

Thesis submitted for the Doctor of  
Philosophy in Management for the  
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*We see them as we are, not as  
they are: the interaction  
between high potential  
employees' use of emotional  
intelligence and the  
achievement of potential*

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## **Abstract:**

The model of achievement of potential (CLC 2005), and the two-dimensional ability (Mayer and Salovey 1997), competency (Goleman 1995) and trait (Bar-On 1997) models of emotional intelligence are positioned in postpositive conversations that define and then measure the constructs. Using a qualitative approach and an empirical phenomenological strategy supported by un-structured interviews, organisational artefacts and observations, this research explores the manifestation of these constructs from the perspective of embedded, multiple-cases within an Australian Public Service organisation. Ability, aspiration and engagement are negatively impacted by negative supervisor behaviour, poor quality work and development opportunities, and perceived breaches of organisational commitment in the form of broken promises and unfair or unclear application of policies. The participants used a contextual and one-dimensional emotional intelligence that was impacted by new or difficult situations, and when motivated participants developed new and conscious processes to manage specific issues and these processes may become automatic if resulting in success. Participants also used emotionally intelligent, manipulative, negative, intuitive, and unintelligent processes to achieve their potential. The research findings add participant perceptions to the relationship between emotional intelligence and context, motivation and dual processing, and contribute to the discussion of the *dark side of emotional intelligence*. The contextual and one-dimensional emotional intelligence provides an understanding of how participants use emotional intelligence that challenges current assumptions for the relationship between emotional intelligence and recruitment, selection and individual development in an organisational context. The generalisation of findings is limited by the contextualising of results within the Australian Public Service, the limited sample size, open-ended and untested nature of the interviews, and the focus on work achievement.

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