

## Exploring Emotional Competence: Its effects on coping, social capital, and performance of salespeople

Willem Verbeke, Frank Belschak and Richard P. Bagozzi

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Library of Congress Classification (LCC)	5001-6182	Business
	5546-5548.6	Office Organization and Management
	HQ2035	Personal life skills
Journal of Economic Literature (JEL)	M	Business Administration and Business Economics
	M 10 L 2	Business Administration: general Firm Objectives, Organization and Behaviour
	M 19	Business Administration, other
European Business Schools Library Group (EBSLG)	85 A	Business General
	100B 240 B	Organization Theory (general) Information Systems Management
	78 B	(Emotional) intelligence
Gemeenschappelijke Onderwerpsontsluiting (GOO)		
Classification GOO	85.00	Bedrijfskunde, Organiseatiekunde: algemeen
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	85.08	Organisatiesociologie, organisatiepsychologie
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“It is a matter of debate whether all of her [Hillary Clinton’s] moves are deliberate calculation on the part of a politician with higher ambitions, or a glimpse at the true character of a woman who is finally unbound from the strictures of being a President’s wife. But whatever the case, it has caused many of her colleagues to re-evaluate her, and allowed her to begin building personal capital in a chamber that trades heavily on it.” (R. Hernandez, The International Herald Tribune, Friday, January 25, 2002).

## **Introduction**

Researchers recommend that organizations give more attention to emotional intelligence, aptitude for self-regulation, the aptitude for self-regulation of emotions (e.g., Goleman, 2001a, Mayer & Salovey, 1997). However, over-emphasis on emotional intelligence can lead to a nightmare for the organization. For example, Feldman Barret and Gross (2001, p. 304) argue, “One might be positively evil and yet be emotionally intelligent in the sense that one knows how to manage one’s emotions so as to further one’s (wicked) ends”. Huy (1999, p. 334) notes further that “to the extent that [emotionally intelligent] individuals attempt to use their emotional intelligence as private tools to further their self-interests, each might try to outsmart, or rather to “out feel”, the other through emotional manipulation. The net result could well be complete mistrust, cynicism, or alienation at the organizational level.” The above cautions point to a general deficit in the emotional intelligence literature: namely, the concept of emotional intelligence fails to specify needed content about people’s goals, that is, whether they “apply their talents as con artists or in ways that benefit others” (Saarni, 2000, p. 83).

Huy (1999) and Saarni (1999) stress that a person’s capacity to experience, manage, and direct emotions within social situations should have a sense of appropriateness and purpose. “Emotional competence” (Saarni, 1999) and “emotional capability” (Huy, 1999) are concepts that precisely capture the notion that individuals and groups manage their emotions purposively, in the sense that they express people’s individuality and the capacity to cope with emotionally challenging situations, while at the same time behaving in accordance with organizational goals and norms. However, little work has been done to operationalize the concepts of emotional competence or capability. The objective of this paper is to develop and test a conceptualization of emotional competence. Because different functions occur within organizations and require different emotional competencies, we develop a domain-specific conceptualization of emotional competence that applies specifically for customer boundary spanners.

We first define what domain-specific emotional competence is and propose an operationalization of 7 components. Next, we apply cluster analysis to segment employees according to their pattern of scores on the dimensions of emotional competence. Finally, we test hypotheses concerning how emotional competence affects the way employees cope with positive and negative emotions (especially feelings of envy and pride) and how it relates to the attainment of social capital and the achievement of performance goals.

### **Emotional competence as configurations of emotional skills**

An early aim in the study of emotional competence (Saarni, 1999; 2000) was to explain how individuals learn to flexibly apply a set of emotion management skills to their social environments (for instance in families, friendships, or schools), such that the person is conceived as maintaining their own individuality but at the same time is capable of handling different emotionally challenging situations in accordance with the norms of the particular social environment. Emotional competence is manifest as a “working self”; that is, a style of “being in the world” with different skills that function to regulate emotions. A working self is needed because emotion management within social situations (1) is full of uncertainties and ambiguities (e.g., it is not possible to find an appropriate and/or universal coping strategy for every situation) (Weigert, 1991; Erickson, R.J. 1997) and (2) contains seemingly personal contradictions (e.g., one must be able to be authentic in some situations, yet dissemble one’s emotions in other situations (King & Emmons, 1990; Erickson, 1997). To the extent that people achieve an emotional working self, they can more fluently handle emotional laden situations and become successful and respected members of a social community (Saarni, 1999). If people fail to develop coherent selves, they risk becoming a “protean self”, that is, a fragmented, divided self which “is radically bereft of coherence and continuity, an extreme expression of dissociation” (Lifton, 1993, p. 202; Emmons, 1999, and McAdams, 1988, make similar points). As Greenberg, Weinstein, and Sweeney (2001, p. 49) note about salespeople: “As we look at their ability to sell, we have to look at how much or how little of each quality they possess and how these qualities integrate with the strengths of their other qualities.”

Drawing upon Saarni’s (1999; 2000) extensive program of research in developmental psychology, as well as recent research on self-regulation (e.g., Bonanno, 2001) and moral



psychology (e.g., Dillon, 1995), we discern seven emotional proficiencies (developed more fully below) that have to be integrated for achieving emotional competence: perspective taking, strategic self-presentation of emotions, convincing targets of communication that one's emotional reactions are genuine and not self-serving, lack of guilt when using emotions strategically, fostering self-authenticity, developing an ironic perspective, and incorporating one's moral code into the self-regulation of emotions.<sup>1</sup> Yet, within an organization, emotionally competent employees purposively or actively (rather than merely reactively) seek to master and integrate these emotional skills such that they can handle typical or routine emotion laden situations within their profession. They do this in such a way that they express their own individuality (or "personal flavor" as Saarni, 1999, calls it) and also are perceived in their actions to be appropriate to organizational, as well as their own, norms and goals (e.g., Erickson, 1997). For contexts where management cannot prescribe emotional behaviors of their employees, people should have the capacity to show emergent emotional behavior (Mumby & Putnam, 1992). As people seek to integrate the above mentioned emotional proficiencies, it is to be expected that they will achieve integration to different degrees (McAdams, 1988). That is, abilities to transcend all the proficiencies or to integrate across polarities will differ across people in different situations. People low in their abilities to integrate the emotional proficiencies are expected to cope less well with emotional challenging situations than people high in their abilities, but the pattern of abilities can differ, depending on the person and situation.

In accordance with the configural approach of organizational behavior (e.g., Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993), the authors conjecture that integration of the seven emotional skills will exhibit a small number of distinct pattern (McAdams, 1988; Meyer *et al.*, 1993). To take a particular example, the literature suggests that a lack of irony limits people's ability to grow and integrate themselves in complex situations (Hatch, 1997, p. 282). But any one ability in isolation should not completely determine emotional competencies that lead to effective adaptation. Our goal is to empirically discern the pattern of skills operative in a particular work environment that determines effective coping with important motional experience, leads to achievement of high social capital, and results in successful performance.

McAdams (1988, p. 115) argues that the fullest integration of skills will be achieved only by a fraction of people. It seems best then to treat such skills as resources and to propose that they combine to define different proficiencies in working selves: the better that people can purposively integrate these skills the better they can manage specific emotional challenging situations (e.g., Huy, 1999, p. 334; Cantor, 1990; Saarni, 1999). Working selves can also be considered to reflect people's emotional character, in the sense that it refers to people's ability to integrate emotional skills into effective actions (Emmons, 1999). Each situation will call forth for particular skills, but not everyone will be equipped to deal with the situation to the same degree. Emotional character also "focuses upon the long-term aspect of our emotional experience" (Sennett, 1998, p. 10; see also Sabini & Silver, 1998; Saarni, 1999). Finally, because emotional competence is a domain-specific construct (Huy, 1999), it should be noted that one and the same person can be emotionally competent in one domain (e.g., in customer contact) but not in another domain (e.g., managing relations with family members). In our study, we focus on one domain, namely how salespeople interact with customers and members of their own organization.

Whereas research on emotions to date has especially focused on how employees adopt and execute feeling rules within their organizations and how the implementation of the organizations' feeling rules might give rise to emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983) or feelings of deviousness and deviance (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), less effort has been devoted to the study of how employees integrate multiple, complex skills into a healthy working self (Erickson, R.J. 1997) and experience positive emotions as a consequence. Similarly, generativity implies a need to develop and grow in an integrated way: "negative feelings are integrated into one's understanding of oneself such that one emerges as more perceptive and emotionally aware as a whole person" (Saarni, 2000, p. 80, see also Erikson, E.H., 1963). The ability to integrate contradictory emotional skills on the job is similar to the process of job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and role innovation (Ashforth, 2001). We use the term "emotional crafting" to refer to specific emotion competencies. Emotional crafting thus is the process that people undergo to integrate seemingly contradictory emotional skills into a working self, and in the process come to achieve a unique signature to their work.

Emotional competence also has some similarity to emotional homeostasis in that it reflects “reference goals pertaining to ideal frequencies, intensities, or duration of experiential, expressive, or physiological channels of emotional responses” (Bonanno, 2001, p. 256). These reference goals function as personal principles to guide emotional behavior and are exemplified in such virtues as generosity or integrity (e.g., Bonanno, 2001, p. 257). Thus emotional competence can be understood as an ability to create “ideal emotional selves” that guide emotional self-regulation (Bonanno, 2001, p. 258) and, as such, is goal-directed or teleonomic. Somewhat similar ideas have been proposed by Ibarra (1999; 2000) who conceives of membership in an organization as an extending of one’s possible selves through experimenting and imitation of role models (see also Pratt, 2000). People who carefully construct their personal selves are called “collage observers” and are “more likely to find behaviors that fit who they are, who they want to be, and what they can do” (Ibarra, 2000, p. 151). Emotional competence also resonates partly with Mumby and Putnam’s (1992) suggestion of a feminist approach to emotions in organizations, which argues that social actors do not simply enact feeling rules of the organization but rather cope with ambiguity through integrating seemingly contradictory emotional skills into bounded emotionality: “Under norms of bounded emotionality, individuals choose appropriate organizational actions based on a system of tolerance and ambiguity rather than a system of reducing ambiguity through satisficing” (Mumby & Putnam, 1992, p. 474-475).

### **Two distinct concepts: Emotional competence and emotional intelligence**

Emotional competence resonates to some extent with different perspectives on emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1995; 1998). Although there is no universally shared definition of emotional intelligence, researchers agree that, similar to emotional competence, emotional intelligence refers to abilities to recognize and regulate emotions<sup>ii</sup>. Yet, by placing emotional intelligence into a general model of intelligence, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) portray emotional intelligence in rather broad terms as the ability to perceive and express emotions, to understand and use them, and to manage one’s emotions so as to foster personal growth (see also Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Psychologists maintain as well that emotional intelligence is an innate

personality trait<sup>iii</sup> and is as function of cognitive resources (Feldmann Barrett & Gross , 2001, p. 294, speak about aspects of working memory in this regard).

We maintain that on the other hand emotional competence is a capacity or skill that results from long-term efforts to integrate disparate emotional skills in ways that enable persons to manage their emotions appropriately within an organization. The following distinctions can be made in this regard.

First, emotional competence is domain specific. In this regard, we agree with Huy (1999) who insists that emotional capability addresses only emotional issues that are engendered by one specific facet of the organization (that is, change at the organizational level). The domain specific skills of emotional competence (described more fully below) mirror some of the dimensions of Huy's (1999) concept of emotional capability but are by no means identical.

Second, emotional competence is learned and emerges from effortful actions over a longer period of time. Emotional competence is a function of a person's aspiration within a particular domain. That is, it is teleonomic, oriented towards enduring goals (Allport, 1937). More specifically, salespeople who score high in emotional competency seek to fit into their organization while at the same time expressing individuality. This results in esteem from colleagues and customers and contributes to enhanced performance, as developed below. As Saarni (1999, p. 6) notes, people use emotional displays strategically: "depending on whom we are with and what we are feeling, we express our emotions with communicative intent."

Third, emotional competence does not require emotional intelligence. People with low emotional intelligence might achieve emotional competence within a specific domain if experience has taught them the requisite skills. In this regard, we agree with Huy (1999) who states that emotional intelligence is not a prerequisite for emotional capability. Rather, emotional competence and emotional intelligence relate to one another like intelligence does to wisdom, the first being a set of innate cognitive abilities, the second being the result of long-term growth processes in maturation of the self (cf., Sternberg, 1990; Saarni, 2000). For instance, intelligent persons might seek to allocate considerable cognitive effort to solve ambiguity, whereas a wise person might be able to see ambiguity as inherent in all interactions and become comfortable with it (Sternberg, 1990a). A wise person achieves an integrated personality through resolving

contradictions over time by judicious learning following responses to problems. The learning, which produces an organized self, entails emotional and cognitive knowledge and is contingent on specific situations (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990). Pascual-Leone (1990, p. 22) sum this up as follows: “Wisdom differs from [creativity and intelligence] in involving not just cognition but affect and personality as a whole”.

Fourth and finally, in contrast to emotional competence, “[emotional intelligence] has often been defined without reference to ethical values ... or one’s ego identity (e.g., Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997)” (Saarni, 2000, p. 82). Yet, within organizations, emotional competence helps to build trust and social capital by inducing people to act in harmony with commonly accepted moral standards. Emotional competence involves the management of one’s emotions in a way that is in accord with one’s moral dispositions (Saarni, 1999, p. 15) as well as social norms (Huy, 1999, p. 334). Emotional competence thus reflects one’s ability to develop character (e.g., Dweck, 1996; Emmons, 1999; Sabini & Silver, 1998). The concept of emotional intelligence fails to address this component of human behavior. Research on moral development shows that moral commitment and personal integrity are inextricably linked to one’s social-emotional experience (e.g., Haan, 1991; Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1995; Walker & Taylor, 1991). Consequently, Saarni (2000) notes that “personal integrity comes with a life lived in accord with one’s moral sense or disposition, and concomitantly, such a life reflects emotional competence ...[they cannot] be separated from one another ” (p. 72).<sup>iv</sup>

In a nutshell, we concur with Saarni who summarizes the main differences between emotional intelligence and emotional competence as follows (1999, p. 60): “Where emotional competence and emotional intelligence may differ is in emphasis: I consistently focus on emotions in social contexts, and with regard to the individual’s self-efficacy and moral sense.”

It should be acknowledged, however, that Goleman (1995; 1998; 2001a,b) and Bar-On (1997; 2000) incorporate social awareness and social skills in their conceptualizations of emotional intelligence. To some extent we agree with these authors: emotional competence also focuses on the management of one’s emotions in an interpersonal context (Saarni, 1999; 2000). On the other hand, emotional competence is more specific than the concept of emotional intelligence proposed by Bar-On (2000) and Goleman (1995), who may be criticized for over-

stretching the concept of emotional intelligence (e.g., Gardner, 1999; Sternberg, 1999; Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). Bar-On (2000) and Goleman (1995, 1998) include social awareness, as well as social skills, in emotional intelligence in their attempt “to capture almost everything but IQ” (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000, p. 146). Likewise, as Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000, p. 268) point out:

“These alternative conceptions include not only emotion and intelligence per se, but also motivation, non-ability dispositions and traits, and global personal and social functioning (e.g., Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995). Such broadening seems to undercut the utility of the terms under consideration. We call these *mixed* conceptions because they combine together so many diverse ideas. ... Mixed models must be analyzed carefully so as to distinguish concepts that are part of emotional intelligence from the concepts that are mixed in, or confounded, with it.”

### **The seven skills of emotional competence**

Based on research in psychological development (Saarni, 1999), emotional self-regulation (e.g., Bonanno, 2001), and moral psychology (e.g., Dillon, 1995; Flanagan, 1991; Peck *et al.*, 1960), we glean seven seemingly contradictory emotional skills that need to be fully integrated if people are to achieve emotional competence within their social domain <sup>v</sup>. We also draw upon Spencer and Spencer (1993) who found that successful salespersons integrate such contradictory competencies as being assertive and influencing the customer with maintaining a strong customer orientation by trying to discover and meet customer’s needs. Similarly, we benefited from research on role conflict and role ambiguity in personal selling (e.g., Singh, Verbeke, & Rhoads, 1996). Below we define each emotional skill:

- 1) Perspective taking is the skill of placing oneself in the place of another. It is a learned and a central part of empathy which is defined as “an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another’s emotional state or condition, and that is identical or very similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel” (Eisenberg, 2000, p. 677). This ability to feel with others is a key component of emotional competence and is responsible for promoting social bonds among sales people (Saarni, 1999; Manstead & Edwards, 1992). <sup>vi</sup> Empathic salespeople are better listeners; they sense the feelings of others, accrue a basis for better influencing others, and tend to be better performers (Spiro & Weitz, 1989; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Pilling & Eroglu, 1994). Martin, Knopoff, and Beckman (2000, p. 116) argue further that “individuals should constrain emotional expression in order to

function effectively in interpersonal relationships in ways that are sensitive to other people's emotional needs and competencies" (emphasis added).

2) Managing self-presentations of emotion: a key skill in emotion management is a salesperson's awareness that expression of his/her emotions affects others and may be strategically used to advantage (Saarni, 1999, p. 187). The control of emotional expression can be likened to acting and has been called emotional dissemblance because it often involves a dissociation between what is felt and what is communicated (Saarni, 1999). In organization research, the management of emotion (according to feeling rules) has been termed emotional work (e.g., Hochschild, 1983; Mumby & Putnam, 1992; Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000) or impression management (e.g., Schlenker, 1980). Firms expect their salespeople to manage their emotional expressions with customers to advantage (e.g., Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Morris & Feldman, 1996). For instance, salespersons are expected to act in conspicuously enthusiastic ways concerning their products even if they are ambivalent towards the products, company, or customers (e.g., Ash, 1984). Goleman (2001b, p. 37) notes in this regard that "the most effective people sense others' reactions and fine-tune their own responses to move interaction".

3) Helping others accept one's emotions: although an efficient means for managing self-presentation, emotional dissemblance takes resources (Feldman Barrett & Gross, 2001) and is therefore also labeled emotional labor (e.g., Mumby & Putnam, 1992; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Whereas the display of genuine emotions requires little effort (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), considerable control is needed to show emotions that differ from what one actually feels on an on-going basis. Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 992) note in this respect: "What makes regulation of emotional expression more difficult, and thus more labor intensive, are exactly those situations in which there are conflicts between genuinely felt emotions and organizationally desired emotions." In addition, particularly during prolonged and continuing customer interactions that are common in sales, great efforts are required of the salesperson to keep up one's self-presentation (Morris & Feldman, 1996, p. 990). Therefore, it is sometimes better strategy to help others come to accept one's emotions instead of trying to change or dissemble one's own emotions in every instance. Effective salespeople not only have the

ability to dissemble their own emotions in a strategic way but also to “impose” their genuine emotions on others and make other people feel comfortable with them. In this regard, some psychologists speak about emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). In addition, as a consequence of expressing genuine emotions, the salesperson may influence attributions in customers to the effect that one is trustworthy and credible. These attributions have been found to be key in job performance in general (Goleman, 2001b) and sales in particular (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

4) Dissociation of guilt from strategic intent: Skills in the strategic management of emotions will come to naught if the communicator counterfactually anticipates self-guilt in their use. Parkinson (1991) studied how hairdressers interpret their interaction with customers. Hairdressers who felt pleased and proud about their ability to get customers to talk about themselves actually produced more satisfying interactions than hairdressers who did not. Indeed hairdressers who felt guilty about their ability to get customers to talk about themselves produced less satisfying interactions. In this respect, Rafaeli and Sutton implicitly refer to guilt as a consequence of emotional regulation when they (1987, p. 32) speak about a “person-role conflict, or a clash between personal values and role requirements,” and Hochschild’s (1983) concept of alienation of employees, as a consequence of emotional labor, may as well be interpreted as a way of coping with the continuous feelings of guilt that may result from emotional labor (i.e., dissembling emotions). It is these negative feelings that pose a threat to emotional well-being -- indeed research has identified person-role conflict as a significant threat to employee well-being (e.g., Kahn *et al.*, 1964; Caplan *et al.*, 1975). Similarly, King and Emmons (1990) argue that ambivalence of emotional expression is related to guilt, which by consuming people’s resources may lead to job stress and burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In short, salespeople, who are able to avoid guilt or feel less guilty about their emotional expression or who have been able to overcome their negative feelings, should feel more satisfied and relaxed -- and hence be more effective -- than salespeople who feel guilty when contemplating the use of emotions as a strategic tool.

5) Feelings of authenticity: R.J. Erickson (1997) notes that we live in a “therapeutic emotional culture” where the process of emotional management is considered normal, an



assumption that seems to be appropriate at least for the domain of sales and service professions, which are largely dominated by organizational feeling rules or communications tactics developed to facilitate persuasion (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Yet, such a view allows people to engage in emotional management in ways that are consistent with well-being and authenticity: “such a reconceptualization makes it possible to view emotion management as a “normal” part of emotional experience. If so, then it is possible that managed emotion is potentially as real or authentic a part of emotional experience as spontaneously felt emotion” (Erickson, R.J. 1997, p. 7). This argument is supported by research on the effects of emotion management within work contexts (e.g., Adelman, 1995; Bulan, Erickson, & Wharton, 1997; Leidner, 1993). As a consequence, salespersons that are able to assume such a perspective on emotion management might be able to combine strategic intent and use of displayed emotions with feelings of authenticity, even if acting strategically. Thus, Ashforth and Tomiuk (2000, p. 190) note that about half of the persons in their study on service professions “simulated a wide range of emotions ... and yet continued to feel authentic in the role”. That is, such salespeople were able to adopt a persona of caring to perform their roles yet maintain their authentic selves.

6) An ironic perspective: Hatch (1997, p. 281) suggests that irony is achieved through the willingness to let go of conventional ways of viewing experience, and to try on new vocabularies and interpretive routines. Citing Rorty (1989, p. 74), Hatch (1997) suggests that ironists are people who “realize that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed, and their renunciation of the attempt to formulate criteria of choice ... puts them in the position which Sartre called “meta-stable”: never quite able to take themselves seriously because they are always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change.” Similarly, irony serves as a mechanism that should allow salespeople to tolerate emotionally ambiguous situations and apply at times contradictory coping strategies (e.g., Hatch, 1997). Since irony can include contradictory emotional and mental states, it can also support other contradictory realities in sales, for instance acting simultaneously assertive and caring about the customer at the same time. In addition, some emotional coping strategies might provoke distress in salespeople, yet irony might help them to put into perspective these

negative feelings (Vaillant, 1998), because similar to humor, it produces a dissociation from negative feelings (Keltner, 1995). As a consequence, laughter often arises in negative contexts and accompanies shifts toward more positive emotions (Bonanno, 2001). The ability to show a sense of humor and perspective about oneself is also part of Goleman's (1998) concept of accurate self-assessment, which is closely linked to emotional intelligence. In short, an ironic perspective enables salespeople to handle better the contradictory demands of their profession.

7) The role of personal norms: When dealing with one's own emotions in the presence of customers, salespeople have to act in accordance with company norms, as well as their own personal norms. As Saarni (2000, p. 69) summarizes it: "Mature emotional competence, as defined here, assumes that moral character and ethical values deeply influence one's emotional responses in ways that promote personal integrity". Sabini and Silver (1998) express similar ideas in their explication of the role of character and the following of moral norms in the self-regulation of emotions. Goleman (1998) states that the maintenance of standards of honesty and integrity is a determinant of trustworthiness and therefore a consequence of emotional intelligence, and Huy (1999, p. 335) acknowledges the importance of "a sense of honesty, fairness, justice, and respect" for fostering change processes within companies. After all, emotional competence concerns finding a 'balance' between the self (and what one feels and expresses) and the environment (i.e., how the social environment imposes constraints and accepts and responds to the self) (Saarni, 1999). Salespeople are frequently tempted to engage in unethical behavior, either through self-deception or pressure brought to bear by performance expectations, the directives of supervisors, or demands by customers. Salespeople must reconcile such demands with their own codes of conduct if they are to sustain their integrity in the organization, yet perform up to expectations.

### **Part 1: Identification of emotional competence clusters**

The management of emotional competence: Our hypotheses are developed and tested within the context of personal selling by salespeople who span the boundaries of their own organization and multiple customer organizations. Considerable research in organization studies has been conducted into such boundary spanners as flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983),

entertainment employees (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989), convenience stores clerks (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990), and bill collectors and police interrogators (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1991; Sutton, 1991).

Our aim in Part 1 is to distinguish highly emotionally competent salespeople from less competent ones using cluster analysis. We expect that people identified in an emotional competent cluster will be capable to better integrate the seven emotion proficiencies discussed above, which involves complex integrative skills. For instance, even though emotionally competent people engage in perspective taking, they also engage in self-presentation of their emotions and helps others to come to accept their emotions. The emotional competent salesperson reminds us of Maccoby's (1977) "gamesman", who is capable of being empathic, dramatizing his/her ideas, and stimulating others without having feelings of guilt. As Maccoby (1977, p. 48) points out, "(The gamesman) responds to work and life as a game. The contest hypes him up and he communicates his enthusiasm, thus energizing others." The gamesman is able to stay detached in such a way that he can integrate seemingly contradictory competencies: "His character is a collection of near paradoxes understood in terms of its adaptation to the organizational requirements" (Maccoby, 1977, p. 100). Salespeople high in emotional competence as defined by cluster analysis are expected to score relatively high on all seven proficiencies.

We also expect to find in our cluster analysis a group of salespeople that is the opposite of the emotionally competent group. The nature of this group can be discerned in research by Rafaeli and Sutton (1987). Some people are unable to shape their emotions so as to influence others, and some people lack strong normative control over their emotions. Salespeople low in emotional competence are expected to score relatively low on all seven proficiencies, which is characterized by their inability to enforce their emotions onto others or to have clear norms about their emotions. For instance, this group is at the same time lacking in empathy, unable to act authentically, and not guided much by emotional norms. There are several reasons why such a group of salespeople might be found. As Saarni (1999) notes, feelings of strong dissonance might be signs for a person to leave the organization or to choose another career. In other terms, people in this group do not fit the organisation or job. The low emotional competent group also

might include salespeople who suffer burnout, especially connected to depersonalisation (e.g., Maslach, 1982).

The high and low emotionally competent groups are characterized by consistency of emotional character across all seven proficiencies. In addition, we further expect one or more groups of salespeople who score high on one or so dimensions yet low on the others. Such an outcome is consistent with research identifying emotionally dissonant people (e.g., Hochschild, 1979; 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). Emotional dissonance is experienced “when one’s displayed emotions differ from one’s actual emotions” (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000, p. 185). A number of explanations account for dissonant feelings that are in contradistinction with one’s inner feelings. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) speak about feelings of guilt that emerge when people express emotions. Similarly, as noted above, Parkinson (1991) discovered that some hairdressers experienced guilt as a result of inducing customers to share their private feelings. Or else, salespeople might experience guilt having persuaded customers to buy their product. In this regard, Exline and Lobel (1999) also consider how people come to feel ambivalent about their own feelings. They show that when people achieve dominance, they sometimes feel guilty, as they fear appearing too successful in comparison with others and risking negative attacks for standing out.

Hypothesis 1: Salespeople will differ in emotional competence such that the pattern of response to measures of the seven proficiencies will yield clusters of salespeople who are either consistent or inconsistent in emotional competency. The consistent respondents will either be predominantly high or low in scores across all seven proficiencies; the inconsistent respondents will be high on some, low on other, emotional proficiencies, where one or more proficiencies come to dominate and differentiate these salespeople from the high and low emotionally competent salespeople.

### **Method of Analysis**

A total of 780 questionnaires was sent to salespeople who worked in two automotive dealerships in the Netherlands. Two hundred and twenty salespeople returned the questionnaires for a 28 % response rate. In exchange for their participation, respondents received a gift worth

25 Dutch Guilders (or about 12 US dollars). The sample can be described as follows: a majority (78%) of the salespeople were men, 34% of the salespeople were 30 years old and younger, 39% were between 30 and 40, 13% between 41 and 50, and 14% were older than 50. With respect to experience, 24% of the sample had been with the organization less than 2 years, 51% had been with the firm between 2 and 6 years, and 25% were with the company between 6 and 20 years. Finally, most salespeople had finished basic and advanced vocational studies. But only 4 % had a university or college degree, which is typical of selling jobs in Europe.

The data analysis made use of a three-stage analytical strategy. First, a factor analysis was conducted on the emotional competence scale items (described below) in order to discover the dimensionality of the scales. Second, based on these dimensions, a cluster analysis was conducted to uncover the different types of emotionally competent people. Third, to validate the utility of the clusters, multivariate analyses of variance were performed on the dimensions of emotional competency, regarding coping tendencies, social capital, and performance (see below).

## **Measures**

Emotional competence scale: We utilized a 17-item scale to measure the seven emotion proficiencies that constitute emotional competence as described above (see appendix). The development of the items was mainly based on Saarni's (1999) description of emotional competence, as well as in depth interviews with salespeople. Two items (e.g., "I can easily put myself in the place of the customers and their needs") refer to one's "capacity for empathic and sympathetic involvement with others' emotional experiences" (Saarni, 1999, p. 162). Two items (e.g., "I feel little guilt when showing my enthusiasm during a sales interaction") reflect the fact that emotionally competent people experience low levels of guilt about the way they manage their emotions, as their actions correspond to their idea of how it "should" be. As Saarni (1999, p. 278) notes, "in essence, we are living in accord with our personal theory of emotion" and "emotional self-efficacy<sup>vii</sup> may ultimately reflect one's personal theory of emotion". Saarni further points out that people at times also frequently express their true feelings within particular situations. Two additional items capture these tendencies. One of these items asserts, "My expressed emotions are part of what I see as my truthful way of dealing with people." It should

be acknowledged that the expression of one's true emotions does not necessarily occur automatically in a strategic context. As Saarni (1999, p. 201) observes, "there is continual reinforcement of motivation to manage how we present ourselves to others. At some point it is likely that we acquire habitual non-verbal behaviors that reflect self presentation attempts". Saarni also finds that to be able to develop emotional competence one has to achieve a "balance between dissembled and genuine emotional-expressive behavior" (Saarni, 1999, p. 289). That is, both acting (dissembling) and authenticity (expression of genuine emotions) are part of emotional competence. We measured this proficiency with two items (e.g., "I am acquainted with creating emotions to facilitate the process of a sales interaction"). Three additional items were derived to measure the ability of the salesperson to convince others to accept his/her emotions (e.g., "Others have learned to accept the way I manage my emotions"). Next, the degree to which a person uses irony was measured by four items (e.g., "I can easily laugh about myself when my emotions get strong"). The final two items of the scale (e.g., "I have certain moral norms about the way I manage my emotions") capture how personal character relates to emotional self-regulation.

We performed maximum likelihood factor analysis with oblimin rotation on the 17 items by use of SPSS. The different dimensions of the scale were analyzed, and items not loading .50 or greater on focal factors and .25 less on non-focal factors were deleted. Criteria for accepting factors relied on inspection of the scree plot (Briggs & Cheek, 1986; DeVellis, 1991). The results of the factor analysis suggested a 7-factor solution, as the scree plot revealed a relatively clear break after the seventh eigenvalue. The seven factors together explained 75 percent of the total variance (KMO = .78; eigenvalues were 4.82, 2.12, 1.47, 1.23, 1.15, 1.01, and 1.00). The reliabilities for items of each scale were also assessed by means of Cronbach's alpha. The factor loadings and reliabilities are summarized in Table 1.

*[Place Table 1 about here]*

Results of a confirmatory factor analysis validate the seven factor structure. Satisfactory model fits are indicated by non-significant chi-square tests, RMSEA values less than .08 and CFI values greater than or equal to .90. Discussions of indices can be found in Bentler (1990) and Browne and Cudeck (1993). Although the chi-square was significant result ( $\chi^2(98) =$

150.47,  $p = .00$ ), the other indices were satisfactory (CFI = .95 and RMSEA = .05) thus supporting the proposed measurement model. Factor loadings were high (range = .59 to .86, with exception of one item that achieved only a loading of .40). The measures of discriminant validity (i.e. the correlations between factors, corrected for attenuation) reveal that the factors are distinct (range = .34 to .58).

### **Results of cluster analysis**

We utilized cluster analysis to develop a typology of emotional competent people. The cluster analysis and its validation follow the split-sample validation approach suggested by Singh (1990). The data were split into two samples. The first sample was used to generate possible alternative cluster solutions. The second sample then was utilized to select the most optimum solution of these alternatives based on its stability and reproducibility. A schematic diagram of the procedure is given in Figure 1.

*[Place figure 1 about here]*

The data were randomly split into an analysis sample ( $N_a = 114$ ) and a validation sample ( $N_v = 106$ ). The analysis sample was first used to find possible cluster solutions. Because the different dimensions of emotional competence were not expected to be nested in each other, a non-hierarchical cluster analysis was selected, namely K-means clustering. However, the K-means procedure is known to be sensitive to the required a priori specifications of the number of clusters to be extracted, as well as their centroids (Punj & Stewart, 1983). Therefore a hierarchical cluster analysis (using the Ward's method in SPSS X) with the seven factors of emotional competence was performed initially. An examination of the dendrogram and the icicle diagram suggested a plausible range of 3 to 7 meaningful clusters. These plausible cluster numbers and their centroid estimates were used in a subsequent K-means cluster analysis. Next, using the validation sample, we entered cluster centers for each of the plausible solutions obtained from the analysis sample into a K-means cluster analysis. For all possible cluster numbers, a constrained and an unconstrained solution were computed. The constrained solution classifies all cases in the validation sample based on the cluster results of the analysis sample. On the other hand, the unconstrained solution does not impose any restrictions on clustering. The chance corrected coefficient of agreement of the constrained and the unconstrained cluster

solutions (Kappa) were computed to identify an optimum: a maximum Kappa represents the solution with the highest internal validity, i.e., maximum stability and reproducibility. The Kappas for the 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 cluster solutions were 0.67, 0.70, 0.59, 0.53, and 0.64, respectively. Because the decision criterion is to maximize Kappa, a 4-cluster solution was proposed as the most internally valid combination of clusters; its Kappa does not fall below the critical 0.70-limit and can therefore be regarded as satisfactory (e.g., Singh, 1990). Once the optimal cluster value was determined, the analysis and the validation samples were pooled again and input into a final K-means cluster analysis with the number of clusters specified as the optimal value to receive the centroids for the whole sample. The results of this final cluster analysis are displayed in Table 2.

*[Place Table 2 about here]*

Based on the cluster means for the seven factors of emotional competence, the clusters were interpreted as follows. Cluster 1, consistent with Hypothesis 1, represents individuals that show high emotional competence on all proficiencies (thus our label, high emotionally competent salespeople). These salespeople perceive the emotions of their communication partners accurately, adapt their emotions to situational necessities, and stay authentic at the same time. Further, these salespeople are able to regulate their emotions by using irony and thereby distance themselves from their emotions. At the same time, they keep strong norms about how to manage their emotions and they do not feel guilty about managing their emotions. Also, others are accepting of their emotion management style.

Cluster 2 consists of salespeople with low emotional competence, a cluster also anticipated in Hypothesis 1. The low emotionally competent salespeople score lowest on all dimensions of the emotional competence scale – with the exception of guilt, where cluster 3 scores even lower. The most striking result for these salespeople is their very strong feelings of not being authentic in their displayed emotions. At the same time, they also think that other people do not accept the way they manage their emotions, and they are unable to distance themselves from their emotions by using irony. Moreover, these are the only salespeople who characterize themselves as lacking, relatively, norms or limits on the management of their emotions.



Cluster 3 consists of salespeople who experience strong feelings of guilt regarding the way they manage and use their emotions. Furthermore, they lack empathy to a certain extent. These salespeople use emotions in an instrumental way to help them achieve their communicative goals, yet, at the same time they consciously feel inauthentic when doing so. This group exhibits properties consistent with Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional dissonance (hence, our label: the emotionally dissonant cluster).

Cluster 4 consists of individuals who score slightly above the average on every dimension of emotional competence, except irony. That is, they are quite empathic, they are able to adapt their emotional display to the situation and yet be authentic, but they are not able to distance themselves from and regulate their emotions through irony. Consistent with Saarni's (1999) interpretation, we say that the salespeople here fail to laugh at themselves, therefore making it difficult for them to flexibly apply their coping styles in different situations (hence, we term this the low-irony cluster). People who are not able to laugh at themselves have difficulty detaching and distancing themselves from the contradictory emotional experiences they have now and then.

The four clusters achieve internal validity (high Kappa) and are conceptually meaningful. The data therefore provide evidence for four types of salespeople, thus confirming Hypothesis 1. We found that emotionally competent salespeople can be distinguished from emotionally less competent salespeople. The former group comprised about 16% of the sample. Moreover we found three different subgroups of emotionally less competent salespeople, two of which (i.e., the low emotionally competent group and the emotionally dissonant group) are discussed in the literature on emotional work. In addition, we found a third group of emotionally less competent salespeople, the low-irony group, that has not been mentioned in the literature before but *ex post facto* can be interpreted in a meaningful way. Below we test the predictive validity of these clusters.

## **Part 2: Implications of Emotional Competency**

Emotional coping: One question we explore is whether emotionally competent salespeople display mature coping strategies when they experience positive and negative interpersonal emotions. Emotionally competent people possess an integrated working self of emotional

competencies that affords a general facilitation of their handling of emotional encounters: “emotional competence is evident in the capacity for adaptive coping insofar as all the preceding abilities or skills involved in emotional competence are also involved in effective coping” (Saarni, 1999, p. 219).

In the literature (e.g., Campos, 1994; Lazarus, 1991), emotional coping or emotional regulation is perceived as the person’s ability to manage one’s subjective experience (or appraisal) of emotion and the ability to manage strategically one’s expression of emotion in communicative contexts. We explore two situations. One is where salespersons experience a positive emotion (pride) and the other is when they experience a negative emotion (envy). We chose pride because recent research by Verbeke and Bagozzi (2002) shows that pride is an energizing emotion and is the most frequently and intensely felt self-conscious emotion mentioned by salespeople. Envy was chosen because it also is energizing and is a negative emotion and therefore provides a contrast to pride, which is positive.

Pride is a self-conscious emotion that emerges when the person evaluates him/herself through the values and expectations of significant others (Fischer & Tangney, 1995). Although having adaptive social functions, self-conscious emotions come with a dark side in some cases (Barret, 1995). In the case of pride, people may feel overconfident and display egoistic behavior, which draws attention to their successes and other people’s relative failures and then leads to envy and possible malicious reactions. At the same time, feelings and expressions of pride are not always negative (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001). For instance, pride might signal to an interaction partner one’s ability to match the norms and expectations of the social environment and promote a positive spiral (Gilbert, 1990). Salespeople should contain their expressions of pride because, if too intense, they might be interpreted by their colleagues as ‘hubris’, which is defined as exaggerated pride or overconfidence and often results in negative reactions by others (e.g., Lewis, 2000). One way that salespeople might contain pride is to engage in pride coping. Based on recent research by Campos (1994), we propose four coping strategies that salespeople might use. The first two relate to the experience of pride: staying focused (e.g., remaining grounded) and using pride as a source of extra energy (e.g., seeing it as a call to work harder). The two other coping strategies are about the expression of pride: control of one’s expressions of

pride (e.g., avoiding displays of arrogance) and holding back one's pride (e.g., keeping pride to one's self). These coping strategies correspond to the categories of coping behavior that Saarni (1997) found to be most adaptive in her study of the usefulness of coping strategies.

It is difficult though to determine “one best way” of coping, as it is often difficult to distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive coping (Matthews & Zeidner, 2000). The adaptiveness of a particular coping behavior is highly dependent on the criteria adopted and the situation of interest: what is adaptive in one situation may be maladaptive in another (e.g., Saarni, 1997). Psychologists therefore propose that it is adaptive to have a range of different coping strategies available from which one can flexibly choose (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Saarni, 1997). High emotional competence goes along with a broad range of available coping strategies, as emotional competence is a syndrome of competencies that is flexibly applied in emotion-eliciting situations to make a judgement on particular behaviors (Saarni, 2000). Saarni (1999, p. 226) summarizes the relationship between emotional competence and coping as follows: “optimal self- and emotion-regulation development appears to entail the acquisition of a flexible repertoire of coping strategies.” Yet emotionally competent people not only have a broader range of coping strategies, but they also have the wisdom to choose a socially adequate and appropriate behavior for the particular situation in question. They are able to accept their own emotional experiences (Saarni, 1999, 2000), yet emotional competence also entails empathy, which enables individuals to feel with others, understand their needs and expectancies, and foresee the feelings that their behavior elicits in others (Eisenberg, 2000). Consistent with these observations, Eisenberg *et al.* (1996) found that empathy predicts socially appropriate behavior and constructive coping. Emotionally competent people are able to direct their behavior according to this knowledge, because they are able to regulate their own emotions strategically and assume a long-term perspective. In other words, adaptive and emotionally competent coping does not mean that one is oriented towards feeling better right away (Saarni, 1999). Emotionally competent people have the maturity to choose coping efforts that are “more comprehensive and may lead to greater self-efficacy and emotional well-being in the long run, and accepting feeling badly in the short run may be part of the bargain” (Saarni, 1999, p. 219). As a consequence, we expect that emotionally competent salespeople accept and do not hold

back their emotions inappropriately, and positive emotions do not alienate them from their (social) environment. Instead, emotionally competent salespeople remain well connected to others and are capable of using pride as a self-motivator concerning their feelings of self-efficacy.

Envy is experienced when a person compares him/herself to another person on a self-relevant dimension and becomes aware of the negative discrepancy between one's own performance and that of significant others (e.g., Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Tesser, 1991). Feelings of envy are indications that a person wants to match significant others accomplishments -- envy in other words, although a competitive emotion, often instigates greater effort in goal striving (Buss, 2000). Like pride, however, envy may also become maladaptive. Envious salespeople, for instance, might be so consumed by their envy that they fail to help others when needed and even react in destructive ways. Or else, envious salespeople might spread rumors, and in turn provoke feelings of guilt, thus creating cycles of negative self-conscious emotions (e.g., Parrott, 1991).

To cope with envy, salespeople are hypothesized to use the four coping strategies mentioned above. Two of these coping strategies relate to the experience of envy: staying focused (e.g., "If only I will not get distracted, I can match their accomplishments.") and second, using envy as an energizer (e.g., "Next time I will just work harder so that others do not perform better than I."). Two strategies relate to the expression of envy: being willing to openly recognize the performance of a significant other (e.g., congratulating colleagues) and holding back one's feeling of envy (e.g., "I keep on working without showing my true feelings."). Again, given our definition of emotional competence as a syndrome, we expect that emotionally competent salespeople will be able to accept their emotions, yet show socially appropriate coping strategies (Saarni, 1999, 2000). Experiencing the negative feelings that come with envy, emotionally competent people are able to see the negative consequences of expressing their negative feelings and therefore dissemble these negative emotions better than less emotionally competent salespeople. Emotionally competent salespeople take responsibility for their lower performance and in so doing use their envy to energize themselves rather than letting it degenerate into gossiping or spreading negative rumors.

Hypothesis 2a: Emotionally competent salespeople will cope better with their pride than less emotionally competent people. They do this by accepting their experience of pride, interpreting it in positive ways, and managing their expression of pride so as not to antagonize others.

Hypothesis 2b: Emotionally competent salespeople will cope better with envy than less emotionally competent sales people. They do this by accepting their experience of envy, interpreting it in positive ways, and managing their expression of envy so as not to disparage others but rather energizing goal pursuit.

Social capital and performance: We propose that high emotionally competent salespeople will have higher social capital, better customer relations, and better sales performance than emotionally less competent salespeople. Before explaining how this happens, we first need to develop what social capital is.

Weitz and Bradford (1999) show that salespeople provide added value to customers when they cooperate with their customers as well as with colleagues dispersed all over the organization and with others in their social network. Social networks are “friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and social capital” (Burt, 1992, p. 9). Social capital is one’s ability to mobilize the members of one’s social network to share and provide such resources as knowledge, political support, or friendship. Researchers have identified two useful dimensions of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 122). One is relational social capital and refers to the personal relationships people have developed through a history of interactions that result in such outcomes as respect and friendship. A second is structural social capital and refers to the overall pattern of connections between actors; that is, structural social capital constitutes whom one reaches and how one reaches them. A well-known characteristic of the effective use of network structures is the ability to create “structural holes”: that is, people strategically create isolated individuals or clusters of individuals in their network that are dependent on or facilitate a focal person’s dealings with others (Burt, 1992).

Researchers have suggested that as we move toward an era of networked organizations, people's ability to manage emotions will be key (e.g., Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 2000; Gibson, 1997). As a consequence, social capital and performance of salespeople can be linked to emotional competence and its constituting skills. First, we expect that the emotionally competent salespeople will score higher on social capital because their empathic abilities foster grounded feedback about their own emotional styles and also help provide insight into what drives others (e.g., one learns what are the preferred modes and ranges of emotional expression of partners: "individuals should constrain emotional expression in order to function effectively in interpersonal relationships in ways that are sensitive to other people's emotional needs and competencies," (Martin *et al.*, 2000, p. 116). Second, emotionally competent salespeople deliberately control their expressions of emotions to achieve their goals. As Saarni (1999, p. 6) puts it, "depending on whom we are with and what we are feeling, we express our emotions with communicative intent, that is, our emotional-expressive behavior is meaningful to others." The management of one's displayed emotions is a rich example of what Goffman (1969) calls "control moves" that influence the actions of others. In addition, emotionally competent salespeople maintain a set of norms that they do not transgress; consequently, they become trusted and respected members in the organization. In short, we believe that emotionally competent salespeople will achieve higher relational and structural social capital.

For similar reasons, we also expect that emotionally competent salespeople will achieve higher levels of performance (particularly better customer relations and higher sales) than less emotionally competent salespeople. Spiro and Weitz (1989), for instance, show that salespeople who are more adaptive achieve better sales performance than those who are less adaptive. Similarly, because emotionally competent salespeople flexibly adapt their coping strategies when meeting different customers or sales situations, we expect that their performance will be higher than less emotionally competent salespeople. Yet, emotionally competent salespeople are able to stay authentic in such encounters, which is also important. Erickson and Wharton (1997) argue that because customers are able to discriminate between authentic and inauthentic emotions, it is not sufficient that service agents control their display of emotions. They also should actually feel these emotions. Moreover, it is important that salespeople not feel guilty

about the way they use their emotions instrumentally because guilt leads to corrective actions (e.g., Lewis, 2000) that could conflict with goals they intend to achieve. For instance, feeling guilty about “manipulating” one’s own emotions as well as another’s emotions could induce salespeople to compensate for this guilt by selling products for too low of prices.

Hypothesis 3: Emotionally competent salespeople will achieve greater relational and structural social capital than less emotionally competent salespeople.

Hypothesis 4: Emotionally competent salespeople will achieve higher levels of performance (better customer relations and sales) than less emotionally competent salespeople.

## **Method of Analysis**

### **Measures**

The appendix presents all items used in the study, and Table 3 displays the factor loadings and reliabilities for the items we describe below. As can be seen from Table 3, all scales achieve high reliabilities.

*[Place Table 3 about here]*

Social Capital: This scale was inspired by the work of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and consists of 21 seven-point Likert-scale items. The items reflect salespeople’s ability to mobilize resources by means of relational and structural social capital. The first 10 items were used to measure relational social capital. Three items measure an employee’s ability to get additional information about his/her own organization (e.g., “Almost everybody shares information with me about important topics in our organization”). Three items measures one’s ability to get additional information about the market and the customer (e.g., “Outside the organization it is easy to attain information about the market”). Four items measure the extent to which a salesperson is able to develop trust in others inside and outside his/her organization (e.g., “People can trust me as a colleague, because I always have been straight forward”). Ten items measure structural social capital, namely a salesperson’s abilities to connect with people (e.g., “I can get the better people in my organization around me to get projects done”), to create structural holes (e.g., “I get the important information quicker than others”), and to achieve

strategic information (e.g., “I make sure that I attain the strategic information from my colleagues”).

A factor analysis revealed six factors (KMO = .86; eigenvalues of 7.40, 2.40, 1.78, 1.28, 1.11, and 1.00) that explained 70 percent of the total variance (see Table 3). Factor 1 can be interpreted as *loose information ties*, that is, getting easy access to internal organizational information. The second factor relates to *customer information ties*, i.e., the ability to get external information, namely about the market and about customers. The third factor we call *structural information holes*. Salespeople scoring high on this factor receive information that is relevant for them quicker than their colleagues. Behavior that is needed to successfully establish a network that provides one with *strategic information* is reflected in factor 4. Factor 5, *implementation*, describes the ability to connect oneself with people that help in achieving one's goals. The last factor was called *trust*, and reflects the extent to which salespeople perceive that others trust them.

The proposed 6-factor structure is supported by results of a confirmatory factor analysis. Although the chi-square was significant ( $\chi^2$  (174) = 399.36,  $p = .00$ ), the other indices were satisfactory (CFI = .90 and RMSEA = .08). Factor loadings were high, ranging from .51 to .92. Correlations between factors as measures of discriminant validity shows that the factors are distinct (range = .40 to .80).

We acknowledge that the use of self-reported measures for social capital might be problematic, although meta-analyses suggest that subjective measures are reliable and valid (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985). To check for a possible bias in salespeople's responses we compared results from self-report versus manager evaluations in another study. Based on items for which managers had information, we selected 12 items for presentation to sales managers.<sup>viii</sup> In this study, we found a correlation of .46 ( $p < .01$ ) between the self-reports by salespeople and the evaluations of salespeople by the managers, indicating that the use of self-report measures seems to yield valid measures.

*The customer relations scale* (6 items) was adopted from Swenson, Singh, and Rhoads (1994) and measures different aspects of the quality of salespeople's customer relationships: for example, trust (e.g., “In general I create trust in my customers regarding my products/



services.”) and keeping promises (e.g., “I keep my promises to customers.”). All responses were obtained on a seven-point completely disagree-completely agree Likert-scale. Factor analysis revealed that the scale consists of a single factor (KMO = .84, eigenvalue = 3.34, explaining 56 percent of the variance). The factor loading ranged from .66 to .82, and reliability was .82.

*The sales performance scale* (5 items) was adopted from Behrman and Perreault (1984). It consists of five quantitative aspects of sales performance including the total amount of sales (e.g., “Compared to an average salesperson, I can generate a high sales amount.”) or the ability to achieve one’s sales goals (e.g., “Compared to an average salesperson, I exceed most of the sales goals throughout the whole year.”). Responses were obtained on a seven-point Likert-scale. The exploratory factor analysis suggests that the items form a single factor (KMO = .75, eigenvalue = 2.68, explaining 54 percent of the variance), with factor loadings ranging from .67 to .78. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was .78. Similar to the social capital scale, we also tested the sales performance scale for possible self-reported bias. In the same study as mentioned above, sales managers evaluated the sales performance of their salespersons who independently provided self-reports of their sales performance. The self-report measures and the manager evaluations achieved a correlation of .34 ( $p < .05$ ;  $n = 39$ ).

*The coping with pride scale* had 13 seven-point Likert-scale items. The item development was inspired by existing research on coping (e.g., Lazarus, 1991; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) and coping strategies identified as most adaptive (Saarni, 1997, 1999). Five items concern what Lazarus calls “positive reappraisal” and Saarni terms “reframing” (e.g., “I think: ‘Remain who you are’”). Two items refer to the strategy of “self-control” (e.g., “I try not to get too self-satisfied so that I do not give the impression of being arrogant”). Three items (e.g., “I try to stay modest”) refer to coping strategies that Lazarus (1991) and Saarni (1997) summarize as “distancing”. Finally, two items measure problem-focused coping (e.g., “I try not to get too self-satisfied so that I am able to keep on performing.”). Saarni (1997) terms these “problem-solving strategies”, and Lazarus (1991, p. 112) calls them “action-centered” forms of coping. The factor analysis showed a four factor solution (KMO = .85; eigenvalues of 5.74, 1.79, 1.14, and 1.01) which explained 73 percent of the total variance. The characteristics of the factors are summarized in Table 3.

The factors found reflect the coping strategies “management of emotional experience” (factors 1 and 3) and “management of emotional expression” (factors 2 and 4) (see Campos, 1994, Lazarus, 1991, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988, and Saarni, 1997; 1999). Factor 1 refers to coping techniques that can be described as “compensating”, that is, changing one’s perspective by extending one’s cognitive frame from the experienced emotion to the whole self, thus limiting the importance of the actually felt emotion and staying focused. “Holding back” (factor 2) describes a person’s attempts to suppress one’s emotions and cope with them internally. Factor 3 suggests the use of one’s experienced emotions to motivate the self. One may feel “extra energy” to work harder and thus change the emotion-eliciting situation. Finally, “controlled expression” (factor 4) characterizes attempts to regulate one’s display of emotions in order to avoid giving a bad image to others and provoking negative reactions.

*The Coping with envy scale* was constructed from 10 items with responses coded on seven-point Likert-scales. Similar to the coping with pride scale, this scale was created to reflect Lazarus’ and Saarni’s four coping strategies of positive reappraisal (two items; e.g., “I immediately think that I could also achieve this performance, if I worked hard, too.”), self-controlling (three items; e.g., “I recognize that they have achieved their successes by working hard.”), distancing (three items; e.g., “I try to give a relaxed impression that differs from my inner feelings.”), and problem-solving (two items; e.g., “I keep on working hard so that others will not top me.”). Factor analysis supported four factors (KMO = .70; eigenvalues of 3.20, 2.10, 1.35, and 1.01, explaining 76 percent of the variance). The factor loadings and reliabilities are shown in Table 3.

The reliability of only one scale (factor1 of coping with envy) did not exceed the critical value of 0.70, but should be satisfactory for exploratory purposes. The factor structure found for coping with envy was similar to the one found for coping with pride, and the factors therefore are labeled similarly.

### **Results of MANOVA**

We investigated the predictive validity of the emotional competency clusters. That is, we checked the influence of cluster membership on coping strategies, social capital, and performance: namely, coping with pride, coping with envy, sales performance, quality of

customer relationships, and relational and structural social capital. We ran MANOVA with the coping, performance, and social capital variables as dependent variables and the configural emotional competency clusters of salespeople as multicategory independent treatment variables. If the null hypothesis of no differences was rejected, we conducted individual ANOVAs with the different dependent variables. Initially, we tested for equality of the variance-covariance matrices across the groups as group sizes differed considerably between the four clusters. Box's test suggested the equality of the covariance matrices across the four groups (Box's  $M = 525.94$ , approx.  $F = 1.081$ ,  $p=0.13$ ). The MANOVA produced the following statistics: Wilk's Lambda of 0.568,  $F = 2.30$ ,  $p<0.000$ . This suggests that the dependent variables differ significantly across the four types of emotionally competent salespeople. Cluster membership explained 9 percent of the variance of coping strategies with pride and envy (observed power = 1.00) and 12 percent of the variance of the performance and social capital measures (observed power = 1.00). Because group sizes differed significantly, we applied the Scheffè multiple comparison procedure to test which groups were significantly different from the others. The results of the variance analysis are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

*[Place Table 4 about here]*

As the  $F$ -values show, the emotional competence cluster membership is associated with substantial differences in salespeople's coping behavior, when experiencing envy, as well as with substantial differences in the coping strategy of using pride as a spur to working harder. Table 4 shows that emotionally competent salespeople achieve significantly higher scores on three out of four strategies in coping with envy; that is, they stay focused in spite of experiencing envy and they use their envy as a source of self-motivation to work harder. In addition, emotionally competent salespeople control their expressions of envy. No significant differences between the different clusters of emotional competence were found regarding the coping strategy of holding back feelings of envy. Hypothesis 2b is therefore mainly supported. Thus, the emotionally competent group of salespeople uses significantly more "mature" coping strategies (Saarni, 1999) than the less emotionally competent clusters. Moreover, these salespeople are not only characterized by high scores on coping strategies relative to other groups, they also achieve high scores on an absolute level. This indicates that they are able to

use a wide range of different coping strategies, which functions to regulate emotions and interpersonal situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Regarding the experiencing of pride, we found that emotionally competent salespeople are better able to use this emotion as a self motivator for staying focused and expending extra energy. No significant differences were found for the two other coping strategies. Hypothesis 2a therefore received mixed support.

*Performance and social capital:* We first investigated the inter-cluster differences for the performance and social capital variables. The observed power, i.e., the probability that the  $F$ -test will detect differences between groups equal to those implied by the sample difference, was higher than 0.95 for all dependent variables, except for the two social capital dimensions “loose information ties” (power = 0.73) and “implementation” (power = 0.80). As the  $F$ -values show, the relationship between cluster membership to the four types of emotionally competent salespeople and the performance and social capital variables is substantial. The differences between the four clusters of emotionally competent salespeople are substantively meaningful.

*[Place Table 5 about here]*

The data provide strong support for Hypotheses 3 and 4. The highly emotional competent salespeople achieve both the highest performance and the greatest social capital. As can be seen in Table 5, cluster 1 scores significantly higher than the other clusters on almost all dependent variables. That is, the high emotionally competent salespeople (cluster 1) perform better both on customer relations and on sales than the emotionally dissonant salespeople and the low emotionally competent salespeople (clusters 2 and 3). The same patterns were found for social capital: On all eight dimensions cluster 1 scored significantly higher than clusters 2 and 3, except for the dimension ‘implementation’, where cluster 1 achieved only significant higher scores compared to cluster 2.

## **Discussion**

As we are moving into an era where social capital plays an increasingly important role in an organization’s success, there will be a need to understand how employees self-regulate their emotions. Emotional intelligence clearly does not answer this question satisfactorily as it does not take into account the appropriateness of the employee’s regulatory actions in terms of

maintaining personal and organizational goals and norms. Indeed, within many business-to-business selling jobs, which characterize fluid and ever-changing organizations, there often are no clear guidelines on how to manage emotions (Rousseau, 1997), and this is especially the case with customer boundary spanners that operate outside the firm with customers. Rather, emotion management is frequently characterized by ambiguity and contradiction (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001; R.J. Erickson, 1997). To deal with ambivalent and contradictory situations, people must purposively construct a working self, consisting of emotional competencies that should have some degree of social consensus about their meaning and predictability but also contain some degree of unique personal ‘flavor’ reflecting how salespeople cope with particular emotionally challenging situations (Saarni, 1999, p. 299). In our study, we identified which salespeople were emotionally competent and which are not, based on their self-designated scores on seven domain-specific emotional proficiencies.

Noteworthy here was the finding that the emotionally competent cluster scored high on seven emotion proficiencies and attained full integration of these emotional proficiencies. Saarni (1999, p. 300) speculates that the ability to make a working model, in which contradictory emotional skills become integrated, provides the basis for personal satisfaction and a self-image of accomplishment. Indeed, these salespeople a) engaged in mature coping strategies when experiencing pride and envy, b) achieved higher social capital, and c) performance was higher than those salespeople in the remaining clusters. It should be noted that this group of salespeople constitutes only a minority (16%) of the sample being studied, which confirms E.H. Erikson’s (1963) observation that only a small number of people achieve at a high level of emotional control.

We found three groups of low or less emotionally integrated salespeople. The first had a low score on all emotional proficiencies, except guilt where they scored high. This group tended to display immature coping with envy and pride and achieved the lowest amount of social capital, as well as the lowest scores on performance. What might be behind the poor profile exhibited by members of this group? One possibility is that these salespeople lack the ability to empathize or are alexithymic. Alternatively, members of this group may have a history of such problems as burnout. Our post hoc analysis revealed that salespeople in this group were less

educated (i.e., they tended to have only a high school education, compared to their colleagues who had more advanced vocational education), which might have dampened their enthusiasm and resulted in a feeling that they would never be promoted or caused them to feel inferior to the better educated group and their customers.

The second inconsistent group was the emotionally dissonant group, which is similar to Rafaeli's and Sutton's (1987) emotional dissonant group. Notice that this group of people contained a significant number of salespeople (28% of the sample). What is typical for this group is that they experience high levels of guilt, feel inauthentic, are less empathic, yet score high on character and a sense of irony. This group then reminds us of what has been called, people with a deviant orientation (R.J. Erickson, 1997); that is, actual interactions with customers probably do not reach their levels of expectations. They were the second worst group in attainment of social capital and performance. It should be noted that (though not statistically significant) people in this cluster used more mature coping strategies. For instance, in pride, they engaged in putting things into perspective, and this group also attained high levels of strategic information (one dimension of structural social capital).

Finally, the third inconsistent group scored second highest of all four groups on empathy, dissociation of guilt, self-authenticity, management of self-presentation, and convincing others target to accept one's emotions. This group scored lowest on irony of all four groups, hence its label as the low-irony group, and it scored second to last on maintaining norms. In their laughter-as-dissociation hypothesis, Keltner and Bonanno (1997) give three arguments to explain the process of letting loose of one's emotions through laughter. First, laughter involves shifts from positive to negative psychological states (e.g., Tomkins, 1984). Second, laughter produces a reduction in negative emotions associated with a certain situation (e.g., Krokoff, 1991). Finally, the reduction of negative emotions creates positive feelings of amusement. These arguments, which were supported empirically, show that laughing at oneself leads to a certain amount of detachment from one's emotional experiences. The result is some respite from needing to continuously work on one's emotions, which can be stressful. In addition, a lack of or low irony inhibits one's ability to interpret and reconcile contradictory emotional experiences. Salespeople in the low-irony group risk being prisoners of their emotions. Hatch (1997, p. 285)

notes in this context that “What is key here is that, with a little irony, we both can be conscious of these [contradictory emotional] processes and thereby bring them into clearer focus.” In other words, “Laughter, as theory and evidence indicate, is a transient, mild form of dissociation from distress that promises joy and perhaps peace” (Keltner and Bonanno, 1997, p. 688). Hatch illustrates the role of ironic humor in her study of managers: she found that via the use of humor managers construct their thoughts and emotions in a contradictory manner, focusing on laughter and humor as opposed to negative emotions, and these “contradictory emotions neutralized emotional denial so that contradictory cognitions could be confronted in a less-threatening, more-playful fashion” (Hatch, 1997, p. 287). Salespeople in the no irony group do not draw upon such coping resources.

A limitation that should be acknowledged is that self-reported measures were used in the present study. Experimental research is needed to determine more precisely how emotional competence functions and what its boundary conditions are. In addition, objective measures of performance as criteria should be obtained, although meta-analyses suggest that subjective performance measures are reliable and valid in the personal selling area (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985) and results from a second study indicate that the self-report performance and social capital scale are moderately to highly correlated with manager evaluations.

### **Future research**

Future research should explore whether emotional competence can be fostered. Training programs, coaching, and mentoring may be effective ways of helping employees become more emotionally competent. In such a training the topic is not so much how people might adopt feeling rules or apply certain persuasion techniques, rather people are trained to employ a mind set that allows them to comfortably handle interactions with customers that are characterized by ambiguity. Research is needed as well to determine to what extent emotional competence and emotional intelligence are related to one another.

Another area for research is the role of culture. As emotional competence is a skill that is learned in social contexts, it would be fruitful to investigate how people in different cultures acquire and use their emotional competencies to different degrees. For instance, some cultures

might emphasize that emotional competence is about integration, whereas other cultures might stress that emotional competence is about being authentic. This hypothesis can be linked to Markus and Kitayama's (1991; 1994a,b) distinction of independent-based and interdependent-based cultures. In independent-based cultures, the emphasis is on internal, individual emotional experiences and hence feelings of (in)authenticity are an important issue for their members; people seek to express their emotions and by doing so seek to differentiate themselves from others. In interdependent-based cultures, on the other hand the emphasis is on interactive emotional experience; therefore, members of these cultures are more likely to seek to integrate how their emotions fit into their social environments (see Saarni, 1999, p. 74). Similarly, Peng and Nisbett (1999) propose that cultures might differ according to their implicit epistemologies: for some cultures change, contradiction, and holism might be part of a cognitive framework of how people seek to understand the world. Such an investigation would not only provide insight into the boundary conditions governing emotional competence and its effects but might provide insight and policy guidelines for managing cross-cultural interactions.

Finally, we studied the domain specific emotional competence of salespeople who interact with customers. But emotional competence also can be applied to other domains like human resource management or general management as well as to more general and functional tasks in and outside organizations such as for manager-subordinate relationships or entrepreneurial activities (e.g., Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Goleman, 1998). This deserves further study.



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## Appendix 1: items (loosely translated from the Dutch)

### **Emotional competence proficiencies**

#### Empathy

1. I can easily put myself in the place of the customers and their needs.
2. I can tune my emotions to those of the customer.

#### Guilt

3. I feel little or no guilt about the way I manage my emotions.
4. I feel little guilt when showing my enthusiasm during a sales interaction.

#### Authenticity

5. I feel that my expressed emotions are part of my sincere and deeper self.
6. My expressed emotions are part of what I see as my truthful way dealing with people.

#### Self-presentation

7. I am acquainted with creating emotions to facilitate the process of a sales interaction.
8. I can easily show a variety of emotions when the situation asks for it.

#### Convincing others that one is genuine

9. Others have learned to accept the way I manage my emotions.
10. People accept how I manage my emotions.
11. I feel that people can quickly feel my emotions.

#### Irony

12. Laughing about myself takes care that I do not get too emotional.
13. Laughing keeps me from worrying about the question whether I show emotions that are adequate for the given social context.
14. Whatever happens, I have learned to accept my emotions and look at them with some irony.
15. I can easily laugh about myself when my emotions get too strong.

#### Character

16. Although being flexible with my emotions I also have limits.
17. I have certain moral norms about the way I manage my emotions.

### **Social capital dimensions**

#### Loose information ties

1. I receive from everybody information about our own organization.
2. Almost everybody shares information with me about important topics in our organization.
3. When I ask for it, others in my organization easily provide me their knowledge about a specific domain or topic.

#### Customer information

4. Customers easily tell me the information they have heard about our competitors.
5. Outside the organization it is easy to attain information about the market.
6. Customers easily share information about their organizations with me.

#### Trust

7. People give to me important tasks in the organization.
8. People easily follow me to do things.
9. People can trust me as a colleague, because I always have been straight forward.
10. I am known by my colleagues that I stay committed on projects.

#### Implementation

11. In order to get something done in my organization I can surround myself by the better people in the organization.
12. I can get the better people in my organization around me to get projects done.
13. I know how to motivate others in order to finish up projects.

#### Structural information holes

14. If it comes down to getting information, I can attain it quicker than others.
15. People tell me: You know always more than others.
16. I am sometimes called the "street-smart" of the organization.
17. Usually I am the first in my organization to get relevant strategic information of the market.
18. By and by, I get the important information quicker than others.

#### Strategic information

19. I make sure that I attain the strategic information from my colleagues.
20. I have made up a network such that I can get the essential information in my organization.
21. I make sure that I know the right people in the organization (and I ask them) to get the important information about my organization.

### **Dimensions of coping strategies for pride**

#### Stay focused

*In general, when realizing that others tell me or give me the impression that I am better than I have expected or better than others, I tend to proceed as follows...*

1. I immediately try to put my performance into perspective.
2. I immediately think: "Stay grounded despite of your performance."
3. I immediately think: "This is no reason to have your head in the clouds."
4. I think: "Stay who you are."
5. I immediately think that I would never have achieved such a performance alone.

#### Control expression

*If feeling proud, ...*

6. I try not to get too self-satisfied so that I do not give the impression of being arrogant.
7. I try not to get too self-satisfied so that others do not get estranged from me.

#### Hold back

*If feeling proud, ...*

8. I tend to keep this feelings inside of me.
9. I try to stay modest.
10. I tend to control this feeling.

#### Extra energy

*If feeling proud, ...*

11. I try not to get too self-satisfied so that I am able to keep on performing.
12. I try not to get presumptuous so that I am able to move my limits.
13. I try not to get too self-satisfied so that I do not get presumptuous.

### **Dimensions of coping strategies for envy**

Stay focused

*If my colleagues perform better than I and I experience some envy, I have learned to proceed as follows...*

1. I immediately think that I could also achieve this performance, if I worked hard, too.
2. I immediately think: how can I avoid seeing myself as a worse salesperson.

Control expression

*If my colleagues perform better than I and I experience some envy, I have learned to proceed as follows...*

3. I recognize that they have achieved their successes by working hard.
4. I recognize that they have achieved their successes on their own by working hard.
5. I do not put their performances down.

Hold back

*If feeling envious in face of better performing colleagues, ...*

6. I try to give a relaxed impression that differs from my inner feelings.
7. I keep on working as usual without letting show what I really feel.

Extra energy

*To avoid experiencing envy in the future, ...*

8. I take care of performing well so that others will not top me.
9. I keep on working hard so that others will not top me.
10. I improve my work strategies so that others will not top me.

Figure 1. The split-sample validation clustering procedure

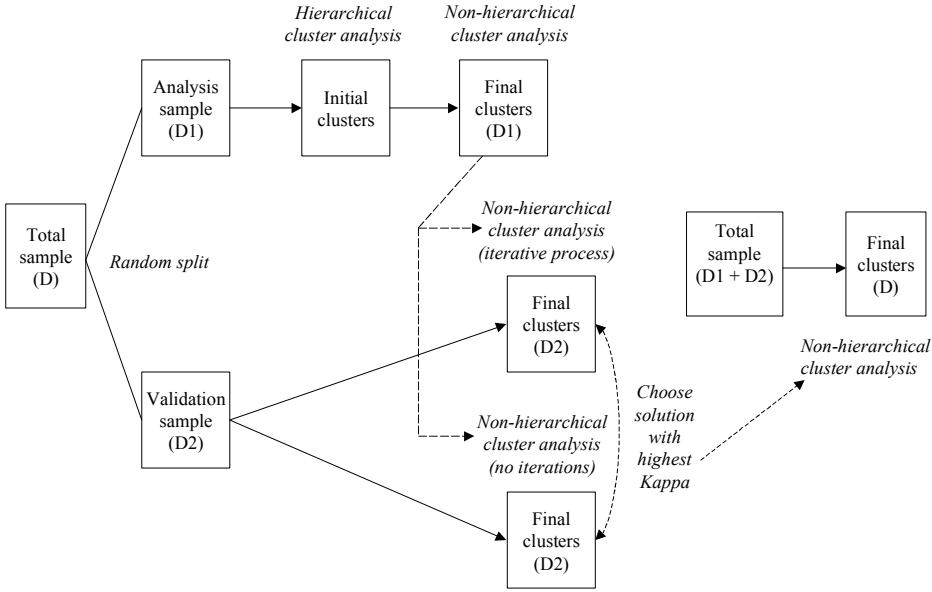


Table 1. Competencies of emotional competence (factor loadings and reliabilities)

<i>Emotional Competence</i>						
1) Empathy	2) Dissociation of guilt	3) Authenticity	4) Managing self-presentation	5) Making target of accept one's emotions	6) Ironic perspective	7) Moral character
em1 (.81)	em3 (.88)	em5 (-.85)	em7 (-.86)	em9 (.79)	em12 (-.68)	em16 (.83)
em2 (.88)	em4 (.68)	em6 (-.85)	em8 (-.88)	em10 (.85)	em13 (-.85)	em17 (.84)
				em11 (.70)	em14 (-.66)	em15 (-.84)
Reliabilities						
0.72	0.56	0.82	0.79	0.76	0.78	0.70

Table 2. Results of the cluster analysis

Cluster	Number of cases in each cluster	Score for cluster centers <sup>a</sup>						Character
		Empathy	Dissociation of Guilt	Authenticity	Managing self-presentation	Making target accept one's emotions	Ironic perspective	
1) High emotionally competent cluster	34	0.80	0.68	0.83	1.06	1.14	1.33	0.87
2) Low emotionally competent cluster	53	-0.54	-0.30	-1.70	-0.51	-0.80	-0.74	-0.71
3) Emotionally dissonant cluster	61	-0.29	-0.75	-0.46	0.29	-0.16	0.40	0.23
4) Low-irony cluster	68	0.27	0.57	0.22	0.55	0.20	-0.44	-0.09

<sup>a</sup> To facilitate the interpretation we used z-standardized values in the table that have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. That is, -0.09, for instance, indicates an average activity on a dimension.

Table 3. Factor loadings of measures (in parentheses)

<b><i>Social Capital</i></b>					
<b>1. loose information ties</b>	<b>2. customer information</b>	<b>3. structural information</b>	<b>4. strategic information</b>	<b>5. implementation</b>	<b>6. trust</b>
sc1 (.85)	sc4 (.79)	sc14 (.69)	sc19 (.65)	sc11 (.86)	sc7 (-.53)
sc2 (.93)	sc5 (.81)	sc15 (.78)	sc20 (.63)	sc12 (.80)	sc8 (-.43)
sc3 (.89)	sc6 (.73)	sc16 (.82)	sc21 (.62)	sc13 (.67)	sc9 (-.80)
		sc17 (.80)			sc10 (-.80)
		sc18 (.53)			
Reliability					
.88	.73	.83	.70	.83	.82

<b><i>Coping with Pride</i></b>			
<b>1. stay focussed</b>	<b>2. hold back</b>	<b>3. extra energy</b>	<b>4. control expression</b>
tc1 (.61)	tc8 (-.88)	tc11 (-.69)	tc6 (.87)
tc2 (.91)	tc9 (-.79)	tc12 (-.79)	tc7 (.93)
tc3 (.84)	tc10 (-.92)	tc13 (-.92)	
tc4 (.70)			
tc5 (.50)			
Reliability			
.81	.82	.90	.85

<b><i>Coping with Envy</i></b>			
<b>1. stay focussed</b>	<b>2. hold back</b>	<b>3. extra energy</b>	<b>4. control expression</b>
nc1 (.77)	nc6 (.89)	nc8 (.83)	nc3 (-.86)
nc2 (.88)	nc7 (.88)	nc9 (.84)	nc4 (-.85)
		nc10 (.93)	nc5 (-.79)
Reliability			
.58	.76	.86	.79

Table 4. Mean differences for coping strategies

	Configural Archetypes <sup>a</sup>				ANOVA results	
	High emotionally competent cluster	Low emotionally competent cluster	Emotionally dissonant cluster	Low-irony cluster	F-Statistic	p-value
<i>Coping with Pride</i>						
Stay focussed (tc1-5)	<b>5.70</b>	5.29	5.60	5.23	2.90	<b>.04</b>
Hold back (tc8-10)	5.64	5.24	5.49	5.13	1.96	.12
Extra energy (tc11-13)	<b>5.97<sup>b</sup></b>	5.23	5.37	5.31	3.98	<b>.01</b>
Control expression (tc6-7)	5.73	5.33	5.28	5.43	1.2	.31
<i>Coping with Envy</i>						
Stay focussed (nc1-2)	<b>5.30<sup>c</sup></b>	4.32	4.94	4.59	3.79	<b>.01</b>
Hold back (nc6-7)	4.34	4.43	4.53	4.34	.36	.78
Extra energy (nc8-10)	<b>5.97<sup>d</sup></b>	4.75	5.18	5.07	9.54	<b>.00</b>
Control expression (3-5)	<b>6.38<sup>d</sup></b>	5.63	5.65	5.78	6.13	<b>.00</b>

<sup>a</sup> Mean values in boldface differ significantly from other mean values in the same row, results are based on Scheffe's contrast method ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>b</sup> significant difference to clusters 2 and 4 ( $p < 0.05$ ), significant difference to cluster 3 ( $p < 0.07$ ).

<sup>c</sup> significant difference to cluster 2.

<sup>d</sup> significant difference to clusters 2, 3, and 4.



Table 5. Mean differences for performance parameters and social capital

	Configural Archetypes <sup>a</sup>				ANOVA results	
	High emotionally competent cluster	Low emotionally competent cluster	Emotionally dissonant cluster	Low-irony cluster	F-Statistic	p-value
<i>Performance</i>						
Customer Relations	<b>6.40<sup>b</sup></b>	5.95	5.96	<b>6.27<sup>b</sup></b>	9.28	.00
Sales	<b>5.34<sup>b</sup></b>	4.69	4.81	4.98	6.19	.00
<i>Social Capital</i>						
Information Ties	<b>6.17<sup>c</sup></b>	5.57	5.60	5.86	3.47	.02
Customer Information	<b>6.26<sup>d</sup></b>	5.20	5.24	<b>5.63<sup>b</sup></b>	17.16	.00
Structural Information	<b>4.94<sup>d</sup></b>	3.84	4.07	4.27	6.80	.00
Strategic Information	<b>5.60<sup>d</sup></b>	4.60	5.02	4.99	7.53	.00
Implementation	<b>5.74<sup>e</sup></b>	5.04	5.24	5.27	3.74	.01
Trust	<b>6.09<sup>f</sup></b>	5.46	5.68	5.78	5.58	.00

<sup>a</sup> Mean values in boldface differ significantly from other mean values in the same row, results are based on Scheffe's contrast method ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>b</sup> significant difference to clusters 2 and 3.

<sup>c</sup> significant difference to clusters 2 and 3 ( $p < 0.07$ ).

<sup>d</sup> significant difference to clusters 2, 3, and 4.

<sup>e</sup> significant difference to cluster 2.

<sup>f</sup> significant difference to cluster 2 ( $p < 0.05$ ), significant difference to cluster 3 ( $p < 0.07$ ).

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<sup>i</sup> Saarni's (1999) research was conducted primarily on children and adolescents, and only partly on adults, and in addition dealt with general populations. We used here research as a guide to identify skills that seem particularly relevant to customer boundary spanners and adaptable to the work selling (e.g., Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

<sup>ii</sup> Terminology in the literature on emotional intelligence is not consistent. Some authors use the terms emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1995), others emotional quotient (e.g., Bar-On, 1997) and Huy (1999) emotional capability.

<sup>iii</sup> Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000) place emotional intelligence as a part of general intelligence, as such, Saarni (2000, p. 84) argues that "intelligence is an entity that we locate inside the person or as being traitlike in terms of characterizing the person according to some consistent quality."

<sup>iv</sup> Moral psychologists (e.g., Flanagan, 1991; Flanagan & Rorty, 1990; Dillon, 1995) also stress the connection between emotional competence and moral character. In this regard, Peck et al. (1960, p. 9) note this about a person with high moral character: "He reacts with emotion appropriate to the occasion. ... He knows himself, and faces his own reactions honestly. He does what is morally right because he wants to, not because it is "the thing to do." ... He assesses each situation in its own terms, but follows his principles in deciding what to do. ... If he succeeds, he no longer feels guilty. Such a person, it was proposed in this study, is moral to the highest degree. He is also mature, emotionally well-adjusted, and using his constructive capacities to the fullest."

<sup>v</sup> It should be stressed that these seven proficiencies – in contrast to the components of emotional intelligence – are all skills and hence can be learned (Saarni, 1999; 2000; Huy, 1999).

<sup>vi</sup> Although there is certainly a significant genetic contribution to empathy (e.g., Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992; Rushton et al., 1986), learning processes also have a strong influence on the development of empathy (see Plomin et al., 1993). As Eisenberg (2000, p. 684) notes, "observation of and interactions with socializers also probably contribute to individual differences in empathy-related reactions, above and beyond any contributions made by heredity."

<sup>vii</sup> It be noted that Saarni (1999) uses "emotional competence" and "emotional self-efficacy" interchangeable.

<sup>viii</sup> The total sample consisted of 59 self-reports and manager evaluations by salespersons and managers working in industrial selling within Dutch companies. 71% of the respondents were male, mean work experience was at 7 years. 30% of the salespeople were 30 years and younger, 42% were between 31 and 40 years, 15% between 41 and 50, and 13% older than 50 years.

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