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Emotional Intelligence as a Measurable Driver of Individual Social Influence

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Introduction

"Business is working harder and paying more to pursue people who are trying to watch and listen less to its messages" (Keller & Berry 2003, 11). Modern customers are overloaded with information about new goods and services. They face advertising on TV, radio, in internet, in journals and newspapers, on the streets, underground, in flight, per post, per email and even on coffee-to-go cups. Taking into account individuals´ limited processing abilities, it is not surprising that the lion's share of these messages is just ignored. However, customers, ignoring traditional advertising media, still tend to listen to their friends, colleagues and relatives, which may increase their awareness of particular products and have direct influence on their choices. (Busch & Houston 1985). In this context, the fact that some of these friends are even more trusted and asked for advices and opinions may be especially important for marketers. Beside their greater power of persuasion, such influencers tend to be more interconnected, which helps them to reach more people, accelerate spread of information and foster the adoption of new products. (Iyengar / Van den Bulte & Valente 2011) The empirical evidence demonstrates that targeting influencers bring greater value than just targeting random customers. (Haenlein & Libai 2013) Obviously, companies are ready to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to capitalize on abilities of influencers.

For public sector, influencers can be useful in supporting socially desirable objectives, such as promoting healthy lifestyle, reducing smoking or preventing fraud. (Aral & Walker 2012)

Despite the considerable interest generated by this group of people and high practical relevance for business, as well as for policy makers, there is still no universal reliable and convenient method of identifying influencers in applied settings.

Traditionally, opinion leadership scales have been used to identify influencers. The problem of these scales is that they are built upon product expertise. However, the evidence shows that confident interaction partners not necessarily possess deep product knowledge. Often these are just neighbors, friends or colleagues being around at the moment of decision making. Unfortunately, in this case, the modern opinion leadership scales are not able to capture influence.

Scholars in a field of management propose an alternative driver of individual social influence. They regard emotional skills as being crucial for formal and informal leadership. (Lewis 2000; Wolf et al. 2002; Wong & Law 2002). According to the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI), emotionally intelligent people are more successful in interpersonal communication, build more favorable long-term relationships and better manage other people (George 2000; Kellett/Humphrey & Sleeth 2002; Kidwell/ Hardesty/ Murtha & Sheng 2011). Though emotional abilities have been regarded as a powerful tool of individual social influence, the performance of an EI scale and an opinion leadership scale in identifying influencers was never tested before. The objective of this research is to fill this gap. Considering that different types of individual social influence can be manifested differently, we concentrate on informational influence, which may be especially important for saturated markets. Furthermore, we take into account the need for a reliable tool of identifying influencers independently of their expert knowledge and focus on the situation of decision making apart of product expertise. The research question of this paper is:" Does a self-reported EI scale demonstrate greater performance in identifying influencers than a self-reported opinion leadership scale under these conditions".

In order to answer the research question, we adopted the following structure. In the first part we address the problems of identifying influencers and critically discuss self-reported opinion leadership scales as a measure of individual social influence. In the second part, we theoretically justify our position that EI should be considered as a driver of informational influence. To do so, we examine the concept of EI from the different perspectives and summarize existing knowledge on EI as a driver of informational influence. Then, we answer the research question by running a survey and a game. In order to compare the performance of a self-reported opinion leadership scale and a self-reported emotional intelligence scale, we use the specialized methodology to measure the distribution of informational influence in an organization. Finally, we discuss the applications and the limitations of the study, as well as the directions for further research. We suggest that emotional intelligence scale can be considered as a helpful tool to identify influencers. Moreover, the development of customers´ emotional abilities may enhance their potential to influence others and help companies to generate additional economic value.

1 Opinion leadership scales as a measure of individual social influence

Since the two-step flow model of communication emerged in 1950s, topics related to individual social influence have often been considered as the "holy grail of marketing". (Rand 2004). In this chapter we analyze the role of individual social influence, in particular informational influence for marketing practitioners and discuss the problems with identifying influentials. Because opinion leadership scales were traditionally considered as a way of identifying influencers, we analyze in detail the problems associated with use of early and modern versions of this tool.

The role that influencers play in successful marketing campaigns has been widely discussed in scientific journals (Bakshy/ Hofman/Mason & Watts 2011; Godes & Mayzlin 2009; Watts & Dotts 2007) as well as in business focused literature (Christakis & Fowler 2010; Keller & Berry 2003). The importance attributed to individual social influence can be inferred just from the titles of books about influentials, such as "The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy" (Keller & Berry 2003). The interest toward the process of individual social influence and the willingness of companies to invest money in identifying and targeting influentials is understandable. Processing abilities of customers are limited. This means that, the more advertising customers face, the less attention they pay to the content of a particular message. Moreover, often customers consciously avoid annoying advertising: they turn of banner ads, switch a channel or mute TV commercials. Under these conditions, marketers struggling for consumers´ attention, have to apply more sophisticated methods instead of traditional mass media advertising. One of the emerging marketing directions is word-of-mouth marketing, aimed to take advantage of people´s social nature. Even customers, who discount traditional forms of advertising, still discuss consumption-related topics with their friends. They also tend to trust their friends´ advices more than mass media advertising (Busch & Houston 1985). This informational sharing accomplishes a function of social bonding and plays an important role in social life. (Berger 2014; Cheung/ Anitsal & Anitsal 2007) Obviously, for marketers it becomes very important to identify and target the most trustable people, who are able to influence others´ opinions and actions and whose advices are considered as important.

Another reason for marketers to pay attention to the phenomenon of individual social influence is that influencers tend to be more interconnected and occupy more central position in social networks. Normally, in the process of social interaction people transmit information and influence their reference groups, which transmit it further through their social networks. This process is also known as the "multiplier effect". Influencers, who tend to have more social ties and more influential friends, may more efficiently spread information and influence others (Aral & Walker 2012).

Consequently, many studies consider individual social influence as being crucial for successful diffusion of opinions and innovations (Aral & Walker 2013; Iyengar et al. 2011; Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955).

In a case of saturated markets, one the most appealing types of individual social influence is informational influence. Informational influence is defined as an internalization process, embracing individual´s striving for others´ opinions and advices in order to enhance his knowledge and to meet an informed decision (Bearden & Etzel 1982; Hsu & Lu 2004). In this case, information obtained from other people is considered as "evidence about reality" and serve as a foundation for particular decisions and attitudes. (Deutsch & Gerard 1955, 629). Influencers are defined as people "from whom others seek advices and information". (Rogers & Cartano 1962, 435) They can act directly by providing information, giving advices or sharing their opinion or they can be asked about their point of view. In both cases the information they provide may influence other consumers´ attitudes and behavior.

Nowadays, informational influence can be especially important, taking into account how many different products people see on the shelves and pass by just because they never thought about purchasing these products. Properly use of Informational influence may help companies to overcome this negative effect of saturated markets, to promote new knowledge and perspectives, to raise brand awareness and, consequently, to enlarge the consideration set and to modify consumers´ behavior.

Burnkrant & Cousineau (1975) compared the effects of different types of influence and demonstrated that during the process of shopping, informational influence played a key role. Their findings were confirmed by Mascarenhas & Highy (1993), who provided empirical evidence that for teenager´s apparel shopping informational influence had stronger effect on decisions than normative influence.

According to Burnkrant & Cousineau (1975, 241) , customers often rely on other´s opinions "not to establish some self-fulfilling role relationship to the others, not to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment mediated by the others, but rather to acquire what they perceive as a good product". Consequently, the perception of a product as good or bad is often inferred from the evaluations of other people, which are considered as a source of information.

Informational influence may be especially important for recently introduced products. (Goldenberg/ Han/ Lehmann & Hong 2009; Rogers 1983) There are two reasons explaining this fact. First, in the situation when a new product enters a market, the initial level of customers´ awareness about it, tends to be low. On aggregate level, this unawareness may hinder the success of newly introduced products and sometimes leads to financial losses or even bankruptcy of innovative companies. Informational influence may be helpful in increasing awareness about an innovation and reducing risks associated with a new product´s introduction. Second, as Rogers & Cartano (1962) stressed, informational influence plays a key function in mitigating uncertainty caused by lack of information and evoking interest toward new products. Normally, for newly introduced products there is no so much available information, which may increase customer´s uncertainty. One of important particularities of informational influence is that its impact enhances in a case of ambiguous stimuli, unclear information or higher degree of decision complexity. In this situation, an individual understands that he is not able to accurately evaluate a product himself. Consequently, the information obtained from other people makes him feel more knowledgeable and simplifies his choice.

Thus, for companies, individual social influence, in particular informational influence may be considered as an important catalyst of product demand. Despite the importance of influencers in driving products diffusion reported in multiple studies (Iyengar et al. 2011, Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955) and the interest of practitioners toward the process of individual social influence, the problem of identifying influentials slows down the practical application of the concept. This can explain skeptical attitudes of some scholars toward the effectiveness of marketing strategies based on identifying and targeting influentials.

For example, investigating the spread of influence on Twitter, Bakshy et al. (2011) demonstrated that some individuals are more influential than others. However, the identification of such influencers is so costly and unreliable that it is more effective just to target an average user.

Multiple factors can make the assessment of the strength of individual social influence difficult. Beside the problems associated with separation of confounding factors, such as friends´ preferences similarity (Aral & Walker 2012), simultaneity (Godes & Mayzlin 2004) or time-varying factors (Van den Bulte & Lilien 2001), the difficulties with assessing influence can be explained by the fact that it does not necessarily lead to immediate change in attitude or behavior. Godes et al. (2005) defined social influence as "an action or actions taken by an individual not actively engaged in selling the product or service that impacts others´ expected utility for that product or service". However, this change in "expected utility" should not necessarily cause immediate reaction. Informational influence can be even less obvious than manifest influence, which makes it especially complicated to measure.

Because of difficulties with immediately assessing of behavioral responses companies try to evaluate the strength of informational influence using the evidence about customers´ engagement into social interaction. This can be the number of conversation partners or the number of advices that customers give to others. For example, the agents of Trnd AG have to report how many people they contacted and what was a conversation about. (http://www.trnd.com/infos/infos02.trnd) However, it is important to understand that informational influence is more than just generated word-of- mouth. Some people can talk a lot about consumption related topics, but not necessary their friends listen to them attentively and pay attention to the information they share. Other customers, on the contrary, can be considered as a reliable source of information and be asked for advice in the case of hesitation. The method described above does not take into account this difference in credibility and perceived competence. Though, it cannot be considered as an optimal tool for assessing the strength of individual social influence.

Another method of identifying influentials is selecting the people with the greater number of social ties. However, to maintain big amount of social ties an individual should pay attention to each of them. As a consequence, such people have less time

per connection, which makes the relationships superficial and decreases the strength of individual social influence on each of their peers. (Hinz/ Skiera/Barrot & Becker 2011) Other networks´ features, such as degree centrality, could be better predictors of potential influence. However, in applied setting companies mostly don't have the possibility to investigate their customers´ social ties in details.

There exists an opinion that people ask for advice their most intelligent friends. However, informational influence cannot be exclusively determined by high level of IQ. People may have brilliant ideas, but if they keep silence and don't share their opinions with others they cannot influence their friends´ attitudes and actions. Moreover, if the communication process with an intelligent person is not pleasant, the probability that other people will ask him for advice decreases. Thus, high IQ cannot be considered as a guarantee of greater informational influence.

In fact, one of the most important preconditions of informational influence is trustworthiness. Only trusted referents can be considered as valuable sources of information. (Bearden & Etzel 1982). One of the traditional solution to identify influentials, whom people trust and with whom they communicate is represented by the concept of opinion leadership. Since the concept of opinion leadership was introduced by Lazarfeld/ Berelson & Gaudet (1944) to demonstrate that during the presidential election 1940 voting choices were influenced by social references of individuals, it became common practice to identify influencers with opinion leadership scales. Some modern opinion leadership scales show high reliability and validity. (Goldsmith & De Witt 2003) However, they are mostly based on product expertise i.e. deep product category knowledge and/or experience of an individual. Designed to identify influential only for particular products or groups of products, these scales are only capable to identify monomorphic opinion leaders, whose influence is limited to some particular product area. (King & Summers 1970)

Nevertheless, in many situations the decisions are taken without experts. For example, sometimes, decisions have to be made quickly and expert advisers are not always available. Another case may be when new goods and products enter a market. In the case of discontinuous innovation, such as 3D printing, few people, if any possess expert knowledge. Finally, not for all products expertise can be important. It is hard to imagine someone who is looking for a true expert to make a decision about pur-

chasing a chocolate or an ice-cream. Still, he may ask his friend´s advice. Normally people tend to imitate behavior of other people independently of their expert knowledge. (MCShane/ Bradlow & Berger 2012). Moreover, people also tend to express similar to other people judgments (Asch 1956). Just simple information about the preferences of others can have a considerable impact on choice. For example Cai/ Chen & Fang (2007) demonstrated that just the information about music and meal preferences has a positive impact on choice of those preferred items by other people. Therefore, individual social influence is not necessarily linked to product expertise.

Unlike the modern opinion leadership scales, early opinion leadership scales attempted to capture polymorphic influence, which is more independent from individual´s expert knowledge about a particular product. According to the polymorphic model of influence, opinion leaders can be regarded as influencers for more than one narrow product category. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) empirically demonstrated that 1/3 of opinion leaders have impact on others´ opinions and actions for more than one product field. Later their findings were confirmed by King and Summer (1970).

One of the first scales aimed to measure influence using this approach was well-known and still widely applied King and Summer´s (1970) scale that they developed on the basis of Rogers and Cartano´s opinion leadership scale (Flynn/ Goldsmith & Eastman 1996). Despite the popularization of this scale, Childers (1986) demonstrated that its reliability is low and does not meet standard measurement criteria (alpha coefficient of 0,66). Moreover, Childers criticized the format of responces, which included both dichotomous and trichotomous items. He argued that this could confuse respondents and lead to biased answers. Furthermore, he claimed that the restricted range of answers does not fit into the concept of opinion leadership that should be operationalized with continuous variables. Childers (1986) reviewed King and Summer´s scale and proposed a refined one. However, this scale was criticized as well, because it did not form unidimension construct and had questionable nomological validity.(Goldsmith & Desborde 1991) Whereas one item of this scale measures polymorphic leadership, the five others measure monomorphic leadership.

Despite further attempts to refine the polymorphic opinion leadership scale, (Reynolds & Darden 1969) many scholars consider it skeptically. The problem is that all

scales on generalized influence were developed on the basis of King and Summer´s scale, whose nomological and predictive validity was questioned. (Childers 1986).

The use of combined questions and ambiguous temporal relations leads to the lack of clarity and biased responses. For example, answering the question "My friends and neighbors often ask my advices" of Reynolds and Darden scale (1971), it may be difficult to interpret the meaning attributed to "often". The perception of this word can vary among individuals and this perceptual difference can have an unexpected impact on test scores. Moreover, the relationships with neighbors may differ from the relationships with friends and cannot be regarded as a significant indicator of individual social influence in the situation when a respondent just moved, for example. Additionally, some items ask about the attitudes and the behavior of the other people. For example, the item 7 of the King and Summer´s scale (1970) asks: "Do you have the feeling that you are generally regarded by you friends and neighbors as a good source of advice". Evidently, it may be complicated for respondents to accurately assess the attitudes of their friends and neighbors. Thus, some features of self-reported opinion leadership scales may lead to biased responds.

Assessing polymorphic opinion leadership scales Flynn et al. (1996, 139) noticed that despite its common use in marketing studies these scales are not able to accurately assess the strength of individual social influence because they were designed " without the benefit of current psychometric procedures".

Moreover, there is one problem related to older self-reported opinion leadership scales, as well as to modern opinion leadership scales. Some scholars claim that self-designated opinion leadership scales reflect self-confidence of a respondent. (Iyengar et al. 2011) However, people with high level of self-confidence often tend to behave more independently, seeking less information and paying less attention to the opinions of other individuals. (Reynolds & Darden 1971). This finding can be especially relevant for measuring informational influence with self-designated opinion leadership scales, because informational influence is built on social communication, which represents two-way process. "Inner-directed adoption behavior" (Van den Bulte & Josshi 2007, 3) of people with higher level of perceived self-importance may lead to the paradox that they are less engaged in social communication. This means that self-confident customers scored high on opinion leadership scale in fact may exercise less

informational influence than people scored lower on self-reported opinion leadership scale.

Summarizing, though identifying influentials stays an important issue, none of existing methods can be considered as an optimal tool. Modern opinion leadership scales are built upon product expertise, which is not necessary a precondition for individual social influence. Whereas, older opinion leadership scales, developed to identify people with disproportional influence, provide broader perspective, but show poor predictive validity. In praxis, companies face a problem of identifying influencers accurately and cost-effectively. The danger of influencers-focused marketing campaigns is that large amounts of money may be invested into inappropriate methods. This may decrease companies´ returns and lead to serious economic losses. As Esteban Kolsky of Gartner Research noticed "Companies have spent billions of dollars...and know 'zero' about customers. (Johnson & Ambrose 2009) Consequently, there exists a need for reliable and convenient instrument to identify influencers in applied settings.

2 Emotional intelligence as an alternative measure of individual social influence

Aristotle noticed that "those who possess the rare skill to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and the right way are at an advantage in any domain of life". (Langley 2000, 177) Emotional abilities are inextricably linked with successful social communication. In this chapter we discuss the concept of EI, consider different approaches toward it and justify our support for the ability-based view. Then, we adopt Salovey and Mayer´s ability-based model of EI (1997) to demonstrate how emotional skills may enhance individual´s potential to exercise informational influence.

The term social intelligence was first coined in 1920 by Thorndike, who defined it as the "ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls - to act wisely in human relations". (Thorndike 1920, 228 after Law/ Wong & Song 2004) Later, Gardner (1983) developed this idea and introduced social intelligence as a combination of two domains of intelligence: interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal social intelligence reflects the capacity of an individual to deal with his own emotions, whereas intrapersonal social intelligence embraces the ability to perceive and understand other people´s emotions. Although, Gardner in his study did not directly use the notion EI, his conceptual framework provided a foundation for future researches on EI. (Schutte et al. 1998)

In 1990 the concept of social intelligence was refined by Salovey and Maier, who introduced a term EI. They suggested that EI should be considered as a set of mental abilities. (Salovey & Maier 1990) Although, their work evoked considerable interest, not all researchers regarded EI as a set of abilities. Two conceptually different opinions on the EI construct emerged in scientific literature. The first model is trait or mixed model, proposed by Goleman (1996, 1998) and Bar-On (1997). According to this approach, EI represents a part of personality. Additionally, it encompasses particularities of behavior, social skills, competences and motivation.

Despite the interest of practitioners toward mixed models of EI (Bratton/ Dodd & Brown 2011) and popularization of this concept, members of the scientific community tend to regard it skeptically, assuming that this approach is built upon a "popular

depiction" of EI (Brackett et al. 2006, 781). The following reasons explain this criticism.

First, different mixed models of EI often include distinct components. For example, according to Emotional Competency Inventory of Boyatzis & Goleman (2001) EI entails four clusters: self-awareness, self-assessment, self-management and relationship management. At the same time, Bar-On´s model of EI (1997) embraces 5 factors: intrapersonal EI, interpersonal EI, adaptability, stress management and general mood. The fact that different proponents of the mixed model of EI include conceptually distinct constructs into the model blurs the model´s boundaries and worsens the comprehensiveness of this perspective.

Second, the mixed model of EI has been criticized for being inconsistent with the notion of intelligence. Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999) argue that mixed models of EI lump together mental abilities and personal characteristics and traits, such as temperament. As a result, the mixed model of EI is too broad to correspond to the idea of intelligence.

Third, the mixed model of EI demonstrates the lack of construct and predictive validity. (Antonakis/Ashkanasy & Dasborough 2009; Zammuner et al. 2013) Because the mixed model of EI often embraces personality traits, it is not able to assure the distinctiveness of the EI concept from personality and motivation. For example, the mixed model of EI was shown to overlap with extraversion (Ciarrochi/ Chan&Caputi (2000). The ability-based EI, on the contrary, correlates with personality dimensions only mildly or differ from it. (Law et al. 2004) Additionally, the ability based model of EI shows mild correlation among its dimensions and moderate correlation between its dimensions and general mental abilities, such as verbal intelligence. (Mayer et al. 1999; Wong & Law 2002) This finding corresponds to the definition of EI as an intelligence facet (Law et al. 2004) and serves as confirmation of the construct validity of the ability model of EI.

Fourth, EI like a normal mental ability was shown to be developmental, increasing with age and experience. The potential use of emotional abilities´ development for intellectual and emotional growth was first stressed in works of Mayer and Salovey (1997). Later, multiple empirical studies showed that EI normally increases with age and can be trained (Cherniss et al. 2010; Groves et al. 2008; Nelis et al. 2011; Slaski

& Cartwright 2003; Zammuner et al. 2013). There exist special programs, including online and self-administrated trainings designed to improve EI abilities, which demonstrated gut results. (Zammuner et al. 2013). These findings contradict the mixed model of EI, because personality traits tend to be stable and cannot be substantially modified as a result of some training program.

Finally, EI tests proposed by the proponents of the mixed model of EI show poor performance and can be more easily faked than more objective performance tests measuring EI as a set of abilities. (Grubb & McDaniel, 2007)

Thereby, EI representing an intelligence domain should correspond to the classical norms of intelligence and be defined as a set of mental capacities. (Davis et al. 1998; Law et al. 2004; Mayer/ Caruso & Salovey, 2000; Schutte et al. 1998). Accordingly, we advocate the second approach, which defines EI more strictly and limits it to mental abilities.

Although there is no unified definition of ability-based EI, the differences are minor and are "more complementary than contradictory". (Ciarrochi/ Chan & Caputi 2000, 540). Salovey and Maier (1997, 10) define EI as a set of four interrelated abilities:" the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitated thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. "

The association between EI and individual social influence was empirically demonstrated in multiple studies. (Côté/ Lopes/ Salovey & Miners 2010; Offermann et al. 2004; Wolf/ Pescosolido & Druskat, 2002) However, none of these studies examines the general impact of EI on information influence. Next, we summarize existing knowledge and theorize how greater EI may enhance informational influence of an individual. For this purpose, we use Salovey and Maier´s model of EI (1997) and consider how every of four sets of abilities may foster informational influence. We provide a summary in Table 1. (see Table 1)

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence as a driver of informational influence

Ability	**Mechanism**	**Examples**
to perceive emotions	accurate assessment of non-verbal information	• Matching conversation topic with conversation partner´s needs and interests • Properly setting time and duration of a conversation • Properly defining the manner of conversation
to use emotions to facilitate thought	enhanced information processing	• Giving more qualitative advices • Generating creative ideas • Providing better problem solutions • Being perceived as more competent • Being less biased
to understand emotions	empathy	• Building trustful relationship • Evoking warm feeling • Making interactive partner pay attention • Being perceived as more similar
to manage emo-tions in self and in others	self-control emotional contagion	• Being more persuasive • Demonstrating socially desirable behavior • Being more attractive interaction partner • Avoiding or resolving conflicts

The first component of EI, described by Salovey and Maier (1997), is the ability to perceive emotions. This means detecting and decoding others individuals´ emotions, using non-verbal signals, such as changes in facial expression, voice and body language. The ability to perceive emotions also embraces the perception of one´s own feelings and the awareness of the emotions expressed by cultural artifacts. For example, some people can relatively easy recognize other people´s feeling by their facial expressions or just by looking at photos of people´s faces. They also easily identify emotions expressed by music, pictures or sculptures. For other people this task may be rather complicated.

In biology the ability to perceive non-verbal information has been associated with an important communicative function. For animals this ability is necessaire to adopt their behavior and survive. Charles Darwin theorized that monkeys use its facial muscles to communicate some information to others members of horde, for example, in order to show that the food is poisoned or to express aggression. Moreover, they can decode this information and consequently change their behavior, for instance stop eating poisoned food or avoid the animal expressing aggression. Thereby, emotional expression helps animals to make important inferences, to predict the behavior of others and to adopt their own behavior. (Knutson 1996)

This informative function of emotional expression plays an important role in human interactions as well, because it deepens one´s knowledge of thoughts, feelings and intended behavior of an interaction partner (Keltner & Haidt 2001). This knowledge helps to coordinate the communication and evaluate an interaction partner. For example, Knutson (1996) found that during the conversation people make judgments about their interaction partner´s dominance or affiliation dependent on his facial expression. Sad or fearful expression is perceived as a sign of low dominance. Happy expressions, at the contrary, make people consider their interaction partner as more dominant. Moreover, emotional expression helps to predict possible behavioral reactions of an interaction partner. For instance, smiling can be considered as readiness to cooperate. (Frank 1988)

Beside an important role in communication, the ability to perceive emotions is necessaire for successful social adaptation. In early childhood people are already able to decode emotional information. For example, children make inferences about how

safe or dangerous is the situation from facial expression of their parents. (Klinnert et al. 1983) However, further these abilities can develop differently by different individuals. Number of studies demonstrates that people with better developed ability to decode other peoples´ emotions are more successful in social interactions. (Puccinelli et al. 2013; Riggio et al. 2003) These can be explained with a fact that people, who are able to accurately identify and decode other people´s emotions using non-verbal signals, gain an access to the reliable source of information. The information obtained in the process of decoding of facial expression, body language and voice intonation can be more trustful, than the information communicated verbally. (Bonoma & Felder 1977) Non-verbal expressions are usually more difficult to control, that is why they may provide more reliable knowledge about individual´s true attitudes than verbally expressed messages. For example, Mehrabian argued that the impact of different verbal and nonverbal information in explaining behavior should be defined as 7% verbal information + 38% voice intonation+ 55% facial expression. (Mehrabian 1972, after Bonoma & Felder 1977) Thereby, nonverbal information can be crucial for identifying real attitudes and behavioral motives of an interaction partner and adjusting one´s actions. (Van Kleef/ De Dreu & Manstead 2004)

People with higher level of EI tend to be more attentive to non-verbal information and decode it more accurately, which helps them to better understand and address other people´s needs. (Wolf et al. 2002) Understanding latent, expressed only non-verbally needs of friends and acquaintances may become a powerful tool of influence. For example, emotionally intelligent people may exercise stronger informational influence just because they accurately decode non-verbal signals of their interaction partners and know exactly what topics are more or less interesting for them. They also can stop talking when they notice that their partner get bored or, on the contrary, go deeper into a conversation topic when they observe positive reactions. Moreover, emotionally intelligent interaction partners can easier adopt their communication style to particularities of their interaction partners. Consequently, the ability to perceive emotions helps to more accurately assess non-verbal information, which simplify social interactions and can be used as a source of informational influence.

The second dimension of EI is using emotions to facilitate thought. This ability comprehends assessing one´s own and others´ conflicting emotions, weighting them against each other in order to focus attention and facilitate information processing.

Traditionally, the process of decision making in scientific literature was considered as exclusively cognitive process of choosing the most optimal decision. (Bettman/ Luce & Payne 1998) However, recent research demonstrated that emotions significantly amplify judgments and choices. Empirical evidence shows that people tend to see the situation more optimistic when they are in a good mood, and more pessimistic when they are in a bad mood. (Bower 1991) For instance, Isen et al. (1978) demonstrated that respondents in positive mood evaluated their cars and televisions more positively than respondents in neutral mood. This can be especially important, taking into account that the mood related perception may have an impact on actions undertaken in a concrete situation. Affect priming theory provides an explanation of this phenomena, postulating that emotional arousal shifts attention and biases perception in a way that mood related associations and judgments are easier recalled than those, which are not mood congruent. Respectively, Nasby and Yando (1982) demonstrated that learning in positive mood leads to better recall of positive material.

Another interesting finding is the influence of mood on information processing style. Number of empirical studies demonstrates that people in a bad mood tend to use bottom-up or data driven processing. (Schwarz 2002) They are more detail-oriented and process information more carefully. Narrowed focus of attention leads to decrease of peripheral factors´ importance. Under these conditions, the quality of provided arguments plays a key role for attitudes formation and change. People in a good mood, on the contrary, tend to process information top-down, relying on heuristics, thinking more abstractly, easier engaging into new opportunities´ exploration and generating creative ideas. The effect of mood on information processing style can be explained with informative function that emotions play. Negative emotions aimed to signal that something in the environment goes wrong. Therefore, the environment is perceived as threatening and requires additional attention. In this case, an individual cannot just rely on heuristics or enjoy creative thinking. On the contrary, a problem or a threatening situation should be carefully analyzed and all important details should be taken into consideration. For example, Fieder (1988) demonstrated that unhappy participants were more accurate in accomplishing the multiattribute task, than happy participants. Twice less often than their happy colleagues they violated transitivity, assuming that if A>B and B>C, then A<C.

On the other hand, positive emotions signal that the things go well and the environ-

ment is safe. Therefore, an individual can be more spontaneous, use simple heuristics and routines or enjoy the process of generating new ideas. For example, an experiment conducted by Isen and Daubman (1984) demonstrated that participants in a good mood were more creative in categorization of unusual examples. For instance, happy participants grouped "feed" and "camel" together in the category "vehicles". Unhappy participants, on the contrary, found fewer similarities among words to be grouped. Their categories were more strictly limited and not as broad as those of participants in a good mood. Thereby, positive mood may cause greater cognitive flexibility, simplify abstract thinking and, as a result, enhance performance of creative tasks.

In order to control the effects of mood on attitudes and information processing, deep self-knowledge is required. Emotionally intelligent individuals are aware about the effects that their mood has on their performance. They also are better in identifying the reasons of a bad mood. For example, some people are sensitive to weather changes. If it suddenly starts raining they may feel sad. Emotionally intelligent people, aware of this effect of weather on their mood, can postpone accomplishing creative tasks and use slightly negative emotional state for analytical work. Furthermore, sometimes the knowledge about the peculiarities of mood influence on informational processing is already enough to decrease or avoid its effect. (Sinclair/ Mark, & Clore 1994). For example, when a person understands that there is no threating or problematic situation and his bad mood is just about the weather changes he can keep performing creative tasks well. An interesting experiment was conducted by Schwarz and Clore (1983) who asked respondents about their life satisfaction on sunny and cloudy days. Generally, people asked on cloudy days reported less life satisfaction. However, if an interviewer during the conversation mentioned that the weather was not so good, the difference in respondents´ reported satisfaction was considerately reduced. In this case, respondents were forced to pay attention to the weather and attributed their dissatisfaction to the temporary environmental situation. Thereby, emotional intelligence including knowledge about one´s emotional reactions can help to regulate the impact of external factors on attitudes and cognitive performance.

Another example how EI can lead to more efficient problem solving is affect related trade-off, when a choice is associated with negative emotions or losses. One of the coping strategies in this case may be avoidant behavior, the attempt to postpone the

choice and to reduce negative emotions instead of trying to solve the problem (Bettman et al. 1998). Evidently, such emotion-focused coping cannot help to improve the situation. Emotionally intelligent people, realizing that negative affect may involve avoidant behavior, are more likely to engage into problem-focused coping and consciously chose the best alternative instead of trying to avert problem related thoughts. In correspondence with the examples described above, multiple studies demonstrate that emotionally intelligent people are better in using affect to guide thinking and accomplishing mental tasks. (Lopes et al. 2006; Salovey et al. 2000; Schwarz 2002). Consequently, their friends and relatives may perceive them as more competent and seek their advices. Moreover, the ability of emotional intelligent people to guide attention and thinking helps them to consider the problems from different perspectives, which make them less biased and more open for ideas and insides of their communication partners. (Buontempo & Brockner 2008) This openness makes from emotionally intelligent people more pleasant and attractive interaction partners.

Summarizing, the ability to use emotions to facilitate thought may help emotionally intelligent people to productively use a good mood and to overcome the negative consequences caused by a bad mood or negative feelings. These skills may be helpful to focus attention, to direct thinking and to provide better problem solutions. Correspondently, emotionally intelligent people may be perceived by their reference groups as better advisers.

The third dimension of Salovey and Maier´s (1997) model of EI is the ability to understand emotions. This dimension includes labeling emotions, attributing right meaning to different emotions, analyzing complex emotions and understanding the reasons and consequences of different emotional states. Some people are capable to better understand the meaning of emotions and to predict other people´s emotional reactions. For example, if an emotionally intelligent person notices that his friend is tired and irritated after a long day of work he may understand his unwillingness to discuss some problematic issues and postpone it.

The ability to understand emotions may enhance the potential to exercise informational influence through empathy. Emotional sensitivity and empathy are inseparable because in order to feel empathy, one should properly understand other´s emotions.

The role of empathy for the process of informational influence should not be underestimated. Plutchik (1987) argues that empathy connects people, makes them pay more attention to the information they communicate to each other and often makes their behavior more similar. In management theory empathy is often considered as an essential component of informal leadership. (Kellett et al. 2002; Wolf et al. 2002) Moreover, empathy is often a precondition for building warm and trustful relationships with others. Normally, people tend to like the individuals who understand them. For example, an experiment, conducted by Muller & Gurhan (2006) showed that people were more willing to repeat negotiation with partners who better understand them, even if they were not always performing better. Additionally, people tend to trust their friends more if they have good relationship with them. The role that emotional sensitivity and empathy play in the process of communication is well described by Cooper and Sawaf (1997, 48). "Empathy and compassion connect us with others through the shared language of feelings and experience, one heart to next, beneath the words, behind the posturing and gestures. Through feeling of empathy and compassion we help ourselves learn and grow, and we also enable others to begin to feel safe enough to talk about what is really going on in other lives - to tell their stories - without fear of being judged, criticized, or abandoned." Thus, the ability to understand emotions represents an important component of empathy and leads to setting more trustful and cooperative relationships with other people. Taking into account that the credibility of source is an important precondition of acceptance of others´ opinions and evaluations (Burnkrant & Cousineau 1975), the ability to understand emotions may significantly increase the strength of informational influence.

Moreover, understanding partner's emotions can be important for appropriate behavioral reactions (Damasio 1994). This ability may indirectly contribute to the quality of social interactions because it provides a possibility to interpret one owns and others´ cues. Later this information can be used for regulatory actions (Lopes et al. 2006). Lopes et al. (2003) demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between understanding emotions dimension of EI and future emotional regulation. For example, when people understand that displaying anger can lead to unconscious fear-related responses in others (Dimberg & Oman, 1996) they avoid expressing it, if this reaction contradicts their intentions. At the same time, accurate understanding of

others´ emotions can help to "step into another´s shoes" in order to find the best ways to motivate people and to direct their behavior. (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi 2000)

Summarizing, understanding emotions and their consequences serves as an important precondition for successful informational influence. It helps to build warm and trustful relationships with other people, to avoid mistakes and to choose the most efficient strategy of influencing.

The last dimension of EI is the ability to manage emotions in self and in others. This set of abilities entails emotional regulation skills, which may enhance informational influence of an individual through two mechanisms: self-control and emotional contagion.

First of all, the ability to manage emotions helps to control the internal impulses in self, to shift the attention from own affective state and to become more flexible and attentive conversation partner. (Pyszczynski / Holt & Greenberg 1987) For instance, it may be easier for an emotionally intelligent individual to disconnect from his own negative emotions or harmful for interpersonal communication feelings and focus on interaction partner´s concerns. As a result, this can lead to more efficient problem solving and strengthen of interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the ability to regulate emotions combined with the ability to understand emotions may help to figure out the behavioral expectations of other people and adapt one´s behavior to social norms. (Brackett et al. 2004, 2005; Lopes et al. 2003). For example, emotionally intelligent people were shown to be more successful in public speaking because of their capacity to regulate the amount of passion expressed in their speech. (Rode et al. 2007) Second, emotionally intelligent people can reduce others´ people negative emotions, such as anxiety, and amplify positive emotions, such as feeling of joy, using the mechanism of emotional contagion. (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson 1994). Emotional contagion occurs in the process of communication, when one interaction partner consciously or unconsciously mimic the other´s emotional expressions, such as facial expression, voice intonations or body movements. This synchronization causes a convergence of emotions between sender and receiver. For instance, one interaction partner can "catch" good or bad mood from another. Consequently, an interactive partner expressing negative emotions can induce negative behavioral responses such as avoidance or competitive strategies, which may have harmful effects

on future cooperation. For example, Clark and Taraban (1991) demonstrated that expressed irritation can lead to disliking the interaction partner. This finding is consistent with those of Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui & Raia (2007) that anger negotiators evoke in their partners unwillingness to cooperate in future, which decreases joint benefits. Moreover, as demonstrated in Forgas´ empirical study (1998) anger expression may trigger competitive behavioral reactions of an interaction partner. Respectively, Furr and Funder (1998) showed that people expressing negative emotions, such as unhappiness and dissatisfaction had worse social-reputation than people expressing more positive emotions. Consequently, emotionally intelligent people, who are able to manage their own and others´ emotional states and control the expression of negative emotions may be considered as more attractive and pleasant conversation partners. Lopes et al. (2003) demonstrated the existence of positive correlation between managing emotions dimension of EI and good relations with others. They also showed that the ability to manage emotions correlated negatively with conflicting and antagonistic behavior.

Third, emotionally intelligent individuals can consciously evoke in others particular emotions to manipulate their reasoning style. As described above, sad people tend to process information more systematically and pay much more attention to the arguments strength, than happy people. That is why emotionally intelligent person, who cannot provide strong arguments, may try to improve his interaction partners´ mood, for example using emotional contagion. If he manages to do so, listeners in a good mood will not pay so much attention to the quality of his arguments, which makes his message to be perceived as more persuasive. For example, Ottati/ Terkildsen & Hubbard (1990) demonstrated that people listening to happy, smiling speakers tend to rely on heuristic processing style. At the same time sad speakers foster more systematic processing style in listeners. Thus, the ability of emotionally intelligent people to match the processing style and emotional states of listeners can lead to higher persuasiveness of their messages and be used as a tool of individual social influence.

Summarizing, the ability to manage emotions supported by other emotional abilities makes emotionally intelligent people more attractive and more persuasive for their interaction partners, enhances perceived appropriateness of their affective expressions and consequently increases their potential to exercise informational influence.

3 Comparing the performance of the opinion leadership scale and the emotional intelligence scale in measuring individual social influence

In order to empirically answer the research question, this chapter aimed to meet three objectives.

The first objective is to test whether under conditions that nobody is an expert, people still seek advices of other non-experts and change their opinions influenced by other non-experts´ advices. We suggest that, because of the social nature of people and the tendency to imitate others´ behavior, they may seek advices of other people and accordingly change their opinions, even if their advisers are not experts. (Hypothesis 1a; 1b)

The second objective is to compare the subjective perception of the self-reported EI scale (Wong & Law 2002) and the self-reported opinion leadership scale (Reynolds & Darden 1971). We suggest that some items of the self-reported opinion leadership scale may be ambiguously formulated, for example the item 1 uses ambiguous temporal relations. (see Appendix A) Moreover, the opinion leadership scale contains some items, for example the item 4, asking to assess the attitude of the other people, which can be complicated. Therefore, we suggest that the subjective perception of the self-reported EI test (see Appendix B) will be more favorable than those of the self-reported opinion leadership test (Hypothesis 2)

The third objective is to compare the performance of the self-reported opinion leadership scale and the EI scale in measuring individual social influence. We expect that the opinion leadership test, which was initially designed to identify influencers, predicts the distribution of informational influence. Thereby, we suppose that people having higher scores on opinion leadership scale, will be more likely asked for advice than people with lower opinion leadership scores. (Hypothesis 3a) At the same time, EI associated with greater trustworthiness, persuasiveness, agreeableness and more efficient problem solving may also be regarded as an important driver of informational influence. Therefore, we suggest that people with higher level of EI will be more likely asked for advice than people with lower level of EI. (Hypothesis 3b) Taking into account that the self-reported opinion leadership test has been strongly

criticized (see Chapter 1), we expect that emotional intelligence test will be better in predicting the strength of informational influence than the opinion leadership test. (Hypothesis 3c).

Additionally, we decided to compare the performance of the opinion leadership test and the EI test in predicting opinion changes and proposed that the EI scale will outperform the opinion leadership sclale. (Hypothesis 3d)

Summarizing, our hypotheses were as follows:

H1a: People tend to seek advices from other people even in the absence of experts.

H1b: People change their opinions following the advices of other people even if these people are not experts.

H2 The subjective perception of EI scale is more favorable as those of OL scale

H3a: People having higher scores on opinion leadership scale are more likely to be asked for advice by other people than those who have lower scores on opinion leadership scale.

H3b: People having higher scores on EI scale are more likely to be asked for advice by other people than those who have lower scores on EI scale.

H3c: People having higher scores on EI scale are more likely to be asked for advice by other people than those who have higher scores on opinion leadership scale.

H3d: People having higher scores on EI scale are more likely to change the opinions of others than those who have higher scores on opinion leadership scale.

Like Brass et al. we study the spread of individual social influence through informal ties in an organization (Brass & Burkhardt 1993). The participants were 32 employee of Ströer Deutsche Städte Medien GmbH, located in Berlin. Among the respondents were 13 men and 19 women. All participants were German. Median age of respondents was 37,5 years. Median working experience in the company was 5 years. 75% of participants were employees, 25%-managers.

First, we run a survey and measure EI´s level of people working in the company, using Wong and Law´s (2002) 16-item self-reported scale and opinion leadership, using Reynolds and Darden´s (1971) self-reported scale. Mean opinion leadership

score of respondents is 18, 94. Mean EI score is 62, 53. The correlation coefficient is 0,34 (p=0,06).

We choose the EI scale developed by Wong and Law (2002) because they advocate the ability-based approach to EI that we regard as more promising. Furthermore, the ability-based approach has been widely recognized by scholar and applied by practitioners. (Côté & Hideg 2011).

We measure opinion leadership using the scale of Reynolds and Darden (1971). Like King and Summer, they advocate polymorphic concept of opinion leadership. We choose this scale because of the compatibility with research design e.g. it is designed to measure informational influence. Reynolds and Darden refer to Arndt (1969, 217) definition of opinion leaders as "individuals who exert considerable personal influence because other people seek information from them and/or because others accept the advice volunteered by these leaders" .This definition fits well into the concept of informational influence considered in our study.

The survey was organized in a way that every participant answered the Reynolds and Darden´s (1971) self-reported opinion leadership test, as well as Wong and Law´s (2002) self-reported EI test. To reduce context effects we varied the order of the scales and randomly distributed two versions among participants. In the first version of the questionnaire, items on opinion leadership were followed by items on EI. In the second version, on the contrary, questions on EI were asked first. Both test used 5-point Likert scale, on which a "5" corresponded to "strongly agree" and a "1" corresponded to "strongly disagree". The respondents were asked to indicate to what extend every question described them. The pretest was conducted to ensure that there were no unclear items. At the end of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to provide information about their gender, age, working experience and hierarchical position in a company. Additionally, participants were asked how comfortable they have been feeling answering different parts of the survey and how well-built the questions were.

To assess the subjective perception of two self- reported scales, we asked the respondents: "Did you have fun answering the questions?" 28,1 % of respondents reported that they had fun answering the both parts of a questionnaire; 15,6% reported that they had fun answering the questions of the opinion leadership scale; 21,9%

reported that they enjoyed answering the self-reported EI scale; 34,3 % answered that they did not have fun answering neither EI, nor opinion leadership tests.

The second question was to indicate if the respondents agree or disagree with a statement "Filling in the survey I often hesitated about the answers". 21,9 % of respondents indicated that they often hesitated about the answers for both parts of the survey; 21,9% reported that they felt not sure answering the opinion leadership scale; 15,6% hesitated what statement to choose answering the questions of the EI scale; 40,6 % answered that they did not have any hesitations answering the both surveys´ questions.

The third question was based on the theoretical claim that the self-reported opinion leadership test contains some ambiguously formulated questions. We wanted to compare how respondents assess the clarity of the questions of the both self-reported scales. We asked them if they agree or disagree with a statement "I found the questions were too ambiguously formulated to provide a concrete answer". 25% of respondent claimed that the both scales contained ambiguous questions; 31, 3% reported that the questions of the opinion leadership scale were ambiguously formulated; 15, 6% found that the questions of EI scale were not concrete enough; 28, 1% found that the both scales contained clearly formulated questions.

Thereby, we can conclude that in average respondents assessed the perceived features of EI scale more favorable than those of the self-reported opinion leadership scale. The Hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

The next step is to compare the objective performance of two self-reported tests in measuring informational influence. To meet this objective we asked the participants, previously filled in the EI and the opinion leadership surveys, to take part in a game. During the game participants should answer 40 questions about healthy diet for a cosmic monster, whose spaceship crashed in Berlin (see Appendix C). Previously, we run a pilot study of the game to verify the degree of complexity of the questions. The content of the game was choosing with a specific reason. The topic ensures that there are no experts among the participants. This is an important point, because we believe that normally people possessing expert knowledge about some topic are more likely to be asked for information or for advice about this particular topic. However, in daily life such experts are not always available. With the cosmic mon-

ster game we simulate the situation that nobody is an expert in order to test how informational influence will be distributed under these conditions.

In order to objectively judge the correctness of answers we provided participants with an instruction on cosmic monster´s healthy diet. Because all participants were native German, the instruction was provided in German.

Our objective was to make the instruction complicated enough to read in order to motivate people to seek their colleagues' advices. Normally, informational influence increases in ambiguous environment, when people feel that they are not able to properly evaluate situation themselves. In this case they are more likely to rely on opinions of others and to consider these opinions as evidence. (Burnkrant & Cousineau 1975) To complicate the reading of the instruction we combined the information from Russian websites on diet and nutrition for cats. Then we replaced "cats" with "cosmic monsters", changed food that was supposed to be healthy and translated it into German using Google Translator. The presence of some Russian words in the instruction was explained to the participants with the lack of time to perform a qualitative translation from the cosmic monsters´ language into German. The pretest showed that 14 pages of low-quality translation, still containing some words in Russian and written using heavy to read font (Chiller), was possible but extremely complicated to read. (see CD)

The game consisted of two stages. In the first stage participants selected the food that they considered to be healthy for a cosmic monster using their intuition or the instruction. Moreover, we provided participants a possibility to help their colleagues by giving them an advice in a free form.

In the second stage participants could choose two colleagues whose advices they would like to see and modify their answers according to their colleagues´ propositions in order to improve their scores. All the "colleagues´ advices", however, were faked because some of them were too generally formulated to cause the change of opinions. Moreover, the idea behind it was to attribute the number of modified answers to the actual strength of the informational influence. Put differently, if all advices are wrong and people still believe some of their colleagues and change their answers according to given advices, these advisers should be considered as more

trustable source of information. Accordingly, they are supposed to exercise greater informational influence on their colleagues.

Thereby, the cosmic monster game can be regarded as similar to the sociometric method of identifying influentials, where participants report whom they would ask for advice. The difference is that in our case, the respondents actually choose a concrete adviser among their colleagues and not just hypothetically assume whom they would prefer. Taking into account the evidence reported by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that behavioral intentions may be totally unrelated to actual behavior, we preferred to test the performance of the EI and the opinion leadership scales with actually chosen advisers. Moreover, in our case, participants believed that the scores that they get for participation in the game were influenced by the quality of advices given by their co-workers. That is why, we expect that participants were motivated to select people whom they trust and whose advices they consider as meaningful.

Another benefit of the cosmic monster game is that it permits us to model a situation that nobody is an expert. One could assume that people reading the instruction, which contained the right answers, could be considered as experts. However, during the game we tried to ensure that the participants did not know how properly their colleagues read the instruction. First, the participants did not have much time for informational exchange. There was no sense for participants to ask how properly their colleagues read the instruction, because initially they were not aware that they could use the advices of their colleagues to improve their results. Second, because the participants were aimed to get more scores that their colleagues in order to win a prize, they were motivated to keep silence.

Moreover, after they game was conducted we tested it empirically. The binary logistic regression, which we run using SPSS (Version 22) demonstrated, that the scores that the respondents get were unrelated to the choice of respondent´s advices (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Respondents´ scores in predicting informational influence

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	.174	1	.676
	Block	.174	1	.676
	Model	.174	1	.676

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Scores	.045	.110	.171	1	.679	1.046
	Constant	.138	.681	.041	1	.839	1.148

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Scores.

Thus, we can assume that in our case expertise did not amplify participants´ informational influence. However, despite the absence of experts, in 81, 25% cases respondents wanted to see an advice of some of their colleagues. Furthermore, in 34, 37% cases respondents changed their opinions according to the recommendations of their colleagues, although all advices were wrong. Thus, the Hypotheses 1a and 1b were confirmed.

To test the hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c and 3d we run binary logistic regressions. We wanted to explore whether the choice of respondents´ advices were explained by their opinion leadership scores or by their emotional intelligence scores.

Dependent variable was dummy coded choice of respondent´s advices (1-respondent's advice was chosen, 0-respondent´s advice was not chosen).

First, we run a binary logistic regression to test a performance of Reynolds and Darden´s (1971) self-reported opinion leadership scale. The model is not significant (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The performance of Reynolds and Darden´s (1971) self-reported opinion leadership scale in measuring informational influence

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	.059	1	.808
	Block	.059	1	.808
	Model	.059	1	.808

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	OL	-.033	.134	.059	1	.809	.968
	Constant	.996	2.575	.150	1	.699	2.708

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: OL.

After we include gender, age, working experience and hierarchical position into the model it still stays insignificant (see Figure 3)

Figure 3: The performance of Reynolds and Darden´s (1971) self-reported opinion leadership scale. Control for demographic characteristics

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	7.252	5	.203
	Block	7.252	5	.203
	Model	7.252	5	.203

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Gender(1)	.765	.889	.741	1	.389	2.150
	Age	.034	.076	.207	1	.649	1.035
	Experience	.132	.179	.541	1	.462	1.141
	Position(1)	-1.782	1.205	2.185	1	.139	.168
	OL	-.041	.161	.066	1	.797	.960
	Constant	.299	3.997	.006	1	.940	1.349

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Age, Experience, Position, OL.

Thus, the Hypothesis 3a is disconfirmed. In the situation when nobody is an expert, the self-reported opinion leadership scale demonstrates poor performance in predicting informational influence.

As a next step, we repeat the procedure for self-reported EI scale. The model is slightly significant. B coefficient is positive, which means that higher level of EI leads to greater probability to be chosen as an adviser. (see Figure 4)

Figure 4: The performance Wong and Law´s (2002) opinion leadership scale in measuring informational influence

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	4.102	1	.043
	Block	4.102	1	.043
	Model	4.102	1	.043

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	EI	.174	.092	3.540	1	.060	1.190
	Constant	-10.417	5.721	3.316	1	.069	.000

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: EI.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test is not significant, which means that the model fits data. (see Figure 5)

Figure 5: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	10.583	8	.226

The model correctly predicted 8 respondents who were not chosen as advicers (61,5%) and 16 respondendents who were chosen as advisers (84,2%). On average 75% of choices were estimated correctly. (See Figure 6)

Figure 6: Model estimations

Classification Table[a]

Observed			Predicted		
			Was a respondent chosen or not		Percentage Correct
			not chosen	chosen	
Step 1	Was a respondent chosen or not	not chosen	8	5	61.5
		chosen	3	16	84.2
	Overall Percentage				75.0

a. The cut value is .500

Thus, hypothesis 3b and 3c are confirmed. The self-reported EI test outperforms the self-reported opinion leaderhip test in predicting informational influence under conditions that nobody is an expert.

In order to compare the performance of the opinion leadership test and the EI self-reporeted test in predicting opinion changes, we also run a binary logistic regression. However, in both cases, the results that we obtained were not significant. (p=0,70 for the opinion leadership scale; p=0,16 for the EI scale) This can be explained by the fact that in our case the change of opinions could depend on how accurately the respondents read the instruction and what information they kept in mind after reading it. Evidently, some facts about cosmic monster´s diet could be more memorable than others. For example, all respondents who read an instruction, remembered that cosmic monsters prefer eating wet umbrellas over the dry ones. However, the information about the usefulness of needles for cosmic monsters´ health was not so easily recalled. Correspondantly, if a respondent get as an advice some option that he remembered as being wrong, he could reject accepting the advice, independently on the degree of advisers´ trustworthness.

Our attempts to predict the number of accepted advices and opinion changes by EI and opinion leaderhip scores with Poisson regression leads to non-significant results in both cases (for the number of accepted advices: p=0,21 for the opinion leadership scale; p=0,72 for the EI scale; for the number of opinions changes: p=0,87 for the opinion leadership scale; p=0,69 for the EI scale). This can be explained by the small sample size. In order to properly run a Poissont regression, which is sensitive to zero counts, we select only respondents who were chosen at least once. As a result, we had only 19 respondents whose advice was asked at least once and 14 respondents who changed someone´s opinion at least once. This may be insufficient to obtain some significant results.

Summarizing, the results we obtained show that under conditions that nobody is an expert people still seek the advices of other people and sometimes change their opinions accordingly. However, in this case the EI test can be a better predictor of informational influence than the opinion leadership test. Moreover, respondents perceive the self-reported EI test more favorable than the opinion leadership test.

4 Discussion

The ways of identifying and targeting influencers have been long of interest of marketing scholars and practitioners. In this study, an attempt was made to compare the performance of the self-designated opinion leadership scale and the self-designated emotional intelligence scale in measuring informational influence in the situation of the absence of experts.

The study contributes to existing theory in several ways. In first chapter, it was found that opinion leadership scales cannot be considered as an optimal tool of identifying influencers beyond the product expertise. In the second chapter, we demonstrated that theoretically EI can enhance the ability of an individual to exercise informational influence. In the third chapter we addressed the research question empirically. Because of the tradition to associate opinion leadership with expert knowledge, the first objective of the empirical part was to explore the effects of informational influence beyond the product expertise. We empirically demonstrated that people are interested in other people´s opinions even if they are aware that these people don't possess any expert knowledge. Moreover, people change their opinions according to others´ advices, even if they know that advisers are not experts. Put differently, our results demonstrated that informational influence may play an important role in decision making, even in the absence of expertise. For scholars our finding indicates that more attention should be paid to the common in marketing situation of emerging individual social influence beyond the product expertise. Moreover, the idea of the game that we proposed can be used by other scholars for further investigations of the spread of individual social influence under these conditions.

For companies our finding has a practical relevance. Along the marketing strategy of targeting product experts, targeting polymorphic opinion leaders may also lead to increase of business´ returns. It may be especially important for companies, promoting multiple product categories. In this case, investing in polymorphic influencers, who will advocate the brand across different product categories, may be more cost-effective than investing in specialists in a particular product area.

The second objective of the empirical part was to compare the subjective performance of the self-reported opinion leadership test and the self-reported EI test. We demonstrated that the EI self-reported test was more favorably perceived by respond-

ents, than the opinion leadership self-reported test. This finding has a practical relevance because the convenience of the scale and the explicitness of the questions may have an impact on the willingness of respondents to accurately fill in the survey.

Finally, our main finding is the empirical evidence that the self-reported EI test may be a better predictor of informational influence, than the self-reported opinion leadership test. Evidently, this finding may be beneficial for scholars, as well as for practitioners. Scholars can use the self-reported EI scale to further explore the process of informational influence, in particularly to study influentials´ personal features and peculiarities of behavior. For example, the self-reported EI scale can be used to select influencers for participation in focus groups. Moreover, for researchers in the domain of EI, the empirically demonstrated association between EI and informational influence provides wide range possibilities for further research.

For practitioners, striving to bring their products and services to the attention of customers, the short self-reported test may become a helpful tool to identify and target influencers in order to spread word-of-mouth and accelerate the diffusion of new products.

For example, for companies promoting intentional viral marketing campaigns, like Trnd AG or Buzzer B.V., a short self -reported test identifying people who tend to exercise disproportional informational influence provides a possibility to select the most efficient agents.

Another important implication for companies is that emotional skills can be trained. (Cherniss et al. 2010; Groves et al. 2008; Nelis et al. 2011; Slaski & Cartwright 2003; Zammuner 2013) This means that companies can intentionally coach their customers in order to enhance their potential to exercise individual social influence. Instead of investing money in expensive and often inaccurate methods of identifying influencers, companies may increase their returns by developing emotional abilities of their actual customers. Nowadays, there exist a variety of programs to improve emotional abilities. An example can be Training Emotional and Interpersonal Intelligence program, also known as Tremint. This program is proposed in many different forms, dependent on the application area. Furthermore, there is a self-administrated program, which provides a possibility to develop emotional abilities online. It takes about ten hours to go through an extended training. Empirical evidence shows that

the program demonstrates good results in enhancing emotional abilities. (Zammuner et al. 2013)

Though, our investigation makes many important contributions, our findings are to be interpreted with caution because of some limitations.

The sample we used had multiple attractive proprieties for testing our hypothesis. For example, people have been working together and, consequently, have known each other well. However, our investigation took place during the summer holidays, therefore we could not ensure a large sample size. We could not randomly assign 32 participants into two groups in order to test the opinion leadership scale and the EI scale separately. Although we prepared two versions of the questionnaire (modifying the sequence of two scales), the context effects could lead to biased answers. Moreover, we suppose that because of the small sample size, we could not properly run a Poisson regression to analyze what effect do opinion leadership and EI scores have on the number of advices and opinion changes. Additionally, the small sample size could explain non-significant results for the opinion leadership scale and the EI scale by measuring the change of opinions. However, this also could be explained either by low performance of both scales in predicting opinion changes, or by the particularities of the game. Because of the small sample size, we wanted to increase the number of responds and let the participants see the advices of their two colleagues. Taking into account that all advices were faked, they should be different to be plausible. Some of these advices, however, could be easier recalled than the others. In the case of larger sample size, we could provide the same advice for all participants in order to avoid this effect.

The second limitation is that all participants have worked for one company. Consequently, we cannot exclude the influence of the corporate culture on the outputs.

Thus, to make conclusions about generalizability of the obtained results, this study should be replicated with other samples.

We also should notice that during the game two participants mentioned that they choose a particular advice because of the intellectual abilities of an adviser. Though, the game did not suppose using of intellectual capabilities, the participants could unconsciously associate higher IQ with better ability to solve practical problems.

Unfortunately, taking into account the length of IQ tests, we did not have the possibility to check this hypothesis on the final stage of our study.

Therefore, as a direction for further research we propose to compare EI and IQ effects on individual social influence for different tasks (high risk/low risk; high involvement/low involvement), contexts (friends/colleagues/neighbors) and for different groups of products.

In our study we demonstrated that EI has a measurable effect on informational influence. However, it also would be interesting to explore possible moderators and mediators. Emotional abilities, like normal mental abilities, reflect optimal performance. Consequently, the application on these abilities can differ depending on the situation and the desire of an individual to apply his skills. For example, Rode et al. (2007) demonstrated that EI increases the effectiveness of team-work but only in interaction with conscientiousness. Hence, the effect that emotional abilities have on informational influence may be moderated or mediated by motivation and personality traits.

The next direction for further research is aimed to overcome the disadvantages of self-reported tests. Specifically, in the situation when a respondent understands that his evaluation depends on his scores, a self-reported test can be faked. Moreover, it was shown that sometimes respondents assess their ability not properly just because it is complicated for them to judge themselves objectively. (Brackett et al. 2006) The ability-based approach to EI provides a possibility to measure EI with performance-based scales. Widely recognized in scientific literature Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) demonstrates high reliability and validity (Mayer/Salovey/Caruso & Sitarenios 2003). However, because of its length (141 items), costs, complexity of administration and difficulty to combine this scale with other scales, this instrument cannot be considered as convenient. Nevertheless, it should be taking into account that EI became a research object only recently. In future, the development of briefer performance-based EI test can help to avoid socially desirable responding and make the measurements more objective. Moreover, there already exist briefer performance-based tests of EI for specific domains. For example, Emotional Intelligence in Marketing Exchanges (EIME), a performance-based scale aimed to assess emotional abilities of sales managers, which contains 15 items. (Kidwell et al. 2011) Another performance-based EI scale is Consumer Emotional

Intelligence Scale (CEIS), consisting of 18 items. (Kidwell/ Hardesty & Childers 2008) Unfortunately, both scales include only questions on social interactions with sales personal, totally ignoring consumer-to-consumer communication. We believe that briefer performance-based EI tests including items on consumer-to-consumer interactions will be developed in future. Then, it would be interesting to compare the performance of a self-reported and a performance-based EI tests in measuring informational influence.

In our study we concentrated on the case that nobody possessed expert knowledge. However, it would also be useful to test the interaction of product expertise and EI´s effects on informational influence. For example, to replicate the study, but instead of task of choosing food for a cosmic monster, let participants make decisions about some real product or many products belonging to different categories.

Finally, our investigation considers only one type of individual social influence i.e. informational influence. Additionally, the effects of EI on the other types of individual social influence, for example normative influence, should be studied.

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Appendix A

Opinion leadership scale (Reynolds & Darden 1971)

1. My friends and neighbors often ask my advice

2. I sometimes influence the types of products my friends buy

3. My friends come to me more often than I go to them for information

4. I feel that I am generally regarded by my friends and neighbors as a good source of advice

5. I can think of at least of two people whom I have told about some products in the last six months

Appendix B

EI scale (Wong & Law 2002)

1. I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time

2. I have good understanding of my own emotions

3. I really understand what I feel

4. I always know whether or not I am happy

5. I always know my friends emotions from their behavior

6. I am a good observer of others´ emotions

7. I am sensitive to the feeling and emotions of others

8. I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me

9. I always set goals for myself and then I try my best to achieve them

10. I always tell myself I am a competent person

11. I am a self-motivating person

12. I would always encourage myself to try my best

13. I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally

14. I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions

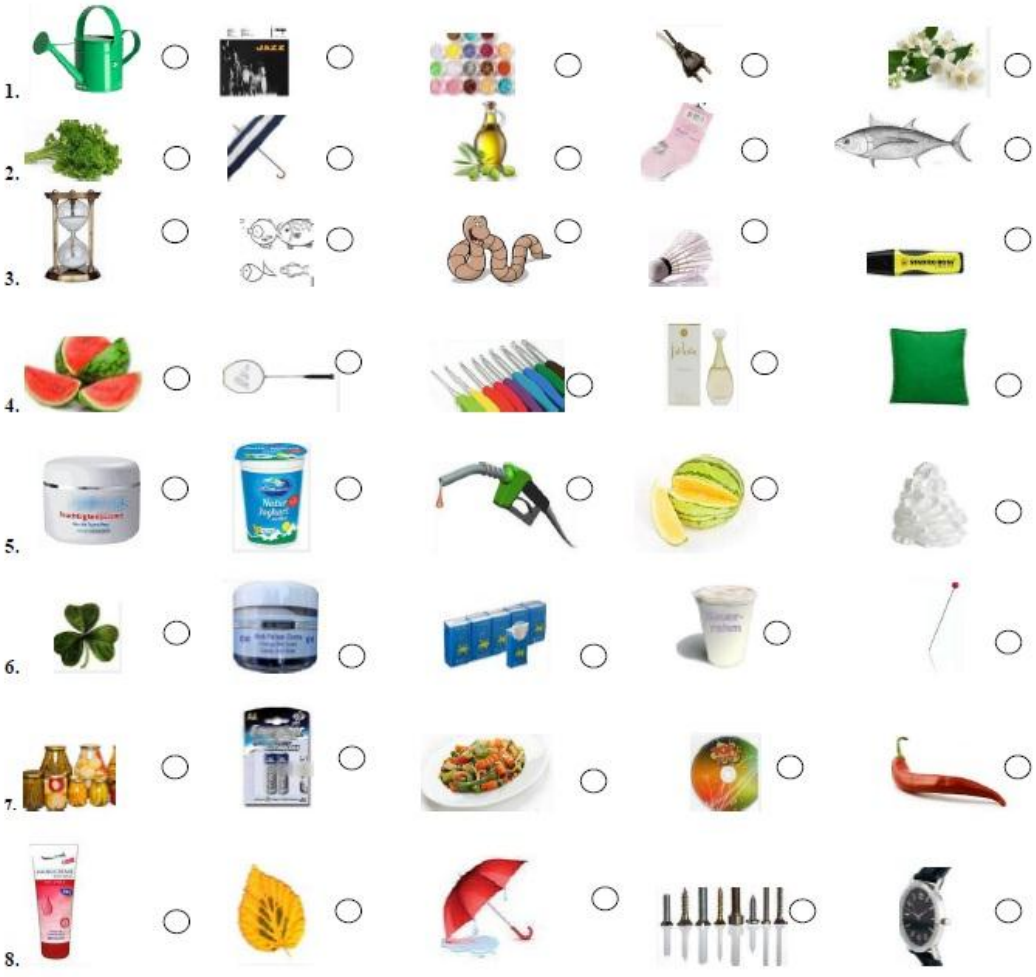
15. I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry

16. I have good control of my own emotions

Appendix C

The cosmic monster game

In Berlin stürzte ein Raumschiff ab. Im Inneren befindet sich ein Weltraummonster von einer unbekannten Spezies und eine Instruktion zur seiner Ernährung in seiner Sprache. Das Weltraummonster will essen. Aber leider haben wir keine Zeit für eine gute Übersetzung der Instruktion.
Ich bitte um Ihre Hilfe, die richtigen Produkte für das Weltraummonster zu wählen. Für einige Fragen sind mehr als eine richtige Antwort möglich. Nutzen Sie Ihre Intuition oder die Instruktion zur gesunden Ernährung des Weltraummonsters, die auf der Festplatte V / Katja / Weltraummonster gespeichert ist. Für jede richtige Antwort erhält der Teilnehmer einen Punkt, für jede falsche Antwort -1 Punkt. Kreuzen Sie die richtige Antwort an.
Sie können auch Ihren Kollegen helfen und schriftliche Ratschläge geben, was Ihrer Meinung nach für das Weltraummonster gesund oder ungesund ist.
Schreiben Sie ihre Tipps auf der Unterseite des Fragebogens. Die drei Personen, welche die beste Ernährung für das Weltraummonster finden, sowie die drei besten „Tippgeber" bekommen eine Flasche Sekt von einem dankbaren Weltraummonster. Nach einer Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse können wir geneinsam die Rettung des Weltraummonsters mit Café und Kuchen feiern.



Tipp für andere Spielteinehmer

Name_____

Statement

I ensure: I wrote the master thesis myself without the use of any means or sources other than indicated.

This paper was not submitted to any other examination committees.

Frankfurt (Oder), 11.09.2014 Signature