through social skills and one's confidence and forcefulness of one's rights. Well-being labels one's self-confidence, optimism, and satisfaction with one's life. Finally, self-control is one's capability to regulate one's impulses and emotions, and to tolerate and manage pressure and stress. Figure 3 shows the four factors and fifteen facets of Petrides' trait emotional intelligence model. Adaptability and self-motivation are not clustered into any factors as these facets are directly linked to global trait emotional intelligence. (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018 p. 24-25; Petrides, 2011, p. 660)

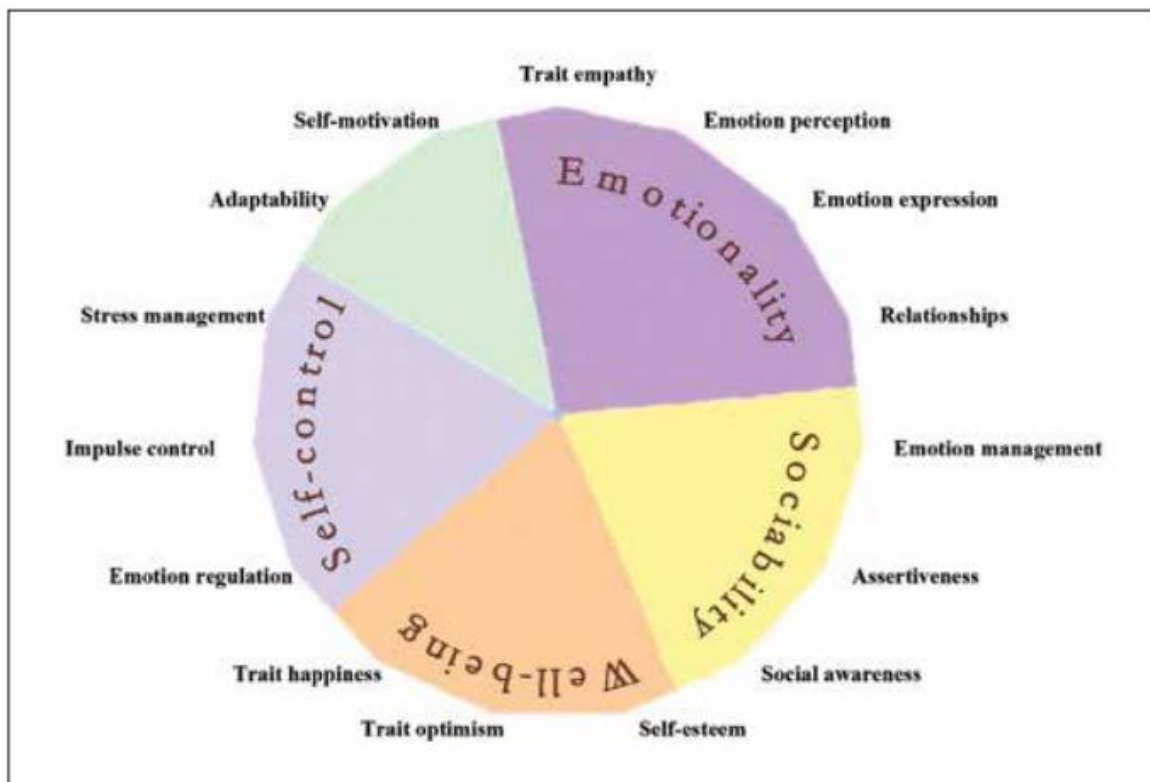


Figure 4: Petrides' mixed ability model's dimensions and competencies (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018 p. 27)

2.3 Assessment tools of emotional intelligence

The author chose to show multiple assessment tools of emotional intelligence as they represent how different models are used to measure emotional intelligence in research, furthermore showing the implications of different models.

Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is based on the ability model. MSCEIT is viewed as the only emotional intelligence test that describes emotional intelligence as cognitive intelligence. It presents eight problems, two for each dimension of the ability model. Similarly, to an ordinary IQ test, it has right and wrong answers which are evaluated to the set criteria, which determines the participants emotional intelligence levels. (Akley, 2016, p. 275-276)

Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) is a self-report inventory based on Bar-On's mixed model of emotional intelligence that consists of 133 items. EQ-I uses a 5-point Likert scale, one stating that the item is not true of the participant and five stating that the item most likely true of the participant. Scores determine the participants total emotional intelligence quotient, each dimension's level, and the level of each of the fifteen competences. (Weerdt & Rossi, 2012, p. 150)

Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) developed by Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee is based on the Goleman mixed model. ECI contains 110 items which evaluate the 18 competencies, personality traits or behaviors and dimensions in the refined four branch Goleman emotional intelligence model. A 360-degree approach of the assessment tool can include ratings from oneself, colleagues, and supervisors. (Conte, 2005, p. 434; Akley, 2016, p. 276-277)

Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA) is an assessment tool that contains 28 items referring to the participant's frequency of indicating a certain type of behavior, using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always'. The result scores indicate the participant's overall emotional intelligence level, and each dimension's level from Goleman's refined mixed emotional intelligence model. (Sunindijo & Maghrebi, 2020; Raney & Bowman, 2018, p. 3)

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) developed by Petrides based on the trait emotional intelligence model. The questionnaire contains 153 items. Each item is designated for one of the 15 facets which are further clustered into the four factors of trait emotional intelligence. Items give scores on the facets, factors, and global trait emotional intelligence. (Petrides, Mavroveli 2018 p. 26-27)

Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) is a 33 item self-report emotional intelligence assessment tool based on the original concept of Salovey and Mayer. The tool uses a 5-point Likert scale. AES can determine participants' emotional intelligence score which are further clustered into the Salovey and Mayer four-branch model. (Schutte et al., 2009)

The Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) were based on concepts of Salovey and Mayer, but Wong and Law further developed the concept creating their own definition of emotional intelligence that consists of four dimensions: Self-emotion appraisal (SEA) which describes one's ability to deeply understand and express their emotions. Regulation of emotions (ROE) which explains the individual's ability to regulate one self's emotions in a way that it helps to manage difficult and stressful situations. Use of emotions (UOE) recognizes the ability of the individual to utilize their emotions. Other's emotion appraisal (OEA) is one's ability to acknowledge and understand other's emotions around them. Each dimension contains 4 items. Participants are required to answer on a 7-point Likert scale. WLEIS determines the participant's level for each dimension. (Wong & Law 2002 p. 244-260)

2.4 Evaluation of emotional intelligence models

Emotional intelligence has caused lots of controversies in the scientific community since its years of existence. As multiple definitions and viewpoints emerged, it led to different perspectives of the topic. It created the problem that different models measure different aspects of intelligence as the ability model describes emotional intelligence as a cognitive intelligence, but mixed and trait models include social and emotional competences and view emotional intelligence as non-cognitive form of intelligence. The models cannot mean and measure the same thing but distinguishing between different models can help to clarify and validate each concept. There is a lack of consensus from researchers of a common definition of emotional intelligence, so backed with research, each concept can be validated. After 100

years of studying general intelligence, researchers still have not found a common viewpoint of it, meaning that emotional intelligence can produce different concepts as the viewpoints of general intelligence can differ. Although there are lots of arguments of the validity of emotional intelligence, growing research supports that emotional intelligence has an important role in the workplace and emotional and social competences are linked to performance. (Cherniss, 2010 p. 110-116)

Salovey's and Mayer's ability model focuses exclusively on cognitive abilities regarding emotions, and it differentiates emotional intelligence from emotional and social competences which makes it the most influential model concerning scientific research. The original measurement tool of the ability model (MSCEIT) faced some problems. Similarly, to an ordinary IQ test the MSCEIT had right and wrong answers which outlined the problem of whether answers can be truly right or wrong. Replying to the problem, the creators of MSCEIT gave out the test for the general population to reach consensus on the test items. It led to further obstacles concerning the validity of the MSCEIT. Following the consensus of the items it can be determined that the right answers are not valid for the full population but rather a bigger portion of it. As research accumulated, plenty of other researchers created their own assessment tool, based on the ability model, which can be viewed more relevant and/or valid than the original MSCEIT. However, the original model has been refined as well. (Akley, 2016 p. 275-276; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 4)

Bar-On's and Goleman's mixed emotional intelligence models views a wider perspective of emotional intelligence as it is mixed with social and emotional competences. These mixed models cannot purely measure scientific emotional intelligence as they are mixed with certain competences. However, Goleman's model shows the importance and implications of emotional intelligence and competencies in practical ways. Goleman can conceptualize emotional intelligence in ways that ordinary people, who are not familiar with psychological terms, can understand and learn. If these models are distinguished from Salovey's and Mayer's concept, they can be viewed as valid models in a wider perspective of emotional intelligence. (Akley, 2016 p. 272-273; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019, p. 5; Cherniss, 2010 p. 110,113)

Petrides argues that emotional intelligence cannot be viewed as a real form of intelligence as emotional experience cannot be objectified. He also adds that only the individuals themselves are capable of determining how they live through emotional experiences. Research indicated that trait emotional intelligence is correlated with the model of the Big Five personalities. The 'Big Five' is a well-known model of personalities that describes and measures an individual's personality traits. It consists of five dimensions, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Extraversion describes one's emotional expression and interactions within one's environment, and it indicates social habits. Agreeableness determines one's tendencies to deal with relationships and one's empathy and kindness towards others. Conscientiousness describes one's thoughtfulness, goal-orientation, and work ethic and one's capability to manage impulses. Neuroticism includes one's emotional stability, stress management, resilience, and optimism. Finally, openness defines one's creativity, imagination, intellect, sense of curiosity, and open-mindedness. The four factors of the trait emotional intelligence show significant relevance to the Big Five's dimensions. Trait emotional intelligence can be viewed valid if it is distinguished from ability and mixed models' definitions and concepts and measured in a self-report format. (Petrides, Mavroveli 2018 p. 24; Petrides, 2011 p. 66; Petrides, 2010 p. 136-137; Grohol & Cox, 2022)

2.5 Emotional intelligence in the workplace

After establishing and evaluating different aspects of emotional intelligence the author included information regarding emotional intelligence's importance in the workplace to confirm that emotional intelligence affects workplace efficiency.

A research center, specialized on executive and management trainings and practices, created a study where they interviewed 5247 managers in a period of three years and concluded that in an 18-month period 46 percent of freshly recruited employees will fail. More than 20000 employees were hired during the research period. The study furthermore explains that 26 percent fail because of their lack of ability to accept constructive feedback, 23 percent because they do not have the necessary skills to understand and manage their emotions, 17 percent do not have enough motivation to achieve excellence, 15 do not have the required personality or attitude towards the job and only 11 percent lack the efficient

level of technical or functional skills. Excluding technical or functional skills, the reasons for failures can be associated with lack of emotional competence and skill, therefore emotional intelligence has a significant impact in the workplace. (Murphy, 2005)

Emotional intelligence allows employees to effectively communicate their ideas and goals in an engaging way which increases other's satisfaction towards their work environment. The social skills of employees make their operation in a team setting easier and increases teamwork's efficiency. Emotionally intelligent workers tend to know their own and other's strengths and weaknesses better, which is important in the flow of teamwork as each team member can focus on tasks which suit their skills. Work comes with stress and pressure; therefore emotional intelligence enables employees to cope with disruptive emotions in order to achieve excellence at the workplace. Leaders' utilizing emotional intelligence create a supportive organizational climate which increase employees' organizational commitment. Hence, it makes employees feel more valued and act towards organization goals which greatly benefits the flows of the organization. (Zeidner et al. 2004)

2.6 Leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence

Leadership is defined as a process converting company goals into visions while influencing, empowering, and motivating others to work towards those visions. Leadership involves social interactions where the capabilities of the leaders alter the behavior of their subordinates and can significantly influence performance. Effective leadership is defined as the leader's ability to develop mutual sense of goals, foster knowledge and affection towards work activities and generate trust, confidence, and excitement. In a wider perspective, leadership effectiveness can be viewed as any successful effort to influence a group. (Kelvin, 2018)

2.6.1 Key components of emotional intelligence in an effective leader

Leadership is an emotional process and includes managerial behaviors therefore there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. Technical skills and IQ are relevant as well, but more on an entry level of leadership. Goleman identified five components that effective leaders with high emotional intelligence

have in common: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation empathy and social skills. (Goleman, 2019 p. 4; 57-58; Maamari & Majdalani, 2017)

Self-awareness is defined as one's capacity to understand one's emotions, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and acknowledge needs and desires. Leaders with high self-awareness can identify the effect of feelings in themselves, others, and professional performance. They can transform negative emotions into constructive ones. High self-awareness gains deeper understanding of one's values and goals, furthermore, allows the individual to act and live towards them. (Goleman, 2019 p. 20-23)

Self-regulation is defined as one's ability to control, limit or transform negative moods or impulses. Leaders with extraordinary self-regulative abilities can stay calm, assess the situation and act accordingly, even in stressful and unpleasant situations, which enhances their decision making. Both positive and negative emotions are contagious. While a leader is taken over by anger, they lose control and can no longer properly assess events and situations. It spreads negativity among employees and creates a hostile environment which furthermore can lead to failure of tasks and invalid information processing. (Goleman, 2019, p. 26-33; Petitta et al. 2019, p. 166)

Motivation is explained as one's desire to achieve and persistence to pursue goals set by oneself. Motivated leaders seek challenges for the sake of achievement. They look for creative approaches to enhance their work. Individuals with high internal motivation stay optimistic even in the face of failure. They look after their subordinates and organization as they always seek to perform better. (Goleman, 2019, p. 34-40)

Empathy can be divided into three categories while assessing leadership effectiveness: cognitive, emotional empathy and empathic concern. Cognitive empathy is one's ability to comprehend others' perspectives. Emotional empathy is described as one's ability to take up others' emotions. Empathetic concern is one's ability to sense others' intentions. Leaders cannot fully adopt others' feelings but rather consider their emotional state and treat them accordingly. While making decisions, highly empathetic executives are able to understand and consider different viewpoints of their subordinates to decrease potential frustration. Empathy builds trust, security and productivity among team members and allows leaders to

understand cross-cultural differences, retain talent and increase job satisfaction. (Goleman, 2019, p. 40-48)

Social skill is one's ability to efficiently manage relationships, build social networks, find commonalities, and establish genuine bonds. Socially skilled leaders have a wide network as they can find common ground with all types of people. They are professional persuaders as they utilize emotional plea if needed. People with high social skills use indirect methods to enhance work efficiency. They chat, joke and conversate with others at the workplace which has no direct connection to work related matters but while doing these activities they build and maintain bonds and relationships as these can gain potential advantage in the long run. (Goleman, 2019, p. 49-53)

Goleman's approach of emotionally intelligent leadership serves as the applied model for various leadership studies, furthermore the author had adapted this concept for the research part of this bachelor thesis as the thesis focused on the effect of emotional intelligence in leader's decisions and decision-making processes.

2.6.2 Change leadership and emotional intelligence

This section does not explore change leadership theory, but the author found it important to mention the correlation between change happening in an organization and the leaders' emotional intelligence. In the globalizing world, changes happen frequently in an organization's structure, vision and goals therefore efficient leaders must have the capability to emotionally adapt themselves and others to these changes. (Issah, 2018 p. 1)

Leaders' ability to efficiently communicate the change determines other employees' willingness to adapt. It can occur that while the change in the organization is decided, workers are satisfied with the status quo so their willingness to change decreases. Leaders must generate dissatisfaction with the status quo in order to overcome the resistance of change. Open and honest communication enable leaders to present the current and future states of the organization. The process of change can trigger anxiety, fear and uncertainty among employees therefore emotionally intelligent leaders can understand and manage these emotions to efficiently alter into a positive perspective of change. They enable

individuals to openly share their concerns while offering them support and advice. They build confidence to accept change by serving as an example, who is relatable, self-confident, adaptive, and motivational. (Issah, 2018 p. 1-5)

2.6.3 Emotionally intelligent leadership styles

In collaboration with a consulting firm Daniel Goleman identified commanding or coercive, visionary or authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching leadership style categories. Effective leaders can flexibly switch between different styles according to the situation to achieve a desired goal. The following figure (Figure 5) demonstrates the six leadership style categories, and shows their implications, ways of operating, leaders’ underlying emotional intelligence competencies and impact on organizational climate.

(Goleman, 2019, p. 115-120; 162-164; 178-180)

	Commanding	Visionary	Affiliative	Democratic	Pacesetting	Coaching
The leader’s modus operandi	Demands immediate compliance	Mobilizes people toward a vision	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	Forges consensus through participation	Sets high standards for performance	Develops people for the future
The style in a phrase	“Do what I tell you.”	“Come with me.”	“People come first.”	“What do you think.”	“Do as I do, now”	“Try this.”
Underlying emotional intelligence competencies	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst	Empathy, building relationship, communication	Collaboration, team leadership, communication	Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative	Developing others, empathy, self-awareness
When the style works best	In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees	When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees	To get quick results from s highly motivated and competent team	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strength
Overall impact on climate	Negative	Most strongly positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive

Figure 5: Goleman’s six types of emotional intelligent leadership styles (Moon 2021, p. 72)

Transformational leadership is one of the most influential behavioral leadership style, where leaders utilize emotional intelligence. It concludes visionary, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching leadership style categories. Transformational leaders motivate subordinates to surpass personal interests for the benefit of the team and organization. They utilize the following four elements: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is defined as

the leader's ability to serve as a role model by demonstrating power and self-confidence. Inspirational influence is a leader's ability to establish a vision which is appealing to followers, and inspire and motivate them to work towards the vision. Intellectual stimulation defines the leader's ability to encourage followers to develop new approaches to goals, problems, and tasks by innovation and creativity. Finally, individualized consideration is a leader's ability to serve as a mentor or coach for their followers by paying special attention to each subordinate's concerns and needs. A large body of research indicates that leaders with high emotional intelligence show more transformational leadership behaviors. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills play an important role in transformational leaderships as leaders with such emotional intelligence competences are able to understand and manage emotions in themselves and others, motivate themselves and others, perceive and understand others emotional make ups, and manage relationships which are related to the four characterized elements of transformational leadership. (Muchiri et al. 2019, p. 259-260; Baba et al. 2019; Moon, 2021 p. 72.)

Empowering leadership is another leadership style which is infused with emotional intelligence. Socio-structural empowerment and psychological empowerment are the two perspectives determined within empowering leadership. The first approach describes empowering managerial behaviors, the other approach focuses on the employee's experience and psychological response of motivational processes. Although socio-structural empowerment may influence psychological empowerment, the author found it irrelevant to further describe psychological empowerment as empowering managerial behaviors were more relevant in terms of empowering leadership's connection with emotionally effective leadership practices. In socio-structural empowerment, leaders give full work-related autonomy to employees. They encourage followers to take part in the decision-making processes as followers have the authority to make decisions and act without unnecessary supervision which enhances accountability and problem-solving efficiency. Empowering leaders express their concerns and provide support and coaching for their followers. They develop practices which emphasize the significance and trust of their subordinates' work performance. Employees become self-efficient and responsible for their work which requires universal information sharing among themselves, enhancing information flow. These types of practices play a vital role in work engagement. Several studies have proven a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership. Similarly, to

transformational leadership, empowering leadership is based on managerial behaviors. Furthermore, Goleman's five aspects, namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are key factors in effective empowering leadership. (Cheong et al. 2019, p. 35; Alotaibi et al. 2020; Bhattacharjee & Rahman, 2016, p. 204-206)

2.7 Emotional intelligence's relation with decisions and decision-making processes

Decision-making is a fundamental part of a successful business. Decisions are based on information gathered from several sources in order to make informed decisions. Well-made decisions save on resources of the organization as good decisions last longer, weigh lots of factors, decrease conflicts of interest, and take steps to company goals. The decision-making process is defined in the following steps: determine and identify the problem, define alternatives, gather essential information, evaluate the alternatives, and choose and implement the best alternative. Decisions are the result of decision-making. (Eby, 2018; Kiyani et al. 2011)

Research indicates (Lerner et al. 2015) that emotions heavily alter decisions, and emotional intelligence allows individuals to understand, regulate their emotions. (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019) Therefore, emotions are relevant to decision-makers as often they predict their and other's emotional reaction before finalizing a decision, experience emotions from the result of the decision, and recall the emotional experience when they examine their past decisions. Expected or experienced emotions regarding decisions have a significant impact on their present and future behaviors. Decision makers are often challenged with decision outcomes which negatively impact some of their subordinates, therefore emotionally intelligent decision maker could potentially forecast employees' emotional reactions, determine who is affected by the decision and manage their own emotions regarding the decision. Goleman's refined four-dimensional mixed model (Figure 3), contains emotional intelligence competencies and skills which emotionally intelligent decision makers utilize. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011 p. 710-713)

Self-awareness enables decision makers to accurately assess their role in the decision-making process. They can determine whether they have the required skills to approach a problem as they are aware of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses. Self-

confidence allows decision makers to be certain of their decision-making process as second thoughts or fear can potentially decrease the quality of the decision. Emotionally intelligent decision makers have the necessary capabilities to choose the best possible person to make the appropriate decision in any situation. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011 p. 714-716)

Decision makers with high self-management skills are able to regulate their impulses of self-interests and desires to show their achievement drive and initiative for the benefit of all. They are better at managing anger as they are accountable for their decisions. Patience is required for quality decisions as stress and pressure can lead to bad judgement of the situation. Emotionally intelligent decision makers become trustworthy to make appropriate decisions by openly and honestly communicating their misjudgments, concerns and perspectives which allows them to earn trust and maintain genuine relationships. Moreover, they keep or delegate the authority of decision making in order to achieve excellent decisions and they show responsibility for the outcomes whether it is good or bad. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011 p. 714-716)

Social awareness enables decision makers to judge the consequences of a decision. They define alternatives and analyze their potential short- and long-term effects. Quality decisions are accepted and understood by the ones affected by the decision. Empathy allows emotional intelligent decision makers to see others' perspective so they can foresee the emotional reactions before implementing a decision. They recall past decisions to predict a potential outcome. Decision makers are aware of their organizational culture which leads them to make appropriate judgements of their decisions in favor of the organization. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011 p. 717-718)

Relationship management allows decision makers to effectively communicate proposed decisions to the right audience. Inefficient communication can cause unexpected negative perceptions of an otherwise quality decision. Appropriate relationship management increases the acceptance of decisions. Decision makers must consider that some decisions may have undesired reactions. Moreover, conflict management is vital to solve employee dissatisfaction when an essential decision has a negative effect on some workers. Emotionally intelligent listen and consider opinions of others and express compassion to

maintain trust. They seek opportunities in the decision-making processes to enhance relationships. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011 p. 717-718)

2.8 Evaluation of emotionally intelligent decisions and decision-making, and their correlation between a leader, leadership, and leadership effectiveness

The author found a significant gap in studies determining emotionally intelligent decision-making process and applications of emotionally intelligent decision-making regarding a leader and leadership. Decision-making theory mostly focuses on organizational and strategic decisions and decision-making process was defined as the following: determine and identify the problem, define alternatives, gather essential information, evaluate the alternatives, choose and implement the best alternative. This approach focuses on problem-solving where emotional intelligence could enhance this kind of decision-making, but from perspective of the author, emotionally intelligent decision-making should include intrapersonal and interpersonal decision-making as well. Viewed from the theoretical definitions of an emotionally intelligent leader they had the following abilities and skills: ability to understand one's emotions, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and acknowledge needs and desires; ability to control, limit or transform negative moods or impulses; desire to achieve and persistence to pursue goals; ability to take on other's perspective; and ability to efficiently manage relationships, build social networks, find commonalities and establish genuine bonds. In the theoretical basis, these abilities had no connection with decision-making. However, if the listed abilities are implemented from a practical perspective, decision-making gains notable importance. For example, an emotionally intelligent leader treated two subordinates in different ways, one with a more affiliative style and the other with more commanding style as he/she had the ability to understand their emotional reactions to achieve better performance. The leader utilized emotional intelligence skills and competences to reach this specific decision, but the decision-making process remained unanswered as such research is non-existent. Applying the available theory, the mentioned example would look like this according to the decision-making process definition: through emotional intelligence the leader identified that the two subordinates needed different treatment to enhance their performance, defined alternatives, gathered necessary information, evaluated the alternatives, by utilizing emotional intelligence he/she chose that one of the subordinates had to be approached with commanding style and the other with

affiliative style. This example points out the deficiency of the ordinary decision-making process while emotional intelligence is implemented as there are no answers how the process of the emotionally intelligent decision was made. Existing theory explains the importance of quality emotionally intelligent decisions and the characteristics of an emotionally intelligent decision-maker but failed to determine and analyze decision-making processes infused with emotional intelligence. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011; Goleman, 2019; (Moon, 2021; Kiyani et al. 2011; Kase, 2010)

Leadership is defined as a process converting company goals into visions while influencing, empowering, and motivating others to share and work towards those visions. In a wider perspective, leadership effectiveness is defined as any successful attempt to influence a group. Leadership is an emotional process; furthermore, emotional intelligence has impact on leadership effectiveness. Emotions have significant correlation with decision outcomes. In the day-to-day basis leaders may have been faced with situations which require to make important decisions including delegating tasks and managing employee's, listening to employee concerns and opinions, resolving conflicts, maintaining trust and relationships with subordinates, regulating own emotions, and coping with stress and anxiety. According to theory, effective and emotionally intelligent leaders are able to manage such situations, but there was a significant gap regarding the decision-making processes, even though research indicates that effective leadership has an important correlation with quality decision-making. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011; Goleman, 2019; Kelvin, 2018; Kase, 2010)

The aim of this thesis is to determine the effect that emotional intelligence has on leaders' decisions and decision-making processes but necessary theory to define detailed emotionally intelligent decision-making processes was not available at the time this paper was written. To solve this problem the author proposed combining emotional intelligence theory, leadership theory, and decision-making theory. After combining these theories, the author created his own model of emotionally intelligent decision-making process which described in five steps with and demonstrated in the following figure. (Figure 6)

	Phases of emotional intelligent decision-making process	Required emotional intelligence aspects
1.	Identify the problem	Self-awareness, motivation, social skills
2.	Define alternatives	Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy
3.	Gather necessary information	Motivation, social skills
4.	Evaluate alternatives, and choose the best alternative	Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills
5.	Implement the alternative	Social skills

Figure 6: The author's proposed model of emotional intelligent decision-making process (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011; Goleman, 2019; Kelvin, 2018; Kiyani et al. 2011)

The figure provides the author's proposed model which consists of the phases of the decision-making process with their assigned emotional intelligence aspects. In order to understand the thought process, the author described the emotionally intelligent decision-making model with reasoning of the utilized emotional intelligence aspects in each phase as the following: First, identify the problem which requires self-awareness to recognize own and others' emotions, motivation as leaders' achievement drive and initiative help them recognize deficiencies in the organization and social skills as it enables them to understand the organizational culture. Second, define alternatives which require self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. Self-awareness enables leaders to understand their own and others' strengths and weaknesses, self-regulation allows them to suppress their self-interests and empathy lets them understand the impact of the decision on others. Third, gather necessary information which requires motivation as it enables leaders to pursue information to achieve the best outcome, and social skills which help them to receive information from many different sources as they have a wide range of social network and genuine bonds with others. Fourth, evaluate alternatives then choose the best alternative which requires self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness enables leaders to understand their own and others' strengths and weaknesses and predict possible emotional outcomes, self-regulation allows them to suppress their self-interests, motivation enables them to pursue the best outcome keeping organizational goals in mind, empathy lets them understand the impact of the decision on others, and social skills to understand the organizational culture. Finally, implement the alternative which require social skills as effective communication increases acceptance of the decision. This emotional decision-making process considers strategic, organizational, intrapersonal, and interpersonal

decision-making processes. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011; Goleman, 2019; Kelvin, 2018; Kiyani et al. 2011)

The author defined theoretical facts to try to confirm the validity of the proposed solution. Emotional intelligence can be viewed as cognitive and non-cognitive intelligence as there is no consensus of a common definition of EI. (Cherniss, 2010) Leadership is an emotional process. Leadership is best viewed as a non-cognitive emotional intelligence to enhance leadership effectiveness. (Maamari & Majdalani, 2017; Goleman, 2019) Emotions significantly alter decision-making; (Lerner et al. 2015) therefore, non-cognitive emotional intelligence has a vital role in decision-making as understanding, utilizing, and controlling emotions are fundamental parts of emotional intelligence. (Goleman, 2019; Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011) Effective leadership positively affects quality decision-making. (Kase, 2010)

2.9 Emotional intelligence in sustainable work

Sustainability must be taken seriously in order to assure a bright future for the generations ahead. In order to emphasize the importance of sustainability, the author chose to mention emotional intelligence's importance in achieving number eight of UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); decent work and economic growth. Green economy, sustainable tourism and employment, decent work for all and social protection are the three related topics of this SDG. The latter topic includes the term 'sustainable work' which is defined as action to achieve living and working conditions that encourage workers to stay in or enter the workforce. In order to create sustainable work environments, organizations must increase job satisfaction by promoting physical and mental well-being, providing quality working conditions, support and training, and being inclusive and equal. (United Nations, n.d.; Eurofound, 2022)

Emotional intelligence shows a great potential to achieve sustainable work environments thus decent work for all and social protection. It enables workers to have hope and be optimistic which are key individual resources in the challenges and transitions in the competitive 21st century. Emotionally intelligent leaders motivate to achieve better, accordingly treat and consider everyone, support and coach, and enable autonomy work

which increases job-satisfaction therefore it fits into the aspects of sustainable work environment. (Fabio et al. 2018; Muchiri et al. 2019, p. 259-260)

3 Methodology

3.1 Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative methodology is used to understand people, and social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research has an interpretative approach which utilizes participants' subjective experiences in a social context where behaviors and specific meanings can be determined. Non-numeric data is collected and analyzed to determine hypotheses or theories. The design is flexible as the goal is to understand the point of view of the participant regarding the subject. Qualitative research loses its validity as soon as the data is quantified. There are several methods of qualitative data collection such as interviews, focus groups, case studies, surveys, and document analysis. A close relation can be noticed between the theoretical framework and research's goal in qualitative research. Emotional intelligence includes social and behavioral components, which can be observed and noted in different forms of qualitative data collection mechanisms such as interviews, thus making this research method valid for the purpose of the thesis. (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006, p. 16; Mohajan, 2018)

3.2 Data collection

The author utilized semi-structured interviews as the data collection mechanism. This type of interview process enables the interviewer to conduct in-depth interviews with the advantage of asking follow-up questions. A set of questions (Appendix 1) were determined regarding the the research question and the topic of the thesis as guidance for the author which were infused with open- and close-ended questions. Close-ended questions were used to create gateways to open-ended probing as it enhances the thought processes of the interviewees because the author expected that not all individuals are consciously utilizing emotional intelligence. Questions were formulated in a manner that allowed the author to explore the thesis topic with the participants being comfortable answering the questions even if they have had no theoretical knowledge of emotional intelligence. The author

developed a part of the interview where questions regarding real-life scenarios were implemented with anticipation to ask non-structured questions concerning the interviewee's answers to gain a wider perspective of the topic in a practical setting. (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017, p. 90; Adams, 2015)

The Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was utilized as an emotional intelligence assessment tool to gain an approximate level of emotional intelligence from each interviewee as such data have had potential to enhance the analysis of the research. The participants were required to answer 16 items (Appendix 2) on a 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Numerical data was collected using the emotional intelligence assessment tool and the author categorized the data into levels of emotional intelligence and used it to enhance his observations regarding the interviews. As qualitative research is based on interpretations and the interviews' data were not quantified, therefore such an approach remains valid in terms of qualitative research methodology. (Wong & Law 2002 p. 244-260; Palmer & Bolderston, 2006, p. 16)

Six interviews were conducted which were carried out in Hungarian language with the thesis' commissioning company which chose to remain anonymous. They took place face-to-face on a working day on 28th September 2022 between 9:00-14:00 in the headquarters of the company which is located in Hungary. The author was responsible for the translation of the questions which were written in English at first. Each interview was conducted one-on-one in private meeting rooms provided by the organization. The interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes. The participants were all leaders from different fields and managerial levels across the organization. Every interviewee chose to remain anonymous and to ensure their anonymity and responsible conduct of the research the author provided a data processing plan (Appendix 3). The following table (Table 1) demonstrates relevant information regarding the participants.

Title	Gender	Age
Finance Consultant	Male	~40
Director of Finance	Female	~50
Head of Sales & Corporate Relations	Male	~40
Production Manager	Male	~50
Warehouse Manager	Male	~35
Chief Executive Officer/Owner	Male	~40

Table 1: Information of interview participants

Before the interviews the author provided information about himself and presented the topic and the research question of the thesis in a couple of sentences. Following that, he asked permission to utilize the data gathered from the interview and record the audio of the interview which he was granted by each participant. He further explained that the interview recordings would be only accessible by the author and analyzed for the bachelor's thesis and the data is handled according to the European Union's GDPR. The author approached the interviews with an open-mind and curiosity. Some interviews were interrupted by a third-party for a couple of minutes as urgent work-related matters emerged. In these cases, the interviewer stopped the immediately the audio recording and asked permission to continue when the third-party left the room. In the first minutes of the interviews the author conducted the Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) which took about 3 minutes. Subsequently, the author moved to the prepared set of questions which he used as a guide to touch on all topics which were pre-determined. Depending on the interview, some questions were skipped, and the order was changed according to which topic had

been mentioned to improve the flow. Lots of follow-up questions were asked, especially after closed-ended questions, so the author was able to gain more in-depth information.

3.3 Process of data analysis

Thematical analysis was chosen as the qualitative analysis method. The author listened to the audio recordings multiple times and took notes which allowed him to transform audio into written data. Utilizing the audio recordings and his notes, he generated codes. Codes are fundamental for analysis, and they identify and label data which have potential to be applicable to the research question. Codes can be semantic or interpretive. Semantic codes describe the data content and interpretive codes provide an interpretation of the data which goes beyond participants' meanings. The author used both coding approaches but especially interpretive coding as the interviews were constructed in such a way that participants were able to comfortably answer without knowledge of emotional intelligence and therefore making the collected data simplified which required theoretical interpretation from the author to create efficient codes which have potential relevance to the research question. Hence, codes which shared similar aspects and patterns were clustered then developed into subthemes and themes which answer the research question. The established themes were reviewed and checked if they represented the data furthermore confirming their validity. (Braun & Clarke, 2012 p. 57-69)

4 Findings and analysis

The author chose to present his findings and analysis in one section. Emotional intelligence is such a holistic topic that it is better to present findings provided with analysis in order to enable the reader to deeply understand the topic. Theoretical interpretation was required from the author in order to translate the data into concepts. The presented data shown in this section is provided with analysis as this approach helps the reader to conceptualize the findings in a way that is applied directly to emotional intelligence which further enhances comprehension.

4.1 Role of emotional intelligence in objectivism of decision-making

Several interview participants emphasized that strategic or business decision-making should be based on facts and information rather than emotions. According to the CEO/Owner's experience: "if at any point someone makes a business decision based on non-objective facts that decision will have a bad outcome 90% of the time". According to their views, emotion control allowed the interviewees to remain objective as they can separate personal issues from professional decisions. Participants explained that most of the time they were aware of their emotional state and they accordingly advanced or postponed certain decision-making processes as bad moods, stress or anxiety can potentially decrease the quality and the objectivism of a decision. All leaders pointed out that decisions which had to be made fast were bad decisions and patience and consideration is key in order to gather sufficient information and evaluate different alternatives in the decision-making processes.

All participants reported that in every decision the vision and goals of the organization are the most important even if it affects them negatively. Their self-interest was always suppressed for the favor of the organization. According to the Finance consultant's views: "In the decision-making process the most important aspect is to achieve the desired goal."

The analysis identifies that leaders' emotional intelligence enables them to regulate their emotions and to assess their own emotional state in order to remain objective and consider whether they are in an emotional condition to make a certain decision. Furthermore, due to emotional intelligence, leaders are aware of their organizational culture and their achievement drive and commitment qualified them to make valuable decisions supporting their organization. Organizational commitment is a key factor in order to remain objective and achieve quality decisions. This section of findings and analysis confirm one theory which suggests that decision makers utilizing emotional intelligence are aware of their organizational culture (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011) and another theory which explains that emotional intelligence allows leaders to suppress their self-interest in favor of the organization. (Goleman, 2019)

4.2 Utilization of emotional intelligence in the phase of information collection in the decision-making processes

According to the interviewed leaders, collecting information from subordinates in the decision-making process is vital to achieve excellent decisions. They emphasized that if a decision directly affects some of the subordinates, in the decision-making process they tend to gather information from the affected followers in order to perceive their viewpoint and reach potential compromises from multiple stakeholders of the decision. Leaders reported that most of the time they involve their subordinates in the decision-making processes as they can provide valuable opinions and information regarding work-related decisions. Their trust in their followers' capabilities allows them to accurately choose certain subordinates in the decision-making processes and include them to enhance the quality of the decision. Furthermore, they noted that trust validated the gathered information. Leaders took responsibility for the information received from followers no matter whether the result of the decision is perceived as good or bad.

Data suggests that emotional intelligence allows leaders to understand other's perspective and consult with followers in the decision-making processes to reach compromises, making the decision weigh more factors. It further enables leaders to be aware of their own and other's strengths and weakness in the decision-making processes. Emotional intelligence further allowed them suppress their self-interest as they value their subordinates opinions. It also validates the gathered information as they are aware of their subordinates capabilities. They realize if they lack sufficient skills to achieve an excellent decision and have no hesitation in including a subordinate in the decision-making process. Theory suggests that decision-makers are aware of their role in the decision-making process (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011) which this data represents.

4.3 Emotional intelligence in decision communication

According to the participants direct, honest, and open forms of communication are the best approach to present a decision. Several leaders noted that strategic decisions are usually communicated in written forms but decisions which have a direct effect on subordinates are always communicated face-to-face and, in some cases, privately. They mentioned that

openly going through the decision-making process providing necessary information increases acceptance as subordinates have a clear understanding of the reasons for the decision. According to the Heads of Sales & Corporate Relations: “when mutual trust is established, they (subordinates) will accept an uncomfortable decision”.

According to the lower- and middle management leaders, they assessed other’s perspective in order to prepare for the subordinates’ emotional reaction regarding the communicated decision. Especially decisions which had affected an individual negatively, they planned scenarios and sentences beforehand as it is difficult to present such decisions and had emotional effect on the leaders themselves. Leaders accordingly created certain approaches to decrease dissatisfaction of their followers in the process of communicating decisions. They tried to be empathetic when they were faced with presenting hard decisions such as firing or a decrease in salary in order to not hurt the individual but leaders limited their empathy to a certain level to remain professional. According to the CEO/Owner, he presented every decision with zero empathy as he believes if he does otherwise it invalidates the reasons for the decision.

Data shows that emotional intelligence allows leaders to assume emotional reactions and emotionally prepare themselves to present a decision. It enables them to choose the best environment and method of communication and regulate their emotions and empathy to efficiently communicate and explain a decision. Leaders utilize emotional intelligence to establish mutual trust in the leader-subordinate relationship as trust increases the acceptance of decisions. Data suggests that lower- and middle management leader’s utilize more empathy in decision communication as upper management has to be completely straight forward with his subordniates to achieve desired goals.

4.4 Past decision’s emotional effect on present decision-making

Leaders noted that they tend to remember emotional information more than words and situations regarding past decisions. They recalled emotions in order to review decision-making processes. Decisions which have had bad outcomes were remembered more vividly and made the leaders assess and approach similar decision-making processes with caution and more consideration. Decisions and decision-making processes which have been

perceived good were remembered less frequently but it gave leaders confidence to approach similar situations in a way that already worked and furthermore made the decision-making process more efficient.

According to data emotional intelligence enables leaders to process emotional information from the past. As they remember emotional information from decisions which share similarities, it generates emotions in the present that are understood and utilized in a manner that makes decision-making more efficient. These findings and analysis confirm Hess's & Bacigalupo's (2011) research as according to them decision-makers tend to remember emotional information from past decisions which affects their present behaviors regarding similar decisions.

4.5 Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) as background information

The Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) served as background information to enhance the validity of the findings and analysis. The interview participants produced an average score of 5,81 which can be determined as a high emotional intelligence score. Participants had little differences in their scores. Theory describes the characteristics of leaders (Goleman, 2019) and decision-makers (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011) with high emotional intelligence, subsequently the findings of WLEIS enhance the validity of the findings in general and analysis done by the author.

4.6 Other findings

This section presents other interesting findings which are related to emotional intelligence's role in the workplace as the author thought that it could be important information and have potential to be further researched.

One of the leaders mentioned that whenever he is new at a workplace, he tries to help his subordinates with operational tasks showing that he is not just a leader who gives tasks and orders, but he understands each subordinate's jobs. According to his experiences this approach enabled him to fit in faster and gain respect from the beginning.

Some of the interview participants emphasized that giving feedback and acknowledgement for subordinates is one of the most important aspects of being a leader. Feedback allowed them to coach and support their followers, which increased work performance. Leaders communicated negative feedback in a constructive way and personalized for each subordinate. Acknowledgement whenever a good project was done further increased followers' job satisfaction and loyalty towards the organization.

One team leader pointed out that making the subordinates feel included regarding the work they are doing greatly increases their job satisfaction. Whenever he received an update from upper management or other companies, he created transcriptions in order to update his followers. According to him this created a sort of belonging in the workplace as followers were aware that their work has an impact.

4.7 Conclusion of findings and analysis

Leaders remained objective in the decision-making processes as emotion driven decisions most of the time had bad outcomes, to achieve objectivism in decision-making they utilized emotional control. Their organizational commitment emphasized the goals' and visions' importance in the organization which allowed them to remain objective the decision-making process for the favor of the organization.

Collecting information in the decision-making process was emphasized as leaders collected information from their subordinates in the decision-making process regarding strategic decisions as their opinion is valuable and enhances the decision-making processes and they consulted with their followers about decision which directly affected the followers. Trust was pointed out as an important aspect in information gathering as it validates the information gathered from the subordinates.

The forms of communication were determined as a very important aspect of decision-making as leaders used direct and honest forms of communication while presenting a decision as such approaches can increase acceptance of the decisions. Hence, leaders tried to forecast followers' emotional reactions and emotional prepare themselves before communicating a decision and potentially decrease the dissatisfaction of the follower. They

limited their empathy as being over-empathetic can decrease the professionalism of presenting a decision. Trust was emphasized again as it increases the subordinate's acceptance of an unpopular decision.

Past decisions greatly impacted leaders as they emotionally remembered their decisions from the past, especially negative ones. Emotional information from past decisions were utilized by leaders in order to reflect and enhance their decision-making processes.

The thematical data analysis showed that leaders utilize emotional intelligence to be aware of their emotional states to advance or postpone decisions. They regulate their emotions in order to remain objective. Data shows that leaders limit their empathy accordingly to the situation to remain professional. They understand their subordinates' perspective and they are aware of their own and follower's strengths and weaknesses in the phases of information gathering. Emotional intelligence allows leaders to understand their and other's emotions in order to prepare themselves to communicate a decision in a professional manner and choose the best environment and method to present a decision. Leaders recall and analyze emotional information and understand generated emotions regarding past decisions, furthermore enhancing their present decision-making processes. According to the statements mentioned, emotional intelligence does affect leaders' decisions and decision-making processes positively as leaders utilize emotional intelligence aspects and competences to enhance their decision-making.

4.8 Limitations

The author faced limitations regarding theory in connection with emotional intelligent decision-making as there was insufficient amount of research available at this field at the time of the writing of this thesis. In order to solve this problem, the author proposed a concept in theoretical framework combining emotional intelligence, leadership, and decision-making theory. Although the combined theories are individually backed with research, the combination as whole is not supported by any studies or research. Hence, it may affect the validity of the concept.

The lack of theory made it difficult for the author to reflect on previous research regarding emotional intelligence in decision-making, moreover it may have affected the analysis done by the author.

The interview participants were mostly from one gender as the commissioning companies' industry is male dominated which it may have affected the findings of this thesis.

5 Discussion

The discussion section provides potential implications for leaders and companies as the findings are presented with analysis.

According to the findings trust is vital when leaders gather information in the decision-making process and communicate decisions as it increases and validates the information gathered. It increases acceptance of an unpopular decision as well. Previous research also indicates that having trust and genuine relationships between leaders and followers increases acceptance of decisions. (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011) Leaders could potentially invest more time maintaining relationships with weekly discussions and everyday interactions such as chatting and joking around as it not only affects decision-making but according to Goleman (2019) these interactions can benefit leaders in the long run, although they have no connection with work related matters.

Emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy are part of all popular models of emotional intelligence (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019; Bar-On, 2006; Mehta & Singh, 2013) (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018) and according to Hess & Bacigalupo (2019) and findings and analysis leaders utilize these aspects of emotional intelligence in decision-making to enhance their decisions and decision-making processes. The mentioned statements confirm that emotional intelligence does have an effect on leader's decision-making, furthermore emotional intelligence affects the workplace efficiency as well. Previous research suggests that emotional intelligence skills enable employees to fulfill their organization's expectations (Murphy, 2005) and enhance work performance. (Cherniss, 2010) According to Goleman (Akey, 2016) emotional intelligence increases with age and can be further developed with training. Subsequently, companies could consider allocating resources for frequent

emotional intelligence training as research (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2019) and findings and analysis show that it increases decision-makers' and leaders' efficiency and quality of decisions and decision-making processes. Other research suggests that emotional intelligence enhances work performance in general, (Cherniss, 2010) furthermore companies have multiple reasons for emotional intelligence training.

The research potentially benefits the field of emotional intelligence in decision-making as the amount of research in such topic is limited but findings and analysis confirm that emotional intelligence correlates with decisions and decision-making processes. From the author's perspective the proposed combined theoretical concept detailing phases of an emotionally intelligent decision-making process has great promise to be researched as such research is non-existent. It could possibly serve as a base for further research and accumulate interest among researchers in the topic of emotional intelligence in decision-making.

6 Conclusion

The thesis attempted to find potential answers for the following research question: How does emotional intelligence affect leaders' decisions and decision-making processes? Emotional intelligence has the potential to enhance organizational processes to overcome competition and leaders are important to translate company goals and visions towards other employees. Decision-making is a vital part in every business and emotional intelligence has the opportunity to enhance leader's decisions and decision-making processes.

The theoretical framework investigated theories which were related to the topic of the thesis. All the popular models of emotional intelligence were detailed as there is a great controversy of emotional intelligence validity and implications due to the lack of consensus in definitions. After that the relationship between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence was defined to conceptualize leaders' ways of utilizing emotional intelligence. Finally, emotional intelligence's role in decision-making was looked into in order to understand the correlations of decision-makers and emotional intelligence.

Different emotional intelligence models are based on various ideas of intelligence, but they all include that emotional intelligence describes an individual's ability to understand one's own emotions, perceive other's emotional information, communicate accordingly to other's emotional makeup, and utilize the listed abilities to cope with emotions and difficult situations.

Emotional intelligence is a key concept regarding leadership effectiveness as it allows leaders to understand their own and others' emotions, regulate their emotions, perceive others perspective, motivate themselves, communicate accordingly, and maintain and establish bonds and genuine relationships. These skills allow leaders to create shared emotional experiences for their followers in order to implement company goals and visions.

Emotional intelligence in decision-making allows decision-makers to forecast emotional reaction of employees regarding a decision, be aware of their own decision-making skills, communicate decision appropriately, and regulate their emotions so it does not interfere with the decision-making process.

The research utilized qualitative semi-constructed interviews and an emotional intelligence assessment tool to explore the experience and views of leaders regarding the research questions.

Findings and analysis showed that emotional intelligence affects leaders' decision-making in several different aspects. Remaining objective in the decision-making process is one of key concepts. Leaders remain objective utilizing their emotional intelligence, as they assess and regulate their emotions in decision-making in order to achieve quality decisions. They suppress their self-interest for the benefit of the organization as organizational commitment was determined as an important aspect to stay objective.

Hence, leaders utilized emotional intelligence in the phase of information collection in the decision-making processes as they tend to ask subordinates about the decisions which directly affect followers. Emotional intelligence helps leaders to understand the perspective of their subordinates, thus compromise to weigh more factors in the decision-making. Leaders include their subordinates in strategic decision-making processes as they reported that followers can provide valuable opinions. Emotional intelligence allows them to be

aware of their own skills of the decision-making process and other's strengths and weaknesses to involve others in the decision-making processes in order to enhance the quality of the decision.

Subsequently, communication of the decision was emphasized as another key aspect of the findings and analysis as the appropriate approach to communicate a decision increases the acceptance of a decision. Leaders use direct and open forms of communication as presenting the process and factors of the decision-making process make subordinates understand the reasons for the proposed decision. Emotional intelligence is utilized by the leaders to perceive other's emotional make-up and emotional prepare themselves before presenting a decision in order to remain professional.

Leaders emotionally remember past decisions and with the help of emotional intelligence they can analyze the emotions connected to the memory and reflect on it in similar decision-making situations to enhance their decision-making process.

Leaders could invest more time in their work-relationships as it showed great importance in decision-making and companies could finance emotional intelligence trainings for not only their leaders but employees in general as emotional intelligence displayed positive correlation with decision-making and other operations of organizations.

Although the research faced limitations due to the lack of theory regarding emotional intelligence in decision-making, it has potential to be valuable research and expand the field. This thesis could be further researched with more diverse interview participants as the interviews were done with the commissioner of the thesis. It could produce wider sets of data allowing the research to be more in-depth. The proposed theoretical concept of phases of emotionally intelligent decision-making by the author has great potential to be further researched as this research did not produce enough data to examine such an idea.

Research and theory suggest that leaders' emotional intelligence positively affects their decisions and decision-making processes as they utilize emotional intelligence to remain objective regarding decisions, more efficiently gather information in the decision-making process, appropriately communicate decisions, and reflect on their past decisions.

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Appendix 1: Set of questions for the interviews

Do you consider your emotions in the decision-making process?

Do you consider other's emotions in the decision-making process?

How does your knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses affect your decision-making?

How does your knowledge of other's strengths and weaknesses affect your decision-making?

Do your past experiences regarding a decision affect your decision-making?

How does your ability to regulate your emotions affect your decision-making process?

How do you regulate your emotions while decision-making?

Do you consider your self-interest in decision-making?

How does your ability to feel and understand others' perspective affect your decision-making process?

Do you consider others while decision-making?

What motives do you consider achieving a quality decision?

How does your inner motivation affect your decision-making process?

How do you gather information in the decision-making process?

How do your social networks affect your decision-making process?

Does your trustworthiness among employees affect your decisions?

Does your trust in your subordinates affect your decisions?

How do you communicate a decision?

Could you please tell a situation when you delegated the right of decision-making to your subordinates?

Could you please tell a situation when your subordinates could not work efficiently together because of personal issues?

Could you please tell a situation when you had to make a decision while having high levels of stress?

Could you please tell a situation when you had to communicate an unpopular decision?

How does emotional intelligence affect your decision-making processes?

Appendix 2: Items of Wong and Laws Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

1. I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.
2. I have good understanding of my own emotions.
3. I really understand what I feel.
4. I always know whether or not I am happy.
5. I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.
6. I am a good observer of others' emotions.
7. I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.
8. I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me
9. I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.
10. I always tell myself I am a competent person.
11. I am a self-motivated person.
12. I would always encourage myself to try my best
13. I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.
14. I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.
15. I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.
16. I have good control of my own emotions

(Wong & Law 2002 p. 260)

Appendix 3: Data processing plan

Data was collected utilizing semi-constructed interviews which were recorded by the author's phone. The author asked permission to utilize the collected data in his thesis which he was granted by each interviewee. Hence, separately asked permission to audio record the interview process which he was granted from every participant. He also explained that their data is handled according to European Union's GDPR and assured the participants that the raw data will be available only for the author and utilized only in his thesis. The author included only gender, age and participant's title in the organization which he was granted to gather and utilize. Gathered audio recordings were stored in the author's iPhone's flash drive which is not connected to any cloud service. The iPhone uses face-recognition in order to prevent anyone from unlocking it. iPhone uses Apple SoC to ensure data protection. iPhone users' data are immediately encrypted utilizing a 256-bit key which is sent to AES Engine which encrypts files created by users. The author utilized code names as the file names to ensure the data is unrecognizable. The thematic analysis was done on paper which the author kept from out of sight every time he finished working on them. The commissioner granted permission to utilize data found in the research but required to delete the raw data gathered from audio recordings to protect the privacy and autonomy of the participants. Whenever the thesis was submitted the raw data was deleted from the flash drive of the author's iPhone.