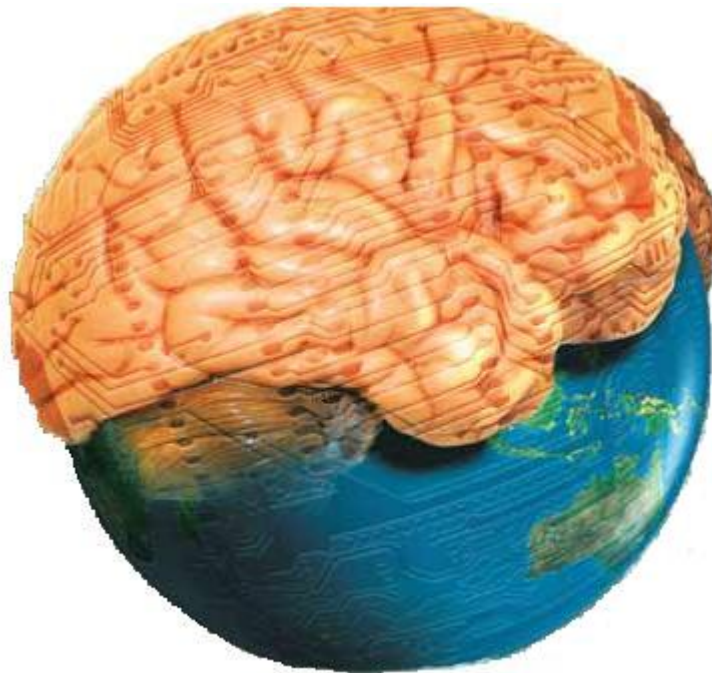


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**The role of intuition on CEO strategic decision
making concerning internationalization.**



Author: Ben O.M. van der Knaap – student number 308497

Coach RSM University Rotterdam
Co-Reader RSM University Rotterdam

Dr. F. Wijen
Dr. J. van Wijk

Foreword

Learning and experiencing are essential for the creation of your own personality. This is a life long process with phases of set backs and prosperity. The choices we take stipulate the path of our successes and failures. Would it not be great when you can learn how to make the right decisions? The answer is probably no. Mistakes are there to be made and from our mistakes we often learn the most. Though learning to make better decisions is an enviable endeavor. One of my better decisions was the choice to attend this study at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. This was one of those times that my intuition did not fail me and that I was able to disregard my emotions which were concerned with how much this study would impose on my private life.

Unfortunately it did off course impose on my private life, though due to the support of my wife it was something that could be overcome. Therefore I like to thank her for her trust in me, her love, her wisdom and support. I also like to thank my parents for their support and for always being there when needed, especially my father who again found the time to help editing this thesis.

Three other persons have been very important for the completion of this report. Firstly, I like to thank Harm Hermans for creating the opportunity for me to follow this study. I also want to thank him for the interesting discussions we have had and the insights he gave me on this topic. Secondly, I want to thank Paul van Loon for his view on intuition, his interest in the subject and the enriching insights as result of our discussions. Thirdly, I want to thank my coach Dr. Frank Wijen for his patience, his guidance and his time and effort. I also want to thank him for directing me in the right direction during some critical phases when writing this thesis.

I also like to thank Dr. Jeroen van Wijk for his time and effort and his remarks that enabled me to fine tune this thesis. Last but not least I want to thank all the interviewees, mentioned in this thesis, for their input and time. I found all interviews to be very interesting and a truly valuable experience from which I have learned more than I expected.

“Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas”

“Fortuned is he who comes to know the causes of things”

(Virgilius, Georgica 2,490)

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Management Summary

The current theories of strategic decision making are based upon the paradigms of rationality, bounded rationality and heuristics. The use of intuition has not found solid ground within the theories of strategic decision making yet, though the subject starts to get more attention from scholars within the field of strategic management. This thesis researches the role of intuition on Chief Executive Officer (CEO) strategic decision making concerning internationalization. The research is based upon three pillars: (1) theoretical background of intuition and strategic decision making, (2) the paradigms of the strategic choice theory and internationalization theory and (3) the field research based on semi-structured interviews.

Based on prior research and theories the definition of intuition is formulated:

“Thoughts and/or actions formed by a non-rational process of making holistic associations based upon subconscious experiential knowledge.”

Theoretical findings showed that intuition can be activated and cultivated and can be obstructed by rationale and emotions. This led to the understanding that there are three inner powers that influence the inner personal decision making process of people: (1) rationale, (2) intuition and (3) emotions. Based on the theories of strategic decision making and intuition, combined with the paradigms of the strategic choice theory and internationalization theory, all external variables of influence on the internal decision making process of a CEO are defined. This results in a framework for well considered CEO internationalization strategic decision making.

Derived from this general model, the research framework is formulated. This framework focuses on the role of intuition on the strategic decision outcome of effective internationalization. The CEO as decision maker has to deal with the environment. The input he receives from this environment influences his inner personal decision making process. The proposed variables that increase or enhance the use of intuition are: (1) information uncertainty, (2) prior experience, (3) learning ability, (4) acceptance and awareness of intuition and (5) cultivating and activating intuition. The variables that have a moderating influence on effective internationalization are rationale and emotions.

The research results show that not all the variables can be validated (ability to learn and the moderating variable rationale that follows a curve linear), though reflected with the theoretical study, the moderating variable of rationale is validated after all. Prior experience leads to increased use of intuition because it increases knowledge and decrease uncertainty. Though, to be able to use our intuition we have to be aware of it and accept it. When we do so, according to theory and empirical research, it can be cultivated and activated. The use of heuristics seems very similar to the activities that can increase the use of intuition. Besides heuristics, intuition is also often used as a tool to simplify the decision making process. It seems that intuition could be a part of heuristics or completes the general theories of strategic decision making. Overall it can be concluded that intuition indeed plays an important role within the strategic decision making process. The

use of intuition leads to effective internationalization, but must be moderated by rationale and emotions in order to make truly effective decisions.

Making a decision solely on one of the three inner powers leads to ineffective decisions.

The decision maker has to learn to reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions, in order to come to the most effective decision outcome.

To create a place for intuition within the theory of strategic decision making, it would be recommendable to perform more research on a larger scale. This research and its outcomes must be valued in relation to the interviews carried out.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The last decade the world has become more complex and dynamic as result of globalization, increase of innovative technology, speed of communication and the twenty four hours economy. The worldwide marketplace has become more accessible for customers, suppliers and competitors. Organizations that internationalize have to make complex decisions and the role of their top executives have become more important. These top executives have to decide within an environment that is changing every day. Interesting to know is how they deal with this complex and unstable environment and how they can make effective decisions concerning internationalization. These issues are often described in management magazines and newspapers. A frequently discussed topic is that the rational decision making model often is not adequate anymore for the modern manager. The complexity of the environment and the abundance of information may lead to a cognitive overload. The modern manager has to deal with this complex environment and develop skills to be able to survive.

Another topic of attention is the use of intuition by managers and how they use their intuition to make decisions. Intuition is nothing new; we use it every day when making decisions, we are just often not aware of it. This because of the fact that intuition is a subconscious process it often stays intangible for people and difficult to explain.

Though intuitive processes are used with decision making and could be of importance for the whole decision making process, there is not much field research performed on this subject. Yes, there are quite a few treatments on the subject in recent literature, but they are mainly theoretical from origin instead of based on field research within the context of a management environment (Khatri & Alvin, 2000).

The media gives more and more attention to the subject, mostly in intellectual and management magazines but also in newspapers. Ap Dijksterhuis, Volkskrant 06-10-2007, page 1: "Decisions you make subconscious are often the best ones."

Within the field of management consultancy and coaching you can also see the change towards the areas of management by looking at psychology and philosophy. We have to ask ourselves if intuition does not deserve more attention, in order to fully comprehend the decision making process and be able to cope with this current complex environment of internationalization.

1.2. Research context

Research of the role of intuition within the decision making process can be performed in different ways. To be able to place the subject of intuition within a theoretical framework and perform a field research, we have to define the boundaries of the research context.

According to Eisenhardt & Zbaracki (1992) there are different paradigms concerning strategic decision making (rationality and bounded rationality, politics and power, and the garbage can theory). They state that strategic decision making is a mix of rationality and

politics were the person with the most power makes the decision. The persons that hold most power within organizations are normally the chief executive officers (CEO's). The CEO, in his role of strategic decision maker, is influenced by his/her internal and external environment and that of the organization.

As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, the world is getting more complex and dynamic. The marketplace is becoming more international and many organizations have to decide on internationalization topics. There is a lot of research in the field of internationalization and the way in which organizations internationalize. The question to internationalize has become for many organizations an important strategic decision.

Based on these facts the research context is set. The focus areas of the research context are: intuition, strategic decision making process, internationalization and CEO decision behavior.

The research will investigate the role of intuition within the strategic decision making process of CEO's, concerning the topic internationalization. The decision maker, in this research the CEO, is seen as the analytical entity.

1.3. Problem definition

Within the current time frame the complexity of strategic decision making concerning internationalization is increasing. Top executives, for example, have to deal with increased speed of communication; an overload of data, pressure on the time to decide and the choice how to enter new markets. This can result in uncertainty about which decision to make. When the decision making process can be optimized and clarified we might be able to learn and improve the outcome of our decisions.

The rational decision making process is clear; though the influence and role of intuition within the strategic decision making process is not. Does intuition play a role, if so which role, and can it improve the effectiveness of the strategic decision.

Main question:

How can intuition lead to effective CEO strategic decision making, concerning internationalization?

Sub questions:

In order to get an answer on the main question, the question is divided in three sub questions.

1. What is the framework of a strategic decision making process?

It is important to know how a strategic decision making process looks like. To get a good view of the strategic decision making process it has to be made clear which aspects and actors play a role. When and how do these aspects and actors play a role? In addition it is important to know how strategic decision making processes differ from strategic decision making processes within the complex and dynamic environment of internationalization.

2. How does intuition influence the decision making process of a CEO?

After defining all aspects of the strategic decision making process, then it has to be researched which role intuition has within this decision making process. Therefore the rational decision making process has to be clarified in order to be able to start to understand the intuitive decision making process. In addition it is important to know when and how intuition influences the decision making process of a CEO, and what the impact is on the total strategic decision making process. To create a clear view of this process, the possible obstacles for the use of intuition have to be investigated and defined. It must be made clear when intuition can be used as a value adding tool for decision making.

3. How does the context of internationalization influence the total strategic decision making process of a CEO?

When it is suggested that internationalization within a complex and dynamic environment means that the developments within this environment are more difficult to predict, then it is important to know how this influences the decision making process of a CEO. Can it be that CEO's whom have had prior experience with internationalization learn to cope with these aspects of internationalization? Do they reduce their uncertainty when dealing with these kinds of decisions and does this lead to increased use of intuition? Are organizations and CEO's able to learn and be aware of the use of intuition, so that they can use it more pro-active and effective when dealing with strategic decision making concerning internationalization?

1.4. Literature study

The literature referred to is based upon the questions stated in the prior paragraph. The topics of the literature study are the strategic decision making process and intuition, complemented with the paradigms of the strategic choice theory and internationalization theory. To get better insight in the strategic decision making process, within the context of internationalization, the theories and research results will be reflected with the paradigms of the strategic choice theory and internationalization theory. With these paradigms the conclusions of this thesis will be refined.

Strategic Choice theory

The strategic choice theory (Andrews, 1986; Child, 1972) describes the actions that actors within an organization take in order to adapt to their environment in and clarifies the organizational changes and processes. Miles and Snow (1978) identify three fundamental characteristics of the strategic choice perspective. They conclude that this perspective: (1) sees management of strategic choice as primary link between the organization and its environment, (2) focuses on the ability of the management to create, learn, and manage on based on the environment of the organization and (3) describes all different manners on which organizations react to their environment.

Internationalization theory

Internationalization is a process as organizations increase their involvement in international operations. This theory suggests that organizations lack knowledge of foreign markets and therefore have a substantial amount of uncertainty when launching international activities. The experience of doing business within foreign markets leads to an increase of knowledge and reduction of risk and uncertainty. This can lead to more investments in foreign operations.

1.5. Research methodology

This paragraph describes the method of research used in this thesis. First of all, this research has a qualitative research character which means that the perception of knowledge on the subject and context is received through the ‘eyes’ of somebody else (Jonker and Pennink, 2004). Data will be collected based upon the research framework. The research propositions are based upon this framework.

Data is collected through qualitative interviews with CEO’s of international operating organizations. The interview is structured based upon the research framework and the outcomes of the interviews are structured based upon the propositions. This enables the researcher to identify relevant and irrelevant remarks concerning the proposition validation or rejection. The conclusion of the research is based upon the triangulation of theoretical research, paradigms and field research. The result of this research will define the relevance of intuition for the research field of strategic management, especially on strategic decision making.

2. Theoretical research

2.1. Intuition

Gut-feeling, hunch, seeing and insight, all words used in relation with intuition. But what is intuition? Through the years many scholars have tried to define or/and clarify the meaning of intuition (see fig. 1 - listed in chronological order -)¹. Scholars from various backgrounds like Jung (psychology), Wild, Rorty (philosophy) Shapiro, Berne, Young (medical science), Simon and Mintzberg (management) shed their light upon the intangible subject of intuition. Although intuition is a broad concept, there are three elements that re-occur in the long list of definitions. These elements are subconsciousness, experiential knowledge and holistic associations. All three elements will be described, resulting in a definition that captures the totality of intuition.

2.1.1. Subconsciousness

As said in the preface intuition is nothing vague however, the process of intuition is difficult to clarify. Intuition comes from non-verbal activity of the right hemisphere of the brain (Young, 1963), though our understandings of the workings of the human brain are not sufficient enough to give and answer to how intuitive actions or decisions arise. The reason for this is, that sources for intuitive acting are subconscious, unconscious and/or supra conscious, which enter consciousness without rational thought or careful analysis and quantitative calculation (Lank & Lank, 1995). Because of this non-rational thinking, the person using intuition is not able to formulate to him or others exactly how he came to his conclusions (Berne, 1949). This makes intuition difficult to apprehend.

For example, managers speak of gut-feeling or hunches to clarify their decisions, better described by scholars as immediate apprehension (Rorty, 1967), understanding without rationale (Benner & Tanner, 1987), or acts of recognition (Simon, 1996).

For a better understanding of subconsciousness or non-rationality, the definition of rationality will have to be clarified. With rationality we mean logical thinking, actions and decisions based upon analysis, conscious thinking and reasoning. Rational decision making is a linear process of decomposing problems, approaching each sub-problem sequentially using logic and data (Sauter, 1999).

¹ Figure 1 is based on prior research of Dane & Pratt (2007) and supplemented with new definitions by the author.

2.1.2. *Experiential knowledge*

The above definitions of intuition give more insight into where intuition comes from and what the output of intuition is. However they still do not explain what intuition really is. Based on the above we can say that intuition is a form of knowledge, from which it can be stated that information can be drawn in an immediate subconscious manner. Intuition is having the capacity for direct, immediate knowledge prior to rational analysis (Myers, 2002). As Berne explains in his research “this knowledge is based on experience and is acquired through sensory contact with the subject”. In other words, psychiatrists can base their diagnosis of a patient on prior experiences with patients with similar symptoms. The definition of Berne implies that intuition is knowledge based on experience with certain subjects. Translating this to managerial issues, a CEO can make fast strategic decisions based on prior experience in a similar situation. This prior experience results in compressed expertise, a way of rapidly accessing chunks and patterns of knowledge formed by previous experience (Seal, 1990). This experience or compressed expertise is the basis of intuition and gives a perception of possibilities, meanings, and relationships by way of insight (Gerrity, 1987), resulting in cognitive conclusions based on a decision maker’s previous experiences and emotional inputs (Burke & Miller, 1999).

2.1.3. *Holistic associations*

When called upon these experiences, it forms relationships, patterns, meanings and associations about the subject, topic or problem in question and generates subconsciously the answer, judgment or action. It is a sense of feeling of pattern or relationships “holistic thinking, immediate insight, seeing the answer without knowing it was reached” (Thorne, 1990), a preliminary perception of coherence (pattern, meaning, structure) that is first not consciously represented but that nevertheless guides thought and inquiry towards a hunch or hypothesis about the nature of the coherence in question (Bowers, et all, 1987). The process of making holistic associations based upon experiences forms the basis for making intuitive decisions.

2.1.4. Definition of intuition

Bringing all these definitions of intuition together and categorize them gives us more insight in intuition and what it really is. Intuition is personal, subconscious, knowledge based on experience, translated into answers by holistic associations. Or put in other words:

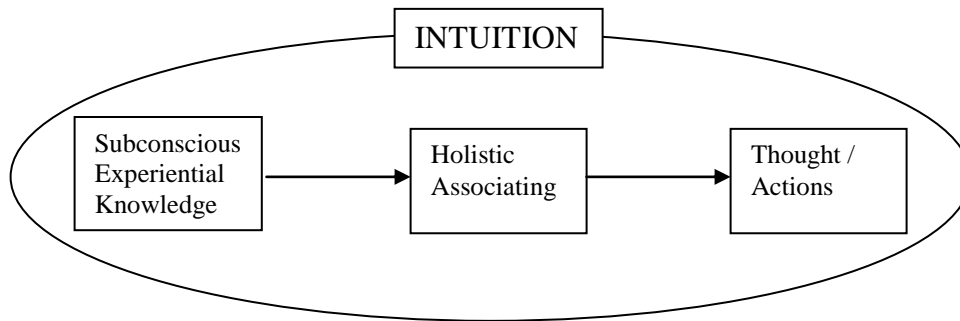
“Thoughts and/or actions formed by a non-rational process of making holistic associations based upon subconscious experiential knowledge.”

Figure 1: Theories of intuition

Source	Date	Definition of intuition
Jung	1933: 567-568	That psychological function transmitting perceptions in an unconscious way
Wild	1938: 226	An immediate awareness by the subject, of some particular entity, without such aid from the senses or from reason as would account for that awareness
Berne	1949, 205	A knowledge based on experience and acquired through sensory contact with the subject, without the intuer' being able to formulate to himself or others exactly how he came to his conclusions
Bruner	1962:102	The act of grasping the meaning, significance, or structure of a problem without explicit reliance on the basis of significantly more information
Westcott & Ranzoni	1963: 595	The process of reaching a conclusion on the basis of little information, normally reached on the basis of significantly more information
Rorty	1967: 204	Immediate apprehension
Young	1983	Non-verbal activity of the right hemisphere of the brain
Agor	1984:	Decision-makers might sense feelings and visual clues or see pattern in apparently unrelated facts. To the observer, intuitive decision-making appears to include instant information processing and choice
Bowers, Regehr, Balthazard, &		understanding without rationale
Benner & Tanner	1987-23	A perception of possibilities, meanings, and relationships by way of insight
Gerrity	1987-63	Knowledge of fact or truth as a whole; immediate possession of knowledge; and knowledge independent of the linear reasoning process
Rew & Barron	1987-60	Immediate knowledge of something without the conscious use of reason
Schrader & Fischer	1987-47	1989 It is a sophisticated form of reasoning based on 'chunking' that an expert hones over years of job-specific experience
Prietula & Simon		
Parker	1990: 74	A preliminary perception of coherence (pattern, meaning, structure) that is at first not consciously represented but that nevertheless guides thought and inquiry toward a hunch or hypothesis about the nature of the coherence in question
Seal	1990: 104	Compressed expertise, a way of rapidly accessing chunks and patterns of knowledge formed from previous experience.
Thorne	1990: 68	"A sense of feeling of pattern or relationships" "holistic thinking, immediate insight, seeing the answer without knowing how it was reached"
Vaughan	1990	A 'synthetic' psychological function in that it apprehends the totality of a given situation
Mintzberg (interview by Andrew Campbell)	1991: 109	A deeply held sense that something is going to work. It is grounded in the context in which it is relevant and based on experience of that context
Lank & Lank	1995-19	A brain skill operating largely from the right hemisphere, capable of entering awareness at physical, emotional and mental levels, whose sources are the subconscious, unconscious and/or supraconscious, and which enters consciousness without rational thought or careful analysis and quantitative calculation
Shirley & Langan-Fox	1996: 564	A feeling of knowing with certitude on the basis of inadequate information and without conscious awareness of rational thinking
Simon	1996: 89	Acts of recognition
Shapiro & Spence	1997: 92	A nonconscious, holistic processing mode in which judgements are made with no awareness of the rules of knowledge used for inference and which can feel right, despite one's inability to articulate the reason
Cioffi	1997-204	Lacking underlying conscious processes and as not being able to be explained in a tangible manner
Wierzbicki	1997-69	Quasi-conscious and subconscious information processing, leading to an action, utilizing aggregated experience and training and performed (most probably) by a specialized part of the human mind
Burke & Miller	1999: 92	A cognitive conclusion based on a decision maker's previous experiences an emotional inputs
Leiberman	2000: 111	The subjective experience of a mostly nonconscious process - fast, allogical, and inaccessible to consciousness - that, depending on exposure to the domain or problem space, is capable of accurately extracting probabilistic contingencies
Raidl & Lubart	2000-2001: 219	A perceptual process, constructed through a mainly unconscious act of linking disparate elements of information
Hogarth	2001: 14	Thoughts that are reached with little apparent effort, and typically without conscious awareness; the involve little or no conscious deliberation
Myers	2002: 128-129	The capacity for direct, immediate knowledge prior to rational analysis
Kahneman	2003: 697	Thoughts and preference that come to mind quickly and without much reflection
Epstein (quoted by Pratt, 2007: 35)	2004	The working of the experiential system
Miller & Ireland	21st c	Holistic hunch: judgement or choice made through a subconscious synthesis of information drawn from diverse experiences. Automated expertise: corresponding to recognition of a familiar situation and the straightforward but partially subconscious application of previous learning related to that situation
Dijksterhuis (interview, de Volkskrant)	2007: 1	A autonomous decision-making mechanism, based upon the unconsciousness
Pratt	2007: 40	Affectively charged judgements that arise through rapid, nonconscious, and holistic associations

Figure 2, clarifies the process of intuition based upon the stated definition. As said earlier, intuition is subconscious and therefore it is difficult to comprehend when and how it can be used. Can we activate our intuition in an instant, can we cultivate our intuition and which tools do we need to do so?

Figure 2: Process of intuition



2.2. How can we put intuition to work?

According to different scholars intuition can be switched on, or triggered and even cultivated. Intuition is seen, by these scholars, as indispensable for good decision making.

At a time of rapid and unprecedented change in the business environment, intuition plays an increasingly significant role in contemporary decision strategies. Executives who understand how to balance their use of intuition and analytical thinking may be better prepared to lead in this environment (Burke & Miller, 1999).

In order to be able to use intuition, it must be clarified how we can activate intuition and put it to use in order to make more effective decisions. Prior research suggests that many adults have not developed their intuition to any significant extent and that managers are often trained to disregard and mistrust their judgment. Increased organizational and employee awareness of and practice with integrating intuitive skills into decision making, are essential (Burke & Miller, 1999). In order to create this awareness, acceptance of intuition is needed. There is much research that proves the advantages of the use of intuition. To get a better understanding of the use of intuition techniques to cultivate and activate intuition, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1. Techniques to cultivate intuition

Intuition can be cultivated and developed in order to use it. According to Burke & Miller (1999), intuitive skills can be enhanced and managers have a set of practical methods that increase the knowledge about the way how intuition works and therefore can be put to use. Agor (1986) and Vaughan (1979) speak of basic principles of intuition and how the use of it can be stimulated. All the methods of Burke & Miller, Agor and Vaughan put together result in a list of techniques that cultivate intuition. This list can be found in appendix 2.

According to Vaughan (1979) learning to awaken intuition is paradoxical, since intuitive experiences tend to occur spontaneously and too much effort is apt to interfere with the process. Yet although one cannot make intuition happen, there is much that can be done to allow it to happen.

2.2.2. *Techniques to activate intuition*

Now that we can cultivate intuition, the question rises: “How can we activate it?” According to Agor (1986), intuitive executives have a clear set of techniques that they use in bringing their brain skill “on line” to help guide their most important decisions. This set consists of relaxation techniques, mental exercises and analytical exercises. In appendix 3 you will find a further explanation of these three techniques/exercises.

Tuning in to intuition, as Vaughan puts it, follows a similar path of techniques and exercises. The first step is learning to let yourself be. Awakening intuition is not about “getting more”; it is about “being more” who you really are. This has a lot to do about being honest to yourself and the acceptance of who you are instead of taking on a role. The exercises, put forward by Vaughan, focus on relaxation, concentration, receptivity and self awareness. These exercises are easy to practice and accessible for everyone. Further explanation of these exercises can be found in her book “Awakening Intuition”.

2.2.3. *Intuition caught in the middle*

There are three inner powers that influence the personal decision making process. According to neuroscience, rational thinking and decision making are processes in the left hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere is where creativity and emotions find their roots, but also intuitive decision making. In this right hemisphere of the brain we have at one extreme the instantaneous, purely emotional, often irrational reaction to a situation. At the other extreme, intuition can be found. It complements and augments fairly thorough analytical reasoning about the options available to the decision maker, based on his or her experience and learning about relevant issues (Patton, 2003).

As explained, to cultivate and activate intuition, we have to learn to set aside rational thinking and emotions, in order to free our intuition. Though one should never make a decision solely based on intuition. Intuitive impressions alone do not provide enough information to make a fully informed decision. But then neither does logic or emotion. Only by combining our intuition, logic and emotions can we operate at our most effective levels (Patton, 2003). However the weight of the three powers in the decision making process can differ, depending on the situation and characteristics of the decision.

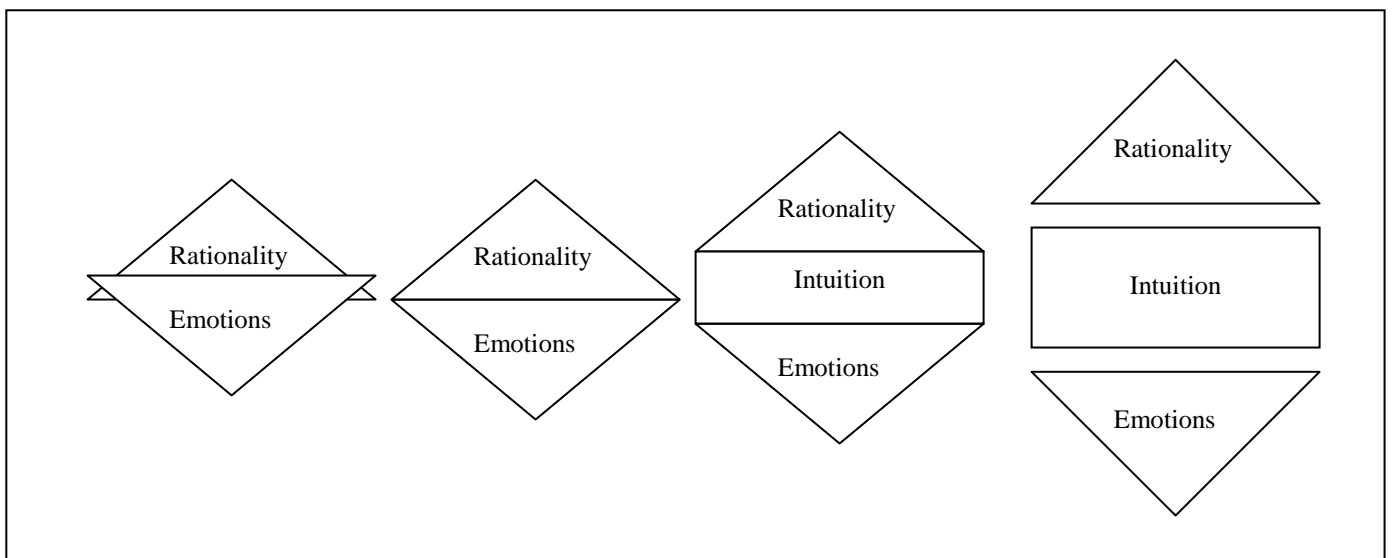
Simon (1987) describes that for example emotions can play a more prominent role when managers face difficult decisions of which the outcome may affect a lot of people. Uncertainty, feelings of guilt, anxiety and embarrassment may lead to behavior that produces temporary personal comfort for the decision maker, but it may result in bad long lasting consequences for the organization. Therefore certain emotions may cloud the path

which leads to the right decision. Not only the emotions described above, but also feelings such as need for status, arrogance, feelings of fear and anger have a negative influence on the decision making process. According to Vaughan (1979), behind fear, anger, depression, and anxiety is hidden the capacity for love, joy, serenity and compassion. Behind all emotions is the wisdom of intuition that can lead one to the full experience of the central core of being. A commitment to awakening intuition is a commitment to truth. It means willingness to know yourself as you are, dropping pretences and disguises no matter how successful your particular act may be in terms of getting approval from others. Empathy and sensitivity are good examples of emotional means for making choices.

On the other hand we have rationality that may restrict the use of intuition. In our Western society we learn to rely on our rational thought, data and analysis, instead of using the whole set of decision making power. We create an environment in which rationality forms the basis for strategic organizational decision making. Sometimes this may lead to an overkill of analysis and data, without offering one clear choice or direction, which in turn leads to uncertainty.

Based upon the prior mentioned scholars and their theories, it is clear that we cannot leave intuition out of the picture of the decision making process, as well as emotions and rationality. These powers serve each other in making good strategic decisions. We have to learn to use all three powers and form interplay between these powers. In order to reach this level executives have to go through several steps: 1. learning to understand how they use rational analyses and not let their “bad” emotions interfere with decision making, 2. find a good balance between rationale and the “good” emotions, 3. free intuition by cultivating and activating it, 4. learn to reflect all three powers on the subject of the decision. Figure 3 shows the process of cultivating and activating intuition in order to make decisions based upon the three powers.

Figure 3: Releasing intuition



2.2.4. *Conclusion three powers of internal decision making*

The internal process of decision making is based upon three powers: rationale, intuition and emotions. These powers affect each other and must be used in the right mix to be able to make effective decisions. Too much rationale or emotions can lead to ineffective decision making and obstructs the use of intuition. Learning to reflect on our emotions and rationale gives the opportunity to use intuition. In order to be able to use our intuition we first have to be aware of it and accept it. Awareness and acceptance of intuition are critical to be able to use all three powers. When accepted, intuition can be cultivated and activated with a set of techniques. Decisions only based on one or two of the three inner powers will often lead to ineffective decision making.

But when do these thoughts and actions play a part in the strategic decision making process of internationalization? Probably the use of intuition also depends on more factors alone than the ones described above, and is influenced by the whole context of strategic decision making process itself. To answer this question we at first have to understand the process of strategic decision making.

2.3. **Strategic decision making**

To define strategic decision making we have to know what makes a decision a strategic one. A strategic decision is ‘important’, in terms of the actions taken, the resources committed, or the precedents set.’ That is, we focus on those infrequent decisions made by top leaders of an organization that critically affect organizational health and survival (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). Besides this definition of strategic decision making, we still have to unravel the process of decision making.

The theory of strategic decision making is subject to three main paradigms: (1) rationality and bounded rationality, (2) politics and power and (3) garbage can. Empirical research supports only modestly the central idea of the garbage can perspective. The theory even suggests that strategic decision making is best described as a combination of bounded rational and political insights (Eisenhardt, 1992). In this research we will therefore not further focus on the garbage can theory. Instead we will look at a new emerging theory, that of heuristics. In the past few years, the idea of using heuristics in decision making has gained more ground.

If we look closer at the subject “strategy” we can also state that strategy is affected by organizational, individual and environmental inputs. Mintzberg classifies ten schools of strategy forming, all with a different view on strategy forming. The first three schools (designing, planning and positioning) of Mintzberg are prescriptive and form a rational basis for strategic decision making. The entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, cultural and environmental schools describe the process how strategies are made. The last school of Mintzberg is the configuration school that combines all the nine prior schools and explains the transformation of strategy over time. These transformations occur due too changes that an organization may encounter over time. The schools are results of the situation or stage in which an organization is in (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1998).

The ten schools explain very clearly strategy formation; they do not explain the strategic decision making process. Mintzberg touches the subject “intuition” and “insight” and places it in the entrepreneurial and learning school. It is likely that entrepreneurs thrive more on their intuition and that through learning more experiential knowledge is gained. However intuition is personal and every person has it and can use it. This means that intuition can influence every decision making process, regardless the decision maker or subject. The schools say little about the decision making process and the process that takes place within the decision maker him- or herself. We have to unravel the decision making process and will not further elaborate upon the ten schools of Mintzberg. Still we will keep in mind that strategy is a result of the situations and stage in which an organization is in.

2.3.1. Rationality and bounded rationality

Decision making can be seen as a sequence of decomposed stages converting to a solution (Dewey, 1910). In its most basic form, the rational model of choice follows the everyday assumption that human behavior has some purpose (Eisenhardt, 1992). Herbert Simon opened up the concept of rationality by challenging the economists’ notion that decision makers armed with complete information about alternatives and their consequences simply select the one that maximizes their utility (Langley, Mintzberg et al, 1995). In the opinion of Simon decisions are not only based upon economic calculation but also on cognitive assumptions. Empirical research clearly supports the existence of cognitive limits to the rational model. Decision makers satisfy in their decision instead of optimizing it, and rarely engage in comprehensive research and just discover their goals in the process of research (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992).

Simon (1987) describes a three phase “intelligence design choice sequence”. This is a model of rational action. The three phases are identification, development, and selection. Simon stresses that these phases generally follow this sequence, however the process is iterative and each phase entails a complex judgment process in itself.

- a. Intelligence-gathering information to understand the problem, the risks involved, and key factors to consider;
- b. Design-identifying the alternative courses of action; and
- c. Choice-arriving at a decision as to the best alternative to take.

Simon also categorizes judgments along a continuum from "programmed" (repetitive, structured tasks) to "non-programmed" (novel, unstructured).

After the opening up of the rational model, a lot of scholars reshaped or adapted the model. Most of these changes were based upon the model of Simon, but with slight adaptations or by adding new insights. All scholars did not stray far from the basic idea of sequential steps in decision making, but the start of the process could differ. The basis for the paradigm of bounded rationality was formed.

Many strategic decisions follow the basic phases of problem identification, development and selection, but research also suggests that they cycle through various stages,

frequently repeating, often going deeper, and always following different paths in fits and starts (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). As an underlying reason for this phenomenon we can say that decision makers are imperfect information processors. They strive to follow the rational model, but depart from it at various points, in order to avoid the cognitive overload from which they would suffer by following it completely (Kraubuanrat & Phelps, 1998). Here starts the emerging of the heuristic school.

2.3.2. *Heuristics*

Decisions based upon heuristics are characterized by organizational routines, being the procedures for weighing and taking decisions which have been built up by the organization, or by individual managers, in the course of experience. Such heuristics may not be justifiable on the basis of the rational model, nor a proven case documented for their efficacy within the organization, but they will have proven through experience to give acceptable decisions in a robust manner (Kraubuanrat & Phelps, 1998). Here the link can be made with the school of thought of resource based competitive strategic advantage. Operations and the way of doing things within organizations is difficult to imitate and therefore more likely to be a source of competitive advantage. Heuristics are categorized in the following generic types (Kraubuanrat & Phelps, 1998):

1. Simplification: intentionally ignoring aspects of the decision in order to reduce the cognitive load;
2. Reference to past cases: identifying similar past cases and using their decision outcomes as guides;
3. Imitation: identifying similar decisions taken by other organizations and adopting them;
4. Risk aversion: searching for specified types of risk, carrying out small-scale experiments, relating to recent or high profile failure cases;
5. Satisficing: searching for an acceptable solution rather than the optimal one, only generating alternatives if the first possibility is rejected;
6. Cooperation: pooling knowledge, sharing risk with competitors, customers and suppliers.

Experience and learning are effective on the outcome of the decision. For organizations and individuals, routines and procedures to canalize knowledge and experience seem to have a positive effect on the decision making process.

2.3.3. *Politics and power*

In the process of strategic decision making people, especially at top management levels, interact to reach a decision. Often these top managers have their own goals and try to form coalitions to reach these goals. Organizations are seen as political systems, collectives of people with at least partially conflicting goals. But, within organizations the rules of power apply. The most powerful people will have preferences for a certain decision outcome. Empirical research supports the fact that choices among competing options are ultimately a reflection of the inequalities within the power structure

(Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). The game in politics is to gain power and enhance your influence, in order to get what you want. According to Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, people engage in political tactics such as cooptation, coalition formation and use of information to enhance their power.

Sometimes politics emphasizes the importance of the tactics of timing and opportunism. This is called incremental logics. According to the research of Quinn (1980) effective managers use such politics. Senior executives develop a broad strategy of what they wish to accomplish, but implement that strategy in a series of piecemeal, opportunistic decisions along “corridors of indifference”. This selective approach allows executives to build a power base for their ideas, to accelerate or delay as necessary, and to be flexible as the need to change arises (Quinn, 1980; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992).

The traditional view is that politics are essential to organizations (Quinn, 1980; Pfeffer, 1992; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Creating effective change and adaptation within organizations depends upon effective use of politics. However a contradicting view is emerging. Politics are triggered by power imbalances and are put to use when subordinates do not see another way in getting their views considered.

2.3.4. Conclusion of the paradigms strategic decision making

Strategy is a result of the stage and situation (life cycle) of an organization and is affected by organizational, individual and environmental inputs. Bounded rationality clarifies that the decision making process is not a structured path, though people try to follow that path. Situations, or call it different variables, may force the decision maker to take a different path on which he or she defines his or her decision. Heuristics may simplify the path of taking decisions, but they show us that intentionally ignoring an overload of data, using sources like past experiences, knowledge sharing by networking, risk aversion and looking for acceptable solutions can make the decision making process easier. These actions by individual managers result in routines and procedures based upon their past experiences and successes. But as said decisions have to be acceptable or accepted by those who hold power of decision making within the organization. Politics are a powerful tool to put your ideas and views to work. Keeping good internal relationships and having the right timing to put ideas forward are essential for effective executives. The person that understands the working of internal relationships and has infallible feeling for timing can probably get his or her ideas translated into effective actions even if these ideas sprouted from intuition. By applying politics it is possible to realize a support group for ideas and views that rooted from intuition. The internal organizational context is therefore of influence on the manner in which decisions are made. Based on these conclusions it can be stated that the decision maker can be placed in the midst of the total context of the decision making process. His or her actions taken, in order to deal with the external variables, are of great influence on to outcome of the decision.

2.3.5. *Decision making structure*

The paradigms of strategic decision making started a broader discussion about the strategic decision making process and led to a whole new range of factors, influencing the strategic decision making process. Based on prior research and empirical evidence Papadakis (et all, 1998) identifies four main groups of factors of influence:

1. The broader context (internal and external environment of the organization);
2. The nature of the strategic decision (expansion, retreat, entry mode, etc.);
3. Decision process characteristics (routines, procedures);
4. CEO & Top management characteristics.

The research of Papadakis (et all, 1998) shows that strategic decision making processes are shaped by the interplay of these factors. Their most striking finding was the dominant role of decision-specific characteristics in determining the decision processes. His study also established the relative importance of top management characteristics and has shown that the personality and demographic characteristics of a CEO play a role in the strategic decision making process. These characteristics are for example: education, upbringing, need for achievement, risk propensity, aggressiveness, experience, etc. Adding characteristics, as important variable of influence on the decision making structure, we can define in total three variables that define the mix of rationale, intuition and emotions in the personal decision making process.

2.3.6. *Conclusion strategic decision making structure*

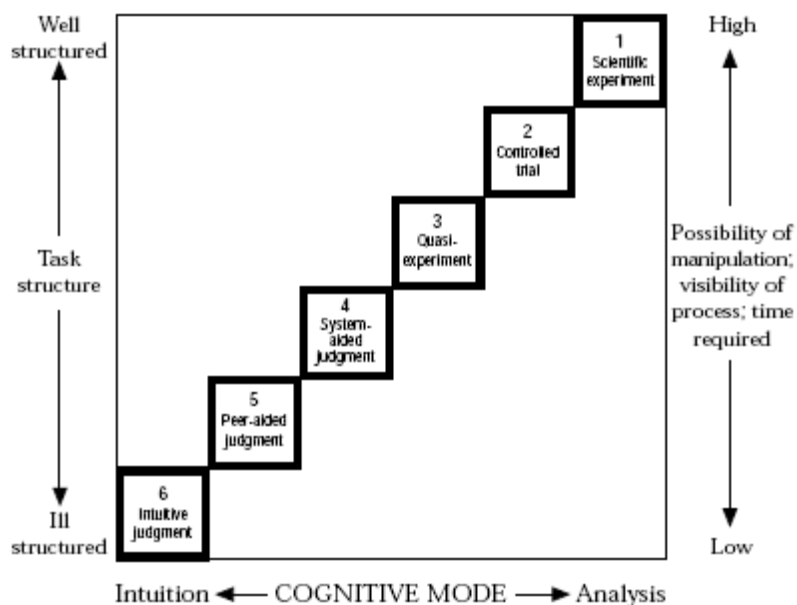
The process of strategic decision making is not solely rational, but also based upon cognitive, political power and heuristic elements. The decision making process is interplay of different factors, all influencing the outcome of the decision and how the decision is made. The influencing factors are the characteristics of the decision makers, the decision making process itself, the nature of the strategic decision and the internal context and external environment. An interesting aspect is the characteristics of the decision maker. These characteristics are of influence on the decision. This subscribes that the manner in which strategic decisions are made are influenced by the decision maker itself. Every decision maker probably has his or her own way to react on external variables. This suggests that there is an interaction between the external environment of the decision maker in his internal personality, resulting in a personal process of decision making.

2.4. Intuition and strategic decision-making

As intuition is personal, it probably plays a role in the decision making process. Though the weight of intuition in the strategic decision making process remains vague, it is clear that analysis by itself is often both inappropriate and inadequate (Agor, 1986).

Intuition is only one of many different modes of thinking available to the decision maker. Depending on the task, the decision maker can use different cognitive modes, ranging from intuition to analysis (Hamm, 1988). The cognitive mode depends on the structure of the task, ill structured or well structured (figure 4).

Figure 4: The cognitive continuum (Hamm, 1988)



Hamm describes his cognitive continuum from a nursing perspective. The amount of time and cues at hand, define the task structure. For example a few cues and a lot of time would suggest a well structured task approach and a lot of cues and little time, suggest ill structured task approach. So time and cues are important influencers of the use of intuition. Time is a clear issue, but cues, however, are not.

To see cues one must have a certain amount of experience. According to Simon and his research on use of intuition by simultaneous chess players, the more experienced chess players could see in an instant the patterns on the chess board and determine their next move. Through frequent play, chess players gain the ability to recognize and process information in patterns or blocks that form the basis for intuitive decisions (Patton, 2003; Simon, 1987). Intuition relies on patterns developed through continual exposure to actual situations (Patton, 2003; Hayes, 1981; Simon, 1987). The experienced manager, too, has in his or her memory a large amount of knowledge gained from training and experience and organized in terms of recognizable chunks and associated information. This implies that intuition can be enhanced by active training and learning. According to Patton

(2003), rigorous repeated drill brings almost involuntary (intuitive) decisions and actions as a result of past learning/practice/drill so that the action becomes a second nature. Expert managers have learned to absorb and evaluate large quantities of information quickly and grow the meaning of certain patterns of operation and activity.

The amount and quality of data also affects the role of intuition. Too little data, an overload of data or the lack of reliability of data can stimulate the use of intuition. The role of the environment plays a part in the way data can be collected and used. In a stable environment data are more reliable. There is not much pressure to collect data quickly. Decisions based on facts may then achieve better performance than decisions based on intuition. An unstable environment, however, poses three challenges to data analysis: 1. time constraint on collecting data; 2. need to collect a large amount of data to deal with environmental instability; and 3. lack of reliability of the data. Thus, given that information may be limited or unreliable, mental processes using soft information may be more appropriate (Khatri & Alvin, 2000; Mintzberg, 1994).

Awareness and acceptance of intuition as sources for strategic decision making are maybe the most important factors that define the role of intuition within this process. This is not only acceptance of the decision maker him/herself but also the acceptance of intuitive decisions within the organization. A decision maker, who is aware of intuitive influences and their impact on the choice of alternatives, is likely to strike an effective balance between consideration of analyzed data and alternatives, and the intuitive component (Patton, 2003)

2.4.1. Conclusion variables of intuitive decision making

Based upon the above, we can define the range of variables that influences the role of intuition in the strategic decision making process:

- Characteristics of the decision (expansion, retreat, entry mode, etc.);
- Stable or unstable environment;
- Amount and quality of data;
- Experience (of the decision maker);
- Learning ability (absorbing, evaluating, information);
- Awareness and acceptance of intuition.

The variables experience and learning ability can be grouped under the label of characteristics of the decision maker, in our case the CEO. Together with the variable awareness and acceptance, these three variables are personal variables that influence the level of intuition used when making decision. The stability of the environment and the amount and quality of data are external variables that can lead to uncertainty and also influence the level of intuition. The level of intuition used when making decisions is probably the result of how decision makers deal internally with the input of external variables.

2.5. Paradigms of strategic choice and internationalization

The next step is to look at the broader environment. Several aspects are already discussed like the broader context of the organization, the nature of the strategic decision, decision process characteristics and the amount and quality of data. To fully understand strategic decision making on the topic of internationalization and the process of CEO strategic decision making we will zoom in on the paradigms of internationalization and strategic choice theory. There are several reasons why there is chosen to use these paradigms. Based on the described theories, the role of the decision maker has become clearer, also the influence of the external variables are pointed out. The paradigm of strategic choice sees persons (actors) as link between the organization and their environment. The paradigm clarifies the actions taken by these actors as a reaction to their environment and see decisions not just as a passive environmental selection process. This thesis focuses on the CEO as the decision maker and the key actor that reacts to its environment. Reflecting the used theory with this paradigm will give more insight and depth on this matter. The paradigm of internationalization is used to clarify how decisions concerning internationalization are made. This will complete the theoretical research on the theory of strategic decision making with additional insights on internationalization.

2.5.1. Strategic Choice theory

The strategic choice theory (Andrews, 1986; Child, 1972) clarifies the actions taken by actors within an organization in order to adapt to the environment, as a result of their explanation of the organizational changes and processes. Miles and Snow (1978) identify three fundamental characteristics of the Strategic Choice Perspective. They conclude that this perspective "(1)states that management of strategic choice is the primary link between the organization and the environment; (2) focuses on the ability of managers to create, learn, and manage on basis of the environment of the organization; and (3) contains all different ways in which organizations react on the environment." In his article of 1997, "*Strategic choice in the analysis of action, structure, organizations and environment*", Child deepens the subject of strategic choice. Strategic choice, when considered as a process, points to the possibility of a continuing adaptive learning cycle. Child's theoretical framework locates "organizational learning" within the context of organizations as socio-political systems (child, 1997). According to Child, the persons that hold power to decide can exercise that power towards the limits upon that power imposed by the operational context, and towards the process of assessing constraints and opportunities against values in deciding about organizational strategies. This implies synthesis between the political process and the functional perspectives, and locates strategic choice within the organizational context.

The strategic choice theory also acknowledges cognitive processes in decision making. This is in line with the earlier described theories of intuition and strategic decision making. Dutton (1993) describes Strategic Issue Diagnosis (SID) as a cognitive process through which decision makers form interpretations about organizational events, developments and trends. Automatic SID involves "the activation of ready made issue categories in the minds of decision makers that have been built from encounters with issues in the past. Classification of an issue into a ready made cognitive category reduces

the amount of thought applied to the issue and activates a set of scripted responses. Dutton also identifies another form of SID, reflective or active SID. Active SID is intentional and conscious, involving a much greater degree of information search and analysis (Child, 1997). These definitions are very similar to strategic decision making based upon intuition and rationale. According to Dutton, automatic SID operates primarily through psychological processes and includes familiarity with the issue, personal relevance of the issue to the decision maker, time pressure, information load, the handling of issues by specialists, strong organizational norms for consistency, and the reinforcement of routine interpretations and actions by past success.

Child (1997) describes three phenomena that can bring limitations to agency and choice. These are action determinism, organizational political process and informational deficiencies. These phenomena highlight the constraints upon choice, additional to those which are imposed by an organizations environment. Strategic choice analysis recognizes both a pro-active and a re-active aspect in organizational decision making regarding the environment. According to Child (1997), the environment of organizations has an institutional character and people inside and outside the formal limits of an organization may share institutionalized norms and relationships. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that the managers of different firms within an industry do share perceptions and cognitive maps and that these are enacted through common environmental relationships (Bogner & Thomas, 1993; Reger & Huff 1993; Child, 1997). Actors often create choice possibilities through their relationships with people who are formally outside the organization. Organizations and environment are becoming inter-penetrated through collaboration between actors in such a way as to diffuse the distinction between the two entities and, incidentally, to blur the distinction between 'firm' and 'market'. Organization and environment permeate one another both cognitively and relationally, that is, both in the minds of actors and in the process of conducting relationships between the two (Child, 1997).

Strategic choice analysis, with its focus on organizational actors, views the evolution of organizations as a product of actors' decisions and not just as a passive environmental selection process. Key actors are seen to play a particularly important role in initiating, shaping and directing strategic reorientations towards the environment (Thusman & Romanelli 1985; Child, 1997). The strategic choice perspective is therefore consistent with theories of organizational evolution and transformation which incorporate organizational learning as an explanatory factor. It locates learning within organizations and their environments as socially constituted systems, and promises a bridge between individual learning and organizational evolution through its attention to the action-structure nexus, and the attendant process of structuration (Child, 1997).

The strategic choice perspective locates the agency-structure relationship within its context. It recognizes that the evaluation of information, from within an organization and from its environment, can lead to the identification of opportunities and problems. This encourages a learning process which proceeds towards action through debate, negotiation and the exercise of choice. The actions that are taken give rise to the outcomes (Child, 1997).

2.5.2. *Conclusion strategic choice theory*

The strategic choice theory subscribes the ideas that top executives are the primary link between the organization and its environment; they are the key actors that make the strategic reorientations (decisions) towards the environment. These actors learn, create and manage on basis of the environment, which in turn results in organizational learning. The aspect of the persons with the most power to decide that is mentioned within the strategic choice theory shows link with the politics and power theory. Strategic choice acknowledges the decision making process to be based on rationale as well as on cognition, thus being a balance between data, analyses and experiences. What is made clear by the strategic choice theory is the importance of the interaction of the actors within the organization and organizational environment. The actors learn from these interactions and experiences based upon past decisions. It is likely that these interactions and experiences will be the bases for intuitive decision making.

2.5.3. *Internationalization theory*

Internationalization is a process in which organizations increase their involvement in international operations. The theory of internationalization assumes that organizations miss the knowledge of foreign markets and therefore have a substantial amount of uncertainty when they launch international activities. Experiences in foreign markets lead to an increase of knowledge and a decrease of uncertainty. This in turn leads to greater investments in foreign operations. Four approaches of internationalization will be discussed: the Uppsala model of internationalization, the eclectic paradigm and transaction cost analysis, the interactive network approach, and the business strategy approach.

The Uppsala model approach

The theory of internationalization relies on a slow and progressive process of internationalization, during which organizational learning takes place (Sullivan & Bauerschmidt, 1990; Fina & Rugman, 1996). Till the mid-seventies this point of view was adequate, though nowadays the simple evolutionary theory is not appropriate anymore. This does not mean that the internationalization theory is fully rejected. The learning aspect of the internationalization theory is still a very important aspect of a successful internationalization process and results in experiential knowledge. This knowledge development is explained by the concept of psychic distance. Organizations expand first into markets which are psychically close, and gradually into more “distant” markets as their knowledge develops (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Whitelock, 2002). The aspect of incremental steps has been questioned by other scholars. Buckley et al. (1987) showed that organizations may use “mixed” approaches to individual foreign markets. Johanson and Vahlne (1990) suggested that there are three exceptions to this model as response to increased market knowledge. 1. When organizations have large resources they may be expected to make larger internationalization steps; 2. when market conditions are stable and homogenous relevant market knowledge can be gained in ways other than through experience; 3. when organizations have considerable experience from markets with similar conditions it may be possible to generalize this experience to other markets. All of these exceptions contend that the internationalization process is based on

the behavior of different actors in the organization and, in particular, on those who are engaged in a foreign market (Whitelock, 2002).

Eclectic paradigm and transaction cost analysis approach

The eclectic paradigm explains the extent, form and pattern of international production and takes into account the ownership of specific advantages, location specific advantages and internalization advantages. The paradigm asserts that at any given moment of time this will be determined by the configuration of three sets of forces:

1. The (net) competitive advantages which firms of one nationality possess over those of another nationality in supplying any particular market or set of markets. These advantages may arise either from the firm's privileged ownership of, or access to, a set of income-generating assets across national boundaries in a way that benefits them relative to their competitors, or potential competitors;
2. The extent to which firms perceive it to be in their best interest to internalize the markets for generation and/or the use of these assets; and by doing so add value to them;
3. The extent to which firms choose to locate these value-adding activities outside their national boundaries.

The eclectic paradigm further avers that the significance of each of these advantages and the configuration between them is likely to be context specific, and in particular, is likely to vary across industries, regions or countries and among firms (Dunning, 2001).

According to the *internalization* theory a multi-national enterprise can have certain firm-specific advantages which are protected within its internal market. A multi national enterprise seeks expansion by direct investment when it has competitive advantage over other firms and the firm-specific advantage needs to be protected by its organizational structure, i.e. a multi-national enterprise internalizes its foreign market activity. Foreign direct investments occur when benefits of internalization outweigh its costs (Fina & Rugman, 1996). International market entry decisions are therefore made in a rational manner, based on an analysis of the costs of the transaction (Whitelock, 2002).

The main difference between internationalization and internalization are the modes of market entry. With internationalization the use of agents or licensing can be a logical step in the evolution of the organization. Internalization on the other hand sees this as a potential loss of know-how and therefore a potential loss of firm specific advantages.

The industrial network approach

According to Johanson and Mattson (1988) the Uppsala model and eclectic theory complement each other. They lead to the development of a network model which offers different degrees of internationalization circumstances as parameters to the internationalization process, while taking into account a firm's degree of internationalization. Certain competitive advantages can be easily used in international expansion, though with very different entry methods.

Both theories concentrate on the autonomy of the organization in developing its international activities. It is the organization, or rather individuals within it, who determine how it will enter a specific market abroad. But more important to the conclusion that these theories complement each other, is the fact that organizational

learning takes place within multi-national enterprises and this intangible firm specific advantage is common to both theories. Nevertheless Johanson and Mattson (1988) believe that both models leave out characteristics of the organization and the market which seem to be important in industrial systems. Two groups of variables are identified as being the characteristics of the parties involved, the atmosphere surrounding the interaction and the environment in which the interaction takes place. The interpretation of this environment by supplier company executives will inform the decision as to which countries to enter and which customers to supply and will drive the organization structure for market entry (Cunningham, 1986). Thus the firm will need to take into account and evaluate not only its own position in relation to its customers in a given market, but also the environment of that market in relation to other actors (e.g. competitors) (Whitelock, 2002).

The business strategy approach

The business strategy approach is based on the idea of pragmatism, with the organization making trade-offs between a number of variables in its decision to internationalize and the methods it adopts to do so (Welford & Prescott, 1994; Whitelock, 2002). The variables for internationalizing and choice for organizational structure to serve the market are international experience, size, export orientation, commitment, market opportunity and attractiveness, firm resources, managerial philosophy, psychic distance, accessibility and informal barriers. The variables that are present define the internationalization process.

Reflection of the four approaches

It is clear that the four approaches explained above all depend on information, in order to internationalize and select the market entry method. However the Uppsala model is unique in seeing information about a market, specifically based upon experiential knowledge, as the crucial indicator of market entry and particularly, market entry mode selection (Whitelock, 2002). The eclectic paradigm and transaction cost analysis are based upon rational data and analyses. The network approach on the other hand focuses on a mix of both but offers the view that the individuals within the organization determine the direction and pace of internationalization, this in interaction with the parties involved, the atmosphere in which the interaction takes place and the environment of the interaction. The business strategy approach takes all variables and makes trade offs between these variables.

Learning, experiential knowledge, rational analyses, interaction with different parties and the environment of the interaction are the tools for the individuals in the company that make strategic decisions concerning internationalization.

How important is it then for a multi national enterprise to have a CEO with experience in internationalization? According to Madsen & Servais (1997) and McKinsey & Co (1993) prior knowledge and work experiences reduce the psychic distance to specific markets and minimize risk and uncertainty. The prior knowledge of decision makers plays an important role in increasing the firms' speed of learning and internationalization (Oviatt & McDougall, 1997; Fina & Rugman, 1996). Born globals are often formed by people who have prior international experience and extensive international personal and business networks (Madsen & Servais, 1997). The process of internationalization also depends on

the strategy of the firm. Strategic decisions have great impact on the path and pace of the firm internationalization (Johanson & Valne, 1990). Fina & Rugman (1996) argue that internationalization processes are the result of a mixture of strategic thinking, strategic action, emergent developments, chance and necessity.

2.5.4. Conclusion internationalization theory

Organizational and personal learning, networking, prior experience, rational analyses, interaction with different parties and the environment of the interaction form the basis for strategic decision making concerning the internationalization process of firms. It is not so strange that all these variables, except the atmosphere, parties and environment of the interaction are also mentioned as variables of influence on the overall strategic decision making process itself. The latter variables indicate the difference with internationalization strategic decision making.

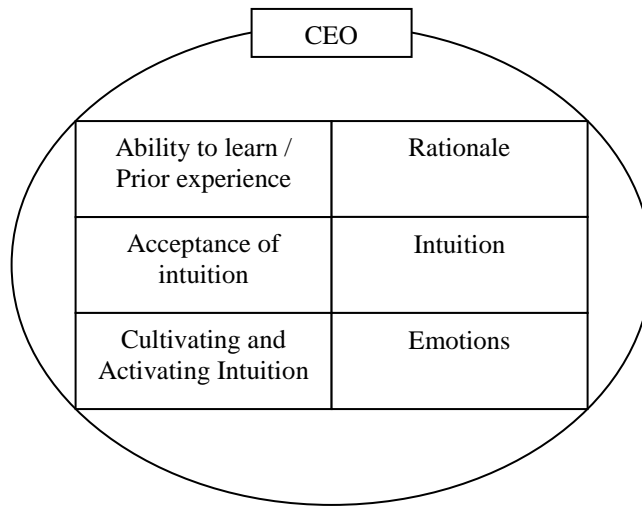
3. Towards a framework for effective intuitive internationalization decision making by CEO's

Based on the described theories the total strategic decision making process concerning internationalization can be constructed. Theory described the internal variables of the decision maker (CEO), the external variables and the internationalization specific variables. In the next three paragraphs will be explained how the framework of well considered intuitive internationalization decision making by CEO's is constructed This enables us to fully comprehend the internal decision making process and how the use of intuition is affected by the interaction of the internal variables with the external variables.

3.1. Internal process of CEO strategic decision making

In this thesis the CEO is placed in the midst of the strategic decision making process. As intuition is a part of the internal decision making process of a CEO, it must be made clear how this internal process operates. The strategic choice paradigm acknowledges that top executives are the primary link between the organization and its environment. They are the actors that make strategic reorientations towards the future. As these actors all have different characteristics, they will all probably react differently on external input. In this thesis only the ability to learn and prior experience refer to characteristics, in order to avoid extensive research on many different characteristic variables. These characteristics together with the acceptance of intuition and the amount of cultivating and activating intuition, determine the internal decision making process of the CEO and define the level of intuition. In figure 5 this internal process of CEO strategic decision making is shown.

Figure 5: The internal process of CEO strategic decision making (based upon rationality, intuition and emotions).



These internal variables define level used of rationale, intuition and emotions, though in interaction with the external variables. The external variables define the source of uncertainty in relation to the internal variables. With external variables is referred to all variables outside the internal decision making process of the CEO.

3.2. External variables affecting CEO strategic decision making

The situation, life cycle and environment in which organizations find themselves have great influence on the strategic decision making process. Strategy is affected by organizational, individual and environmental inputs. The organization adapts to its environment by strategic decisions made by top executives in that organization. As explained, it is to be expected that these executives have to draw upon a different mix of their intuition, rationale and emotions, in certain time frames or situations.

The external variables that are defined by the theories of strategic decision making are:

- Top management;
- Broader context (Internal and external environment of the organization);
- Characteristics of the decision (expansion, retreat, mode of market entry, etc.);
- Decision process characteristics (routines and procedures);
- Amount and quality of data;
- Extensive and divers network (business and personal network);

These variables are of influence on the CEO and his decision making process. How his internal variables cope with these external variables define the level of uncertainty. The variable “nature of the strategic decision” is not taken into account because of the fact

that this is in our case internationalization. Instead we will look at the variables that affect internationalization decisions.

3.3. Variables affecting internationalization decisions

The variables organizational and personal learning, networking, prior experience and rational analyses, combined with the variables interaction with different parties, the environment of the interaction and atmosphere of the interaction, form the basis for strategic decision making concerning the internationalization process of organizations.

Actions like choosing the right partner or market and using the right entry mode are subject to the atmosphere and environment of the interaction. Defining or feeling the right interaction atmosphere and environment probably have a lot to do with having empathy, right timing and use of intuition.

Learning, networking and prior experience are also the foundations for possible increased use of intuition, which in turn influence the strategic decision making process and therefore can influence the internationalization process of firms. So if firms or CEO's have prior experiences with internationalization interactions, make use of international networks and create a habitat for learning, the use of intuition with strategic decision making on the matters of internationalization probably will reduce risk and uncertainty and increase the speed and effectiveness of the internationalization process.

Summarizing this, it results in the following variables that are of influence on CEO strategic decision making concerning internationalization:

- Environment of the interaction
- Atmosphere of the interaction
- Parties of the interaction

In this thesis these variables are captured under one variable name, "internationalization interaction characteristics".

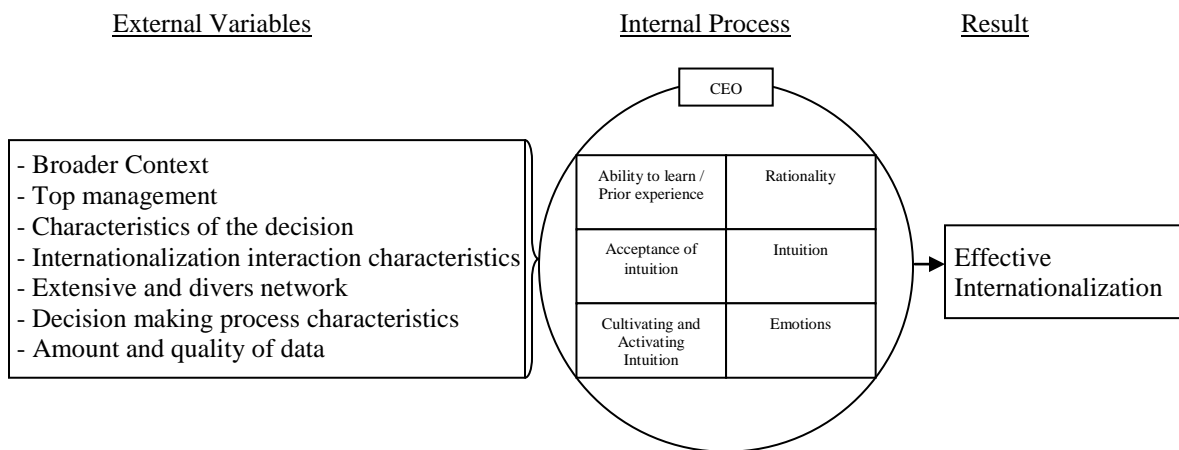
3.4. Framework for effective intuitive internationalization decision making by CEO's

3.4.1. Framework for well considered CEO decision making

The described variables in paragraph 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 form the basis for the framework of well considered CEO decision making. This framework describes the internal process of CEO strategic decision making, influenced by the external variables, resulting in effective internationalization decision making. The three internal powers (rationale, emotions and intuition) form the core of this internal CEO decision making process. The mix in which these three powers are applied, depend on the experience and learning ability, the awareness and acceptance of intuition and the cultivation and activation of intuition. By

“liberating” intuition of the rational and emotional influences, the freedom to base decisions on all three powers will arise. The internal process is continuously influenced by the external variables. These variables and the internal decision making process of a CEO combined, result in a framework for well considered decision making concerning internationalization. Well considered decision making arises when the CEO uses the input of the external variables to reflect with his or her intuition, rationale and emotions. This results in the model as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6: Variables of influence for well considered CEO internationalization strategic decision making.



3.4.2. Framework for effective intuitive CEO internationalization strategic decision making

Departing from the framework above, the role of intuition in the process of decision making concerning internationalization can be made clear. The internal process is the core of the use of intuition. Recognizing situations because of prior experiences, learning from different experiences and actively collecting information and knowledge by networking and interacting with the environment contribute to an increase of conscious and subconscious knowledge. This enhances the ability to make subconscious holistic associations, or in other words increases the possible use of intuition.

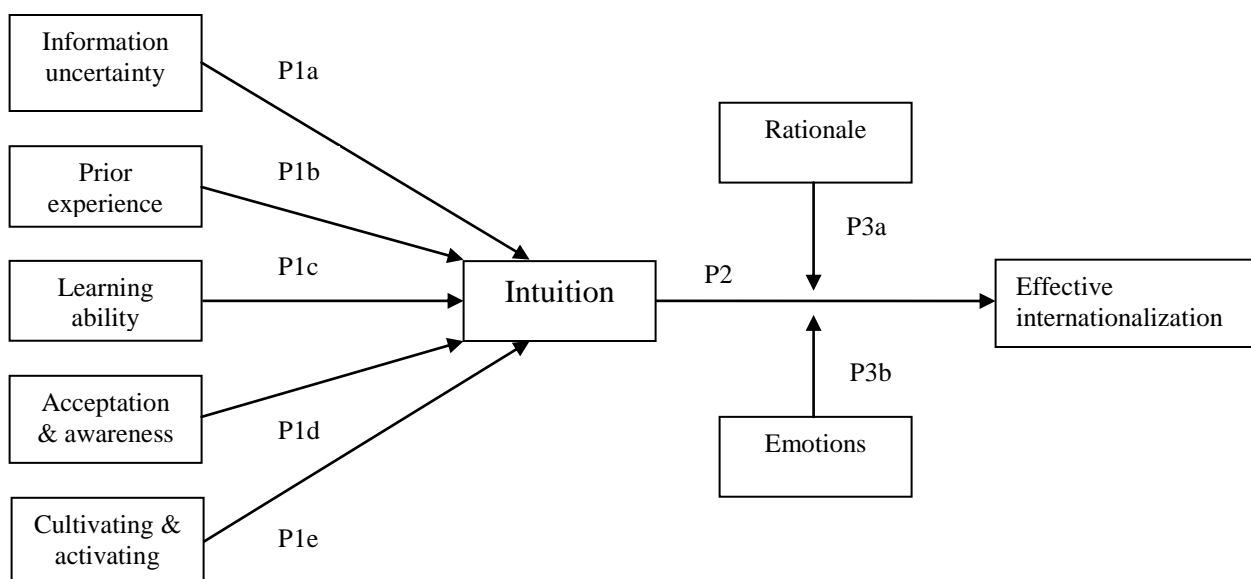
Thus, information is drawn from the external variables and is stored in the subconscious of the mind, in order to make current or future decisions based on intuition. These external variables are, besides a source for subconscious experience, also a source for the level of uncertainty concerning the decision that has to be made. These variables define the external environment in which the CEO makes his decision and influence his internal process of decision making. On the one hand we have variables that provide information (data) that is used as input by the decision maker and on the other we have the characteristics of the environment in which the decision is made. Here is proposed that the level of uncertainty about information input increases the use of intuition. For example, qualitative and sufficient data makes it easier to decide upon rationale, bad and poor data leads to uncertainty and forces decision makers to decide upon our intuition.

The characteristics of the environment in which the decision is made are judged subconsciously on our prior experience. When the situation is recognizable and the decision maker has related prior experience, then he will feel more certain and his use of intuition will increase.

Theory describes the effect of rationale and emotions on the use of intuition. Stated is that there is a level of sufficient data that can be used as information resulting in a positive effect on the outcome of the decision. The use of rationale seems to follow a linear curve. When there is not sufficient information, less rationale will be used resulting in a negative influence on the outcome of the decision. When there is too much data to be used as information, this can lead to a cognitive overload resulting also in a negative influence on the outcome of the decision. This effect is captured in the variable rationale. The same effect seems to account for the use of emotions. The use of none or not sufficient emotions will have a negative outcome on the decision. The influence of too much emotion will have the same negative effect on the outcome of the decision. As clarified in paragraph 2.2.3., the decision maker has to be able to reflect between all three powers and find the right balance to make an effective decision. This effect is captured in the variable emotions.

The prior experience of the CEO has been captured in the internal variable “characteristics” of the CEO. Information uncertainty will be added to the framework and all external variables are left out of the framework. These external variables define the level of uncertainty of the decision maker. In this framework we propose that prior experience will reduce the uncertainty and increases the use of intuition. Prior experience is therefore seen as the link with the external variables that are left out of the framework. This results in the framework as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7: Variables of influence for intuitive CEO internationalization strategic decision making.



3.5. Propositions

Based on this framework the following propositions can be stated.

Based upon the mediator variables:

1a. Uncertainty about information leads to increased use of intuition.

This proposition is based upon the effect of the external variable amount and quality of data. According to the theoretical research not sufficient, bad quality and too much information lead to the fact that decision makers follow paths of decision making and sequentially use their intuition to reach a decision.

1b. Prior experience leads to increased use of intuition.

Prior experience is mentioned in theories of strategic decision making and intuition, because prior experience leads to subconscious and conscious knowledge. As said, prior experience reduces uncertainty about decision making concerning internationalization. From this point of view prior experience can probably lead to increased use of intuition. Firstly by being more able to recognize subconsciously certain situations and secondly by reduced uncertainty about taking internationalization decisions.

1c. The ability to learn leads to increased use of intuition.

A CEO must have the ability to learn in order to collect knowledge and translate it into efficient decisions. The CEO is the person that makes strategic decisions based on his/her environment and must have the ability to create, learn and manage on basis of this environment. The ability to learn leads to increased knowledge and therefore it is likely that it leads to increased use of intuition.

1d. The use of intuition can be enhanced when we are aware of it and accept it.

According to theory intuition can be used more efficiently when aware of it and when accepted. By being aware of intuition the decision maker can use all three decision making powers. This enables the decision maker to reflect between his intuition, rationale and emotions. It is likely that intuition can be enhanced by being able to reflect upon the position of intuition in the internal decision making process and learn from the effect of using it.

1e. Intuition can be enhanced by cultivating and activating it.

When aware of intuition and when accepted, then it can be cultivated and activated according to theory. This cultivating leads to more insight in the use of intuition. Learning to activate intuition makes intuition more tangible as you are able to activate your subconscious. Based on theory intuition can be cultivated and activated and therefore intuition can be enhanced.

Based upon the independent outcome variable:

2. The use of intuition leads to effective internationalization decision making.

When a decision maker is able to use all three inner powers of decision making then he is probably able to make more effective decisions by reflecting between these powers. Intuition is based upon subconscious knowledge derived from prior experiences. When decision makers have more experience with internationalization they are probably able to use their intuition in these circumstances. It is therefore likely that the use of intuition leads to effective internationalization decision making.

Based upon the moderating variables:

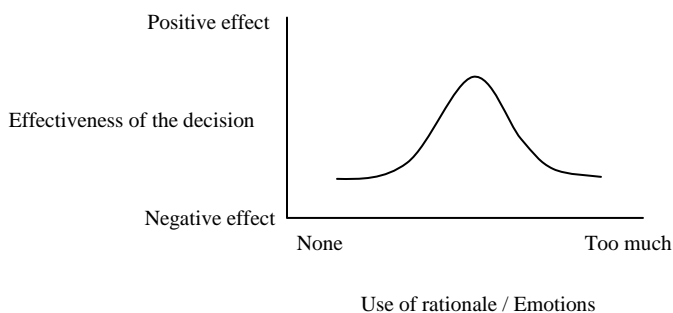
3a. Rationale increases initially the effectiveness of the decision, but too much rationale decreases the effectiveness.²

None of the three inner decision making powers alone is sufficient enough to make effective decisions. Therefore it seems logical that too much or too less use of one of these powers leads to poor decision making. According to theory the amount and quality of data affect the use of intuition. When there is not sufficient data uncertainty will rise and leads to increased use of intuition. When there is too much information, this leads to a cognitive overload and also increases the use of intuition. This will shift the three powers out of balance and will decrease the effectiveness of the decision.

3b. Emotions increase initially the effectiveness of the decision, but too much emotion decreases the effectiveness.³

This proposition can be supported by what is said under proposition 3a. Though emotions are more difficult to measure. There is also the difficulty of what kind of emotions are supportive to effective decision making. Still it seems likely that no use or too much use of emotions decreases the effectiveness of the decision.

Figure 8. Curve linear of the positive effect of rationale / emotions



² This proposition is moderating on the outcome of the decision and follows a curve linear.

³ This proposition is moderating on the outcome of the decision and follows a curve linear.

4. Methodology

This chapter describes the method of data collection, scope and limitations. As described in chapter 1, the data collection of this research will be structured on a qualitative research method. The chosen research method is a semi-structured interview.

4.1. Research method

The research will be executed based upon the qualitative research principles. This method is chosen, firstly because intuition is difficult to analyze or measure in figures, numbers and data, secondly because the field of intuition within strategic management is not extensively researched and thirdly because a quantitative research would need a longer research timeframe in order to collect data upon the effect of intuitive decisions.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) the core theoretical point of view of qualitative methodology is: “Knowing through the eyes of another person”. The research emphasizes on words rather than the quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Understanding the context from within rather than experiencing the context from outside observation (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Bryman and Bell (2003) point out three other important features of qualitative research:

- an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, whereby the former is generated out of the latter;
- an epistemological position described as interpretivist, meaning that, in contrast to the adoption of a natural scientific model in quantitative research, the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants; and
- an ontological position described as constructions, which implies that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena ‘out there’ and separate from those involved in its construction.

The goal of qualitative research is theory searching and developing. This results in mini theories. By repeating the research, the mini theory can develop into a grand theory. The results of these researches have to be understandable and useful for the persons involved. This means that the researcher in some way participates in the research itself. In this case some rules of research have to be applied and ask from the researcher a certain attitude towards the research. Silverman (1993) defines the following research attitude:

- The researcher will limit to develop a theory only based on theory as much as possible.
- The researcher is not an expert but an explorer
- The researcher does research in a certain context.
- The context is the primary source of data.
- The researcher will try to experience the context from the eyes of the beholder.

- The researcher will try to understand certain developments or events within the social context.
- The researcher will have respect for the event: the involved people will give meaning to the event.

This means per definition that the researcher can not be an objective outsider. There are many different ways to perform a qualitative research. Bryman and Bell (2007) have given an overview of some of the qualitative research methods:

- 1.) Ethnography / participant observation
- 2.) *Qualitative interviewing*
- 3.) Focus groups
- 4.) Language-based approaches to collection of qualitative data
- 5.) Collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents

Based upon the specific characteristics of Bryman and Bell (2007), the choice was made to perform a qualitative interviewing method of data collection, because this method offers the best possibilities to collect most data on the subject of intuition.

The data will be collected through interviews with CEO's from organizations with international operations. The data will be analyzed after which the data from the analysis will be confronted with the conceptual framework from the literature study.

4.2. Semi structured interviews

There are a significant number of interviewing techniques within the qualitative interviewing method. Bryman and Bell (2007) give an overview of the types of interviews. For this research is chosen to use the semi-structured interview. This type of interview leaves enough room to pursue other relevant subjects and it will not bind the researcher to the order of the questions. The interview will therefore become more open and enables the researcher to collect more information and insight on the matter. It will however, create a certain consistency in the data string. This has the advantage that the researcher can check if all questions are answered and it will help structure the analysis of the data collected. The structure of this research follows the steps as explained by Bryman and Bell:

1. General research question;
2. Selecting relevant site(s) and subject;
3. Collection of relevant data;
4. Interpretation of data;
5. Conceptual and theoretical framework;
- 5a. Tighter specification of the research questions;
- 5b. Collection of further data;
6. Writing findings/conclusions.

4.3. Data group selection - Interviewees

The group chosen consists of Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) who work for organizations with international operations. In order to perform face to face interviews, it is chosen to start interviewing CEO's that are stationed in the Netherlands with the possibility to interview CEO's within Europe. The initial scope of interviewees was between the 15 and 20 CEO's in order to have a solid base to analyze the collected data.

Limitations to the research scope and methodology are:

- The difference between the organizations;
- The differences between the environments of the organizations;
- The differences between the characteristics of the CEO's;

The following CEO's were interviewed for this research:

Figure 9: Interviewees

Name	Organization	Branch
Mr. Auld	CEO TR Fastenings	Technical Wholesaler Fasteners
Mr. De Becker	Former CEO Hagemeyer	Technical Wholesaler Electrical and Safety Equipment
Mr. Faes	CEO Faes Group	Producer Industrial Cases and Packaging Concepts
Mr. Hazewinkel	CEO Volker & Wessels	Building and Construction
Mr. Hermans	Former Managing Director W.E. Fabory Group	Technical Wholesaler Fasteners, Tools & Industrial Supplies
Mr. Karis	CEO Zeeman textielSupers	Textile & Clothing Retailer
Mr. Kolk	CEO WE International	Clothing Retailer
Mr. Looye	Managing Director Intersafe	Wholesaler Personal Protection Equipment
Mr. Provoost	CEO Philips Lighting	Producer of Electronic Equipment, Division Lighting
Mr. Van den Belt	CEO Fabory Group	Technical Wholesaler Fasteners, Tools & Industrial Supplies
Mr. Van der Aa	Former CEO Fabory Group	Technical Wholesaler Fasteners, Tools & Industrial Supplies
Mr. Van der Hoek	CEO Baarsma Wine Group	Worldwide Wine-Trade House

4.4. Data collection and analyses

The interview set-up is semi-structured. The goal of this method is to get insight in how the interviewee perceives this topic and how he or she relates to it. In order to collect enough data on the subject a guideline of the interview has been set up (see appendix 4.). The main areas of focus of this guideline are:

- Career path
- Characteristics
- Decision making process
- Internationalization
- Learning process
- Intuition

The data is collected based on the general structure of the interview. Each area of focus consist out of a few questions. The propositions that are used reflect to these individual questions. The answer given are allocated under the specific variable with which it corresponds (see appendix 5). These answers are analyzed and categorized as a positive

or negative answer in relation to the propositions. Accordingly the propositions are tested and the amount of interviewees that gave a positive or negative reaction defines the validation of the proposition. This means that based on the amount of twelve interviewees a proposition is validated when there are more than six persons that give a positive answer.

5. Empirical outcomes

5.1. General results

Intuition

During the interview most of the CEO's became more aware of their own use of intuition. All CEO's pointed out that decision making alone on intuition probably would lead to ineffective decisions. These CEO's all argued that it should be a mix of intuition, rationale and emotions. On the other hand, they also concluded that intuition is a valuable tool for making decisions and that it probably deserves more attention. Most of the CEO's mentioned that they would invest in intuition training for their employees. Though it must be said that this training would only be for certain departments or persons, like the departments marketing and sales and top managers. At the end of the interview the CEO was asked to give his own definition of intuition. These definitions can be found in figure 10.

Figure 10: CEO definitions of intuition

Name	Definition of intuition
Mr. Auld	Allowing your imagination to provide you with answers or alternative opinions
Mr. Becker	Non explicated experience.
Mr. Faes	The tension between instinct and intellect.
Mr. Faes	Intuition is an extension of our instinct, the will to survive.
Mr. Hazewinkel	Creative process of making associations.
Mr. Hazewinkel	The aspect of feeling within the decision making process
Mr. Hermans	Doing things subconsciously. Life experience.
Mr. Hoek	A toolbox of experience with which problems can be solved.
Mr. Karis	A tingling gut feeling that has to connect with the hart.
Mr. Kolk	Feeling combined with experience and curiosity.
Mr. Looye	A survival chance in a new situation.
Mr. Provoost	The ability to sense what is relevant and important.
Mr. Van den Belt	Gut feeling formed by a lot of experience.
Mr. Van den Belt	The ability of having a subconscious sense of environmental factors and people.
Mr. Van der Aa	The gut feeling of being right.

Decision making process

This part of the interview did not focus on the total decision making process. The aim of this part was to find out how a CEO personally prefers to decide. It is clear that CEO's most of the time come to decisions together with their management team. It is often so that the CEO has the last decisive word in strategic decisions.

On the manner of deciding they are very clear, it is not solely rational or emotional or intuitively, it is a mix of all three. They are not always fully conscious about the fact that their intuition plays a part, though during the discussion they saw that it played a greater part than they previously thought. The importance and complexity of the decision itself are mentioned as of influence on the use of intuition. This was not fully supported by all CEO's. Trying to reflect between rational, intuitive and emotional aspect is seen in general as the best way to make good decisions.

Internationalization

When internationalizing, the influence of globalization is not really seen as an aspect that makes decisions more complex. The effects of globalization are often taken for granted and as a fact. The information flow is seen as a major change. The market information has become more transparent. Dealing with different cultures is mentioned as the most complex thing when internationalizing. The difficulty with internationalizing is often in the method how and the choice of possible partners. Finding the right partners, understanding the local habits in doing business, understanding the local market process, etc., is something that has to be learned by experience. The more experienced with doing business internationally the more self confident persons become and their uncertainty to make decisions more based on intuition diminishes. This does not mean that decisions are only made based on their intuition, it means that the decision maker feels more confident to let intuition play a bigger part in the decision.

5.1.1. Additional empirical results

Career Path

The majority of CEO's have an extensive background in international management and follow a structured career path without sudden changes. It looks like they are aware of the right and logical next challenge in their career. Most of them differ in educational backgrounds, which vary from psychological-, financial-, technical- and business studies and from a university level to learning by experiencing. What makes CEO's unique maybe anchored in certain aspects of their characteristics.

Characteristics

What these CEO's have in common are certain characteristics. Most striking when carrying out the interviews, was the openness and easiness of the conversations. With an air of confidence, the interviewees spoke about their businesses, personalities and experiences, though without any pretences. This could be because most of the CEO's pointed out the importance of knowing yourself and being able to self reflect. Another characteristic that was mentioned by all the CEO's is the insatiable need for new challenges. Gathering knowledge by searching and collecting information from various kinds of sources, like newspapers, magazines, the Internet, networks, etc, is also mentioned as indispensable for a CEO. To be connected with the "outside world" for all

kinds of information is vital for a CEO. Empathy in people and situations was often pointed out as a critical influence on decisions and is seen as an important characteristic. Infallible feeling for timing, the right time to make a decision, the right time to place people in certain jobs or situation and even the right timing for a new challenge, are seen as a distinctive characteristic for a CEO.

Learning process

Learning by experiences makes the difference in performing international business. Experiences of performing international business cannot be read in books. The CEO's interviewed understand the fact that you never stop learning, and that collecting knowledge is ongoing. Often it is seen as a normal routine, it is done automatically and unconsciously. Interesting is that the interviewees realized that intuition, emotions and rationale, all three play a part in the decision making process. Their use of intuition became clearer for most of them during the interview. They also acknowledged intuition being a decision making tool. Besides learning in general it can be an advantage for CEO's to learn to be aware of all three powers of decision making and learn how to reflect between rational, intuitive and emotional aspects, in order to make better decisions.

5.2. Proposition testing

The interview results as described above are narrowed down to specific remarks that can be connected to the variables described in the framework. Textual fragments are highlighted per variable (see appendix 5). The propositions are tested in this paragraph based upon these remarks given by the interviewees.

5.2.1. Propositions mediating Variables

Proposition 1a: *Uncertainty of information leads to increased use of intuition.*

This proposition seems to be very logical, though the answers given by the interviewees gave more depth on the matter. The interviewees spoke about three situations, (1) when the situation is complex and there is little or no information, (2) the situation at the start of a decision making process and (3) the situation when there is too much information and the quality is poor.

In the first situation 8 of the 12 interviewees pointed out that when it is a complex situation and there is none or little information, then intuition starts to play a big role.

"Intuition is knowing or seeing the way out and knowing what to do in every difficult situation." (Mr. Faes, CEO Faes Cases)

"Not everything can be supported by hard facts. The processes always bring unforeseen changes. Then a good leader must be able to fall back on his intuition and not be afraid to hold on to his decision in rough weather." (Mr. Karis, CEO Zeeman textielSupers)

Five of the interviewees even mentioned that you learn to judge on half the information that is available, resulting in fast insight. This brings us to the second situation.

In the second situation also 8 of the 12 interviewees mentioned that they often start with their intuition in forming plans or decisions based on fragments of information. The second step is testing their intuition with rational analysis to diminish their uncertainty.

“You train on learning to judge on a few fragments, providing fast insights in complex situations by analyses.” – “For judgment you need a lot of intuition. You start with your intuition and then you analyze your choices.” (Mr. Hazewinkel, CEO Volker & Wessels)

This means that one tries to diminish the uncertainty of the decision with rational analyses. Another outcome is that the interviewees use their intuition when judging only on fragments of information.

“The degree of uncertainty and the importance of a decision define how much you have to supplement intuition with facts and figures.” (Mr. Becker, former CEO Hagemeyer)

The third situation describes the overload and poor quality of data. Six of the 12 interviewees mentioned that the amount of information or better said too much data obstructs the decision making process.

“You get obstructed when there are too many facts on the table, when there is too much data to serve as information.” (Mr. Looye, Managing Director Intersafe)

“We often look too much at figures, then we have to return to our feelings again.” (Mr. Van der Hoek, CEO Baarsma Wine Group)

We can conclude that the uncertainty about information influences the use of intuition. When there is too little information the interviewees fall back on their intuition, when there is data they start with using their intuition on fragments of information, and when there is too much data they also fall back on their intuition. This subscribes that intuition is a part of our personal decision making process and is used throughout the process.

“In the end you always use your intuition, because you never have one hundred percent certainty.” (Mr. Looye, Managing Director Intersafe)

Conclusion

Based on 8 of the 12 interviewees (66,7%) it is likely to say that uncertainty about information leads to increased use of intuition. Therefore the proposition can be considered as validated.

The other 4 interviewees did not directly refer to intuition when uncertain about information. Three of them spoke about intuition as if it was already a decision making tool that was used either way.

Proposition 1b: Prior experience leads to increased use of intuition.

All interviewees agree upon the fact that prior experience helps to become more self confident and less uncertain about the decision. Ten of the 12 interviewees made the link between prior experience, self confidence and the use of intuition.

“It is mainly experience. Doing a lot of that kind of things in your life, and watch how others do it and then ask yourself: “How would I have done that?”. You learn to thrive more on your intuition.” (Mr. Kolk, CEO WE International)

The reason that is given for the increased self confidence is that prior experiences helps to recognize familiar issues in the subject of decision.

“Subject of decision is not continuously a surprise anymore, which gives you more peace.” (Mr. Karis, Zeeman textielSupers)

Nine of the 12 interviewees mentioned that through experiences one learns to get fast insight in the subject of the decision. When more experience is perceived in a certain branch or topic, it makes it easier for the decision maker to foresee which buttons have to be pushed.

“My experience with negotiating and meetings helps me to trust more on my negotiating skills and intuition.” (Mr. Hermans, former managing director Fabory Western Europe)

“Through my experiences I make better decisions and I have become more self confident. Intuition gives you a direction where to find possible painful subjects or possible connections.” (Mr. Provoost, CEO Philips Lighting)

Two of the interviewees mentioned that they saw their prior experience as a handbook from which they choose a chapter, based on their intuition, to make a decision.

Conclusion

Ten of the 12 interviewees (83,3%) clearly made the link between prior experience and intuition. Prior experience seems to decrease the uncertainty and helps to make associations on recognizable patterns. This in turn leads to increased use of intuition when making decisions. Based on these answers we can consider this proposition as validated.

Two of the interviewees could not support this proposition based on their answers. They did not make a direct link between experience and the use of intuition, though they did mention that experience made decision making easier. These interviewees do not directly disagree with the proposition, but also do not directly support it.

Proposition 1c: The ability to learn leads to increased use of intuition.

With the ability to learn we look at the certain characteristics of the interviewee. What was striking is that 10 of the 12 interviewees described their almost extreme inquisitive nature and the urge to be challenged.

“I always look for new challenges. When you can not learn anymore in a certain situation then start searching for a new situation from which you can learn again.” (Mr. Van der Aa, former CEO Fabory group)

All interviewees described that they learned from their environment by networking, reading, listening, inquiring, etc. Being in touch with different sources of information is for most of them the normal way of life. It is not realized anymore that there is a continuous information flow that is absorbed.

“Absorbing information has become a habit, it’s a way of life! For example, watching and listening to CNN, reading newspapers and magazines. If I was cut of, of this continuous flow of information then I would be cut of from this world. CEO’s are explorers of the 21st century” (Provoost, CEO Philips Lighting)

Thought that most of the CEO’s described their inquisitive nature, only 4 of the 12 interviewees mentioned the fact that personal learning is important. Learning to know yourself and being able to self reflect, in order to learn. They did not link their inquisitive nature directly to the ability to learn. It seems like it that this inquisitive nature results in learning, though it does not say much about the ability to learn.

“Important for success is the independency of your self knowledge and the capability to change yourself.” (Mr. Karis, CEO Zeeman textielSupers)

That the ability to learn directly leads to increased use of intuition was only mentioned by 3 of the interviewees. They referred to learning as being able to learn to change your patterns of decision making in order to make more effective decisions.

Conclusion

Only 3 of the 12 interviewees (25%) made a direct link between the ability to learn and the use of intuition. What was made clear is that the ability to learn and the eagerness to learn are often characteristics of a CEO. The proposition can not be validated on this data and is therefore rejected.

Proposition 1d: The use of intuition can be enhanced when we are aware of it and accept it.

All the interviewees seem to be aware of the use of intuition and accept it, some more than others. When analyzing the answers 7 of the 12 interviewees gave answers sustaining that they are aware of their intuition in daily practice.

“You must check your gut feeling. Be open for the use of intuition.” (Mr. Kolk, CEO WE International)

“You need to self reflect on the manner in which a decision is taken. Check all scenes on your intuition, rationale and emotions.” (Mr. Looye, Managing Director Intersafe)

It is proposed that when aware of intuition, then it is possible to enhance the use of intuition. As already was noticed in the proposition testing of prior experience, when you have successful experiences with the use of intuition you learn to use it.

“I got good experience with intuition, you develop it, and it is dynamic.” - “The funny thing about intuition is that you sometimes notice that you have turned it off and afterwards realize you should not have done that.” (Mr. Hazewinkel, CEO Hagemeyer)

When looking at the other 5 interviewees, there is a clear result that they are aware of their intuition. It could be that this awareness is generated as a result of the interview itself. Two of the interviewees even clearly mentioned that they started to see the role of intuition more clearly during the course of the interview.

“I am probably not always aware that I use my intuition.” – “I notice that I subconsciously use more intuition than I thought.” (Mr. Becker, former CEO Hagemeyer)

“I did not think about it anymore, nice to see it again.” (Mr. Provoost, CEO Philips Lighting)

The acceptance of intuition is not only a personal aspect. All the interviewees accept the use of intuition, some more than others. The external environment of the CEO plays a role in accepting decision making based upon intuition. The organization itself also has to accept the use of intuition. Six of the 12 interviewees talked about the acceptance within the organization. In these cases the organizations accept the use of knowledge, though there is a limit to it. Two of the interviewees pointed out that when you have a good track record the organization more easily accepts the use of intuition.

“When you are seen as an experienced man, then your credibility is a powerful tool. The use of intuition is then accepted very easily.” (Mr. Auld, CEO TR Fastenings)

Conclusion

As said all interviewees accept intuition, though not all of them are often aware of the use of it. The fact that intuition is subconscious can be the explanation for this. Seven of the 12 interviewees (58,3%) gave answers that demonstrate the possibility of exploring and

enhancing intuition. Two of them showed that when being aware of intuition gave them better insight in their decision making process. We can conclude that it is probably difficult to be continuously aware of your intuition, but when accepted, awareness can help to enhance our intuition. Therefore the proposition can be considered as validated.

Proposition 1e: Intuition can be enhanced by cultivating and activating it.

Nine of the 12 interviewees point out that intuition can be cultivated and activated. Three of them agree more or less, but are skeptic about training of intuition. These three interviewees have different assumptions about intuition in relation to cultivating and activating it. Intuition: is seen as something from the inside that has to be seen or noticed by the person itself (awareness and acceptance), is life experience what cannot be trained or is seen as not so important as facts and figures. The first two of these remarks subscribe the propositions of prior experience and awareness and acceptance. The last proposition describes the importance of rationality, as mentioned under the explanation of the proposition of uncertainty of information.

“I do not believe in enhancing intuition by training, but by experiencing. Life experience is the training for intuition.” (Mr. Hermans, former Managing Director Fabory Western Europe)

The interviewees described a set of different tools which are used to cultivate and activate intuition. The following tools were mentioned as elements for cultivating and activating intuition: self reflection, create time and peace of mind, brainstorming, creating an open environment, learn to think outside boundaries, sharing of intuition and interrupting your consciousness by building in weird moments.

“Interrupt your consciousness, by building in weird moments. For example do not go to your office in the morning, but just drive around or take a bath. I often have my best ideas when taking a shower.” (Mr. Faes, CEO Faes Cases)

The interviewees were also asked if they would promote cultivating and activating intuition in their company. Eight of the 12 answered that they would do this, though 6 mentioned that they would do this under certain restrictions. For instance they would only train certain departments like marketing and sales, or only top management. One of the interviewees mentioned that he have had a training in “management on intuition” from his former employer.

Conclusion

Based upon the answers and the fact that 9 of the 12 interviewees (75%) agreed upon the fact that intuition could be cultivated and activated, we can conclude that intuition can be enhanced and therefore the proposition can be considered as validated.

Another conclusion is that when intuition is made tangible in the form of training and is used to cultivate and activate intuition of other employees in their organization, 8 of the 12 (66,7%) are positive to do this with 6 of them (50%) under certain restrictions.

5.2.2. Proposition independent outcome variable

Proposition 2: The use of intuition leads to effective internationalization decision making.

The interviewees all use their intuition and are aware that intuition is a part of their decision making process. When looking at the answers in relation to this proposition all twelve interviewees feel that when using intuition they are able to better analyze and judge the subject of decision. On the other hand all the interviewees point out that decision making only based on intuition will not improve the outcome of the decision. This point will be further discussed under proposition 3a and 3b. The focus of this proposition is on the use of intuition within the total context of decision making. Intuition is clearly seen as one of the tools to fine tune the decision.

“Intuition is allowing your imagination to provide you with answers or alternative opinions.” (Mr. Auld, TR Fastenings)

“Intuition gives a survival chance in a new situation.” (Mr. Looye, Managing Director Intersafe)

When we look at decision making concerning internationalization, it was often pointed out that intuition was often used when meeting and negotiating with international business partners and choosing the right partners. As validated under the proposition of prior experience, the prior experience with international business and different cultures enabled the interviewees to make better and faster judgments. I also refer to the quotation of Mr. Looye and Mr. Van der Hoek about “the handbook of intuition”.

“Successes in the past diminish your uncertainty and lead to better judgment.” (Mr. Van der Hoek, Baarsma Wine Group)

Conclusion

The use of intuition alone will not improve the outcome of a decision, but the use of intuition within the total context of decision making itself will. When looking at the subject of internationalization, the use of intuition is found to be important when dealing with other people and cultures. Based on this information the proposition can be considered as validated, though with the note that decisions based in intuition alone will not result in effective internationalization.

“The quality of the decision increases when using your intuition.” (Mr. Van der Aa, former CEO Fabory Group)

5.2.3. Propositions moderating variables

Proposition 3a: Rationale increases initially the effectiveness of the decision, but too much rationale decreases the effectiveness of the decision (curve linear)

Rationalizing is used to get a better view on the subject of decision. All twelve interviewees prefer to use a certain amount of rationality when possible. The amount of rationality used to make a decision can fluctuate. The importance and impact of the decision play a key role according 3 out of the 12 interviewees.

“The use of rationality depends on the impact of the decision.” (Mr. Karis, CEO Zeeman textielSupers)

Intuition may often be the start of a process but when possible rationality is used to check and complement it. The amount of rationality may be small in this stage and probably increases when it is not in line with intuition.

“You never make a decision on intuition alone, you always check it.” (Mr. Van den Belt, CEO Fabory Group)

Six out of the 12 interviewees perceive too much rationality to be an obstacle for making a decision. Too much rationality is seen as an obstacle for entrepreneurship en progress.

“When you try to rationalize everything, then you stop moving.” (Mr. Karis, CEO Zeeman textielSupers)

“Use reflection; do not only decide on rationality. It is a pitfall to go in depth and suddenly realize that you don’t know were you started.” (Mr. Kolk, CEO WE International)

It seems that at the start of a decision making process intuition plays a big role and then is rationalized in order to verify our feelings. But when we rationalize too much, we often fall back on our intuition.

“Often we base our outcomes too much on figures. When this happens we have to return to our feelings.” (Mr. Van der Hoek, CEO Baarsma Wine Group)”

Conclusion

It is proven that the interviewees use rationality when possible, that the amount of rationality fluctuates and that the use of rationality is seen as an improvement of the effectiveness of the decision. When we look at the amount of data it seems very likely that the amount of data follows a curve linear. It can be stated that there is a disparity between the point of checking their intuition with rationality and the point of rational overload (see figure 8). Six of the 12 interviewees (50%) indicated this. Based on this result we can not clearly validate, nor reject this proposition.

Proposition 3b: Emotions increase initially the effectiveness of the decision, but too much emotion decreases the effectiveness of the decision.

That emotions have an effect on the decision is underwritten by 10 out of the 12 interviewees. The interviewees point out that a self evaluation is needed to control their emotion. Seven out of the 12 interviewees point out the emotional attachment with people or their company in general. Most of them refer to empathy. The use of empathy is pointed out as to be very useful especially when dealing with people. Empathy has to be placed in its context. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made concerning people, and then too much empathy can influence your judgment too much. Self confidence is also pointed out as helpful, but too much self confidence leads to arrogance and that may color your opinion.

“When dealing with people, put papers over person’s names; just watch what happens and what the rational implications are.” (Mr. Auld, CEO TR Fastenings)

“Disconnect yourself from the company in order to be tied less emotionally and let you judgment be influenced.” (Mr. Van der Hoek, CEO Baarsma Wine Group)

Conclusion

The self evaluation and reflection plays an important role when dealing with emotions. Ten out of the 12 interviewees (83,3%) mention the role of emotions and the ability to control it. This implicates that too much emotions can negatively influence the decision. Besides too much emotion it is clear that some level of emotion is needed to run a business and make decisions, as is pointed out by 7 out of the 12 interviewees (58,3%). Based on this outcome we can consider this proposition as validated. Though it have to be kept in mind that there are different kind of emotions that will probably have different curves linear.

Figure 11: Overview proposition validation

Proposition	Validation
P1a.	Validated
P1b.	Validated
P1c.	Rejected
P1d.	Validated
P1e.	Validated
2.	Validated
3a.	Rejected
3b.	Validated

6. General conclusions and recommendations

6.1. General Conclusion

6.1.1. *Confrontation of the theoretical and empirical outcomes*

Throughout the years the strategic decision making paradigms have been complemented. The research area of strategic decision making started with the paradigm of rationality (Dewey, 1910), followed by bounded rationality (Simon, 1960), politics and power (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992) and heuristics (Kraibanrat & Phelps, 1998).

Concluded is that decision making is not solely a rational process and that there are many external factors that influence this process. The paradigm of heuristics clarifies that decision makers try to simplify and optimize their decision making process. The factors experience and learning are mentioned as effective on the outcome of the decision.

Prior experience

Within the theories of intuition, prior experience is also mentioned as source for subconscious learning. Based upon the outcome of the empirical results, prior experience is seen as a factor from which decision makers learn and are able to make decision within new situations based on making associations with prior experiences. This corresponds with the paradigm of heuristics, but also with the theory of intuition. The outcome of the research subscribes that prior experience increases subconscious knowledge and diminishes uncertainty, which results in increased use of intuition. Heuristics describe learning and knowledge from prior experiences in a rational manner. When dealing with intuition the same factors result in subconscious knowledge, the source of intuition. It could therefore be that heuristics may improve or increase our use of intuition.

Information uncertainty

Dealing with complexity and environmental instability may lead to uncertainty. When dealing with complex situations, decision makers long to have rational information, in order to diminish risk and uncertainty. The amount of information or uncertainty about data leads to the use of heuristics. The empirical results show that intuition is triggered when dealing with uncertainty about information. Three situations were described as source for the use of intuition: (1) when there is little or no information, (2) the start of a decision making process and (3) when there is too much information. The actions taken by the interviewees in these situations are very similar to the actions of heuristics as described by Kraibanrat & Phelps (1998). There is one major difference and that is that the interviewees use intuition as a tool to reduce uncertainty, to simplify the decision and to satisfy towards a decision. It is striking to see that the paradigm of heuristics has many overlapping aspects and it seems like intuition is the last part of the puzzle within the strategic decision making theories.

Ability to Learn

Besides prior experience, the aspect learning plays a role within heuristics and intuition. It is logical that when you do not have the will or ability to learn, then you will not collect knowledge. Within heuristics, imitation, risk aversion and co-operation (pooling knowledge) refer to learning from others. It seems likely that the ability to learn enables

decision makers to collect subconscious knowledge and enhances the use of intuition. This proposition could not be validated by the research results, though what could be concluded is that the majority of the interviewees have an extreme inquisitive nature. When the above is placed in the context of decision making, then some distinctive links can be made. The strategic choice theory supports the learning aspect of the decision makers. The decision makers, top executives, in this research CEO's, are the key actors that make the strategic re-orientations towards the environment. They learn, create and manage on basis of their environment, which in turn leads to organizational learning. To be effective it could be probably so that a CEO indeed must have the ability and will to learn, absorb and challenge him/herself to be able to make effective decisions. Though this could not be proven based on the empirical results.

Internationalization

The empirical results support the fact that prior experience leads to less uncertainty concerning internationalization decisions and increases the use of intuition. The internationalization theory also supports the idea of organizational and personal learning and prior experience. Other aspects described in the internationalization theory are the interaction atmosphere and interaction settings. An outcome of the empirical research is that intuition plays an important role when dealing with other people in general, but also specific when dealing with business partners or potential business partners. This is in line with the effect of the internationalization interaction settings on effective internationalization. It is clear that prior experience, learning, interaction settings and atmosphere are important within the internationalization decision making process. Prior experience and learning are also the source for subconscious knowledge and therefore for the use of intuition. The empirical results conclude that the use of intuition results in effective internationalization. Theoretical research subscribes the importance of intuition as a decision making tool. When intuition is moderated positively or negatively by rationale and emotions this will lead to better decision making. Learning from our experiences, but also learning to use intuition personally and within organizations seems therefore important for organizations that operate internationally.

Rationale and emotions

It is important to realize that intuition alone will not lead to effective internationalization. Rationale and emotions are the other factors that play a key role when making decisions. As said above too much rationale or emotions can cloud or obstruct our judgment. This is supported by scholars like Simon, Patton and Vaughan. The empirical results could not validate or reject that rationale follows a curve linear, and that too much rationale will lead to less effective decision making. Only fifty percent of the interviewees agreed upon the matter. Theoretical research points out the fact that not enough, too much or poor data leads to uncertainty. According to the empirical results this uncertainty will lead to increased use of intuition. Both the theoretical and empirical research point out that there must be a certain balance between the three powers. This supports the proposition that rationale follows a curve linear. It can be concluded that rationale increases initially the effectiveness of the decision, but too much rationale decreases the effectiveness of the decision. The affect of emotions is supported by theory as by the research results. One hundred percent of the interviewees answered that they never made a decision alone on rationale, intuition or emotions. It is important to be able to reflect between these three powers.

Awareness and acceptance

To be able to reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions, there must be awareness of all three inner powers. To be aware of our rationale or emotions is not as difficult, as being aware of our intuition. Because intuition subconsciously emerges it makes it less easy to focus on. What the empirical results show us is that when people are aware of their intuition they start to realize how they make their decisions. When aware of your own personal decision making process then you can start reflecting your decisions and improve your decision making process. Awareness and acceptance of intuition are the starting point for the use of intuition but also for effective decision making. Starting to realize that intuition can be used offers the possibility to reflect between intuition, rationale and emotions. It broadens the scope of possibilities for decision makers.

Cultivating and activating

Theory describes that when aware of intuition and when accepted, it will enable us to use, cultivate and train it. The empirical results support this, but a note has to be made. Actively training intuition is seen by some of the interviewees as not very useful. In their opinion experiencing is the best training for intuition. This in fact supports the definition of intuition. Just being aware of intuition and accept it can already lead to cultivating it and activating it without having followed an intensive training. Though there must be kept in mind that in order to make balanced decisions, decision makers must be able to use intuition in the same amount as rationale and emotions. It seems therefore very likely that intuition must be cultivated and activated in order to make effective decisions.

Intuition and effective internationalization

The empirical results show that when engaging in international business with partners or possible partners intuition is used to create a first impression on which decisions to cooperate are made. Theoretical research shows that the internationalization interaction settings are important to the total decision making process. This points out the importance of the interaction with people. It seems likely that our intuition is more functional when dealing with people as a result of life long experience. The total result of this study proves that intuition deserves much more attention in the field of strategic decision making. Based on theoretical and empirical results it is proven that intuition can be an effective decision making tool, when used properly. The most effective decisions are made by: (1) reflecting between intuition, rationale and emotions and (2) by controlling these powers so that they complement each other instead of blocking each other. Prior experience with international business seems to increase the use of intuition and enables the decision maker to improve his/het decision making process based on intuition, rationale and emotions. On the outcome of the empirical and theoretical research can be stated that the use of intuition probably leads to more effective decision making and has a positive effect on internationalization. Again it has to be said that increased use of intuition can lead to a better balance with rationale and emotions and results in more effective decision making.

6.2. Recommendations

With this thesis I have tried to get a better view on the role of intuition within the strategic decision making process concerning internationalization. As we have seen, the research field of intuition is very diffuse and in some scientific areas scholars have started to go in depth on the subject⁴. In the area of strategic management intuition is a subject that is researched but not quite often or in depth. That intuition plays a role within the strategic decision making process is underwritten by various scholars, though it is still not fully accepted within the theories of the strategic decision making paradigms.

It is stunning to see that the paradigm of heuristics uses the same tools as intuition. It would be interesting to research the effect of implementing these tools within organizations and measure if this will lead to increased use of intuition. It could even be so that using intuition is a possible tool of heuristics. Another recommendation would be to perform research on the time frame of an organization, according to the strategy schools of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, (1998), in relation to the characteristics of CEO decision making and the process of decision making.

The proposition of the ability to learn was not validated. A cause for this could be the structure of this research. I suggest that it is useful to elaborate on the inquisitive nature, as characteristic of a CEO, in future research, instead of researching the aspect ability to learn. This seems quite difficult to investigate, and it could also be that the method of this research is not adequate enough to evaluate this. Another aspect that can be subject to future research is the ability of absorbing and quickly evaluating large quantities of information. Here I refer to Patton (2003), who points out that intuition relies on patterns developed through continual exposure to actual situations. This results in learning to absorb and evaluate large quantities of information quickly and grow meaning of certain patterns of operation and activity.

The interviewees were all CEO's but from various backgrounds. The interviewees were only selected on the fact that they were CEO's of organizations that have international operations. There are no similarities in age, branch, organization characteristics or personal characteristics. The only thing that they have in common is that they are all men. This could affect the accuracy of the research, because they work within different environments and are affected by this environment in different ways. The characteristics of the interviewees can also play a big role on the outcome of the research. For example, some people can be more rational than other people. Another aspect that can affect the accuracy of the research is the amount of CEO's interviewed. In this research twelve CEO's were interviewed, the results were clear, but a bigger amount would probably improve the accuracy. A recommendation concerning this research is to value the outcomes in relation to the amount of interviews carried out. It would be preferable to perform this research on a larger scale in order to create a place for intuition within the theory of strategic decision making. I recommend an extensive quantitative research in which CEO's are followed and their successes in strategic decision making are measured.

⁴ E.g. researches on intuition within the nursing practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Literature references

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Appendix 2. Cultivation of intuition

- Intention: The first requirement for awakening intuition consciously is having a clear intention to do so;
- Attentive: Be more attentive to the overall decision process;
- Challenge: Challenge decisions when you feel or sense the need to do so;
- Reflectivity: Reflect on past decisions and the role that intuition played and attempt to learn from any mistakes;
- Practice: Practice applying intuition in work situations or with hypothetical scenarios, cases or exercises and make decisions without all the necessary data;
- Watch: Watch and observe when and how others employ their intuition;
- Educate: Learn about intuitive decision making by reading books and articles and attending conferences;
- Risk: Learn to take risks when making decisions without fearing the consequences;
- Time: Take time and create a space in your life for developing intuition;
- Relaxation: Let go of physical and emotional tension;
- Silence: Learn to quiet the mind through such techniques as meditation;
- Honesty: Face your own self-deception, be honest with yourself and others;
- Receptivity: Be open to new and different ways of doing an seeing things;
- Sensitivity: Tune in upon both your inner and outer cues;
- Trust: Trust yourself;
- Openness: Be open to experiences, both inner and outer;
- Courage: Be willing to experience your fears and confront them;
- Acceptance: Adopt a non-judgmental attitude toward things as they are;
- Nonattachment: Be willing to let things be as they are;
- Daily practice: Intuitive awareness grows with daily attention;
- Support group: Find friends and colleagues with whom you can share your intuitive experiences without their judging you;
- Journal keeping: Keep record of your intuitive insights;
- Love: Practice love and compassion;
- Non-verbal play: Practice non-verbal expression (for example, music, drawing,) without a specific goal in mind;
- Enjoyment: Find tranquility and satisfaction from expanding your consciousness through all these steps.

Appendix 3. Techniques and exercises for intuition

Relaxation techniques:

- Clear the mind mentally.
- Seek quiet times.
- Seek solitude.
- Listen to classical music.
- Sleep on the problem.
- Fast.
- Meditate.
- Pray.
- Drop a problem and return to it later.
- Exercise.
- Joke.

Mental exercises:

- Play freely with ideas without a specific goal in mind.
- Practice guided imagery.
- Practice tolerating ambiguity and accepting lack of control.
- Practice flexibility, openness to unknowns as they appear.
- Practice concentration;
- Try to think of unique solutions.
- Be willing to follow up on points that have no factual justification.

Analytical exercises:

- Discuss the problem with colleagues who have different perspectives as well as with respected friends.
- Concentrate on listening to not only what but also how people express themselves.
- Identify pro's and con's; then assess your feelings about each option.
- Consider the problem only when you are most alert.
- Tune in upon your reactions to outside stimuli.
- Analyze dreams.
- Insist on a creative pause before reaching a decision.
- Ask "What do I want to do?" and "What is right to do?"

Appendix 4. The semi-structured interview

Interview

What is your background? (Educational, career)

- Do you have a lot of experience with internationalization?
- Which kind of advantages does this experience have?
- Can you describe your career path?

How are strategic decisions concerning internationalization taken?

- Based upon extensive market and partner studies?
- Based upon a set of fixed critical factors/aspects?
- Does it depend upon the situation?

How do you describe the strategic decision making process within your organization?

- Who makes the final decision?
- Is it a process of negotiating or politics?
- Are the decisions made alone or with a team?
- How long are you dealing with internationalization decisions?

Which changes did you experience in doing business these last years?

- Did the way of making your decisions change these past x years?
- How did these changes influence your work?
- What do these changes ask from a CEO and an organization?

How does globalization influence strategic decision making processes?

- Does the pressure increase to make faster decisions concerning internationalization?
- How do you handle the influence of globalization?
- What kind of influence does this have on the manner of internationalizing?

How can you quickly react on changes in the market?

- Do you use certain methods to keep learning?
- How do you value networks?
- Why do you use networks?

How is information and data concerning strategic decisions used and handled?

- How does time affect this?
- Do you use information systems?
- Do you make your decision on key aspects of information or do you analyze all information available?

Have you become more self-confident through the years in taking strategic decisions?

- What is the reason for this?
- Do you thrive more on intuition?
- Do you think that you make better decisions now compared with a few years ago?

How do you prefer to make your decision?

- On intuition or rational analyses?
- On what does it depend?
- When do you use intuition and when not?
- What does obstruct the use of intuition as viable source for strategic decision making?

How would you describe intuition?

- Do you trust on intuition and why?
- How can the use of intuition be increased and enhanced?
- Are you aware of your intuition?
- Do you accept the use of intuition?
- Does the organization accept the use of intuition?
- How are intuitive decisions accepted within the organization?
- Do you think that it becomes more important to stimulate the use of intuition?
- If intuition can be trained or learned would you then invest time, money and effort in it? (personal and for the organization)

Do you have any questions or remarks?

Appendix 5. Proposition testing

Textual fragment	Mediator variables	Interviewee
You have to tell yourself that there is a solution for everything. Then starting with international business is getting less scary.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Faes
You have to make sure that you assemble the right partners. Partners that have the knowledge. This is very important and has everything to do with intuition.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Faes
An entrepreneur has to be able to anticipate on changing circumstances. That's when your intuition kicks in.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Faes
Intuition is knowing or seeing the way out and knowing what to do in every difficult situation.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Faes
There is so much knowledge, but it is not possible anymore to organize it. We have to look at the application of knowledge. What enables us to see what is important and what not?	Information uncertainty	Mr. Hazewinkel
You train on learning to judge on a few fragments. Providing fast insight in complex situations by analyses.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Hazewinkel
For judgment you need a lot of intuition. You start with your intuition and then you analyze your choices.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Hazewinkel
Important for success is the independency of your self knowledge and your capability to change. You have to be able to self reflect continuously on ratio, intuition and emotion. You are forced to do this because there are a lot of changes and there is often not one solution to the problem.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Karis
The use of rational input also depends on the impact of the decision. But it has to stop at a certain point. Too much rationale can lead to delaying your decision, and then as CEO you have to have the guts to decide.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Karis
Not everything can be supported by hard facts. The processes always bring unforeseen changes. Then a good leader must be able to fall back on his intuition and not be afraid to hold on to his decision in rough weather.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Karis
The higher you climb in your career, the more important intuition gets. The decisions you make on a higher level are more complex. But you always have to combine it with rational input.	Information uncertainty	Mr. De Becker
Complexity: not everything can be analyzed, but you learn to set priorities quickly.	Information uncertainty	Mr. De Becker
The degree of uncertainty and the importance of a decision define how far you have to complete intuition with facts & figures.	Information uncertainty	Mr. De Becker
The level of intuition depends on the decision itself, if personal then faster on intuition, when more corporate then intuition supported by rational.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Auld
Intuition is okay, but I need rational analyses to feel comfortable.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Hermans
There is too much info that can make you go nuts. You have to bring it back to just one paper. You can analyze and analyze but in the end you do nothing.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Kolk
Sometimes you have already a certain feeling, and then you rationalize to your decision.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Kolk
There are fast changes in the market. You need your windows, otherwise you loose grip with reality.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Looye
You get obstructed when there are too many facts on the table, when there is too much data to serve as information.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Looye
In the end there you always use your intuition in decision making,	Information	Mr. Looye

because you never have one hundred percent certainty.	uncertainty	
There is a continuous flow of information. You don't realize anymore that you also continuously are absorbing this information. Intuition enables you to separate the wheat from the chaff very quickly.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Provoost
You have to be able to feel comfortable outside your comfort zone.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Provoost
To guide a business you do not necessarily need a lot of information.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van den Belt
You look with a helicopter view. You are not in the daily operations and you have to be aware that you do not let yourself be seduced to all the details.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van den Belt
Your first impression is build upon a handful of items.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van den Belt
We often look too much at figures, then we have to return to our feelings again.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Hoek
At the beginning of a process intuition is in charge. When the process progresses then rational foundation is demanded.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Hoek
The current timeframe is formalistic and does not always help us to progress.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Hoek
Sometimes changes in the environment don't feel good, but you can not put your finger on it. For instance with timing, then you have to rely on your intuition and conviction.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Aa
You need to have talent and feeling for business. Knowing how to trust on half the information and then be cold blooded and rely on your senses and self-confidence to be able to hold on to your decision.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Aa
I have rather have too much information than none. You have to be able to manage the information, and then the quality rises. But be aware for too much reporting, then you can not see the details anymore.	Information uncertainty	Mr. Van der Aa
The first steps of internationalization have enabled me to loose my threshold fear.	Prior experience	Mr. Faes
The experiences in the Belgium market enabled me to do the same in the German market.	Prior experience	Mr. Faes
The level of experience defines the pace of the decision making process. It gets easier to make decisions.	Prior experience	Mr. Faes
Life experience is something that you cannot teach young managers. You must have seen things.	Prior experience	Mr. Faes
My prime experience is that you have learned that by studying and working hard, you learn to judge on fragments of information.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
You learn to keep different balls in the air. That is on what you train and learn to form your judgment on.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
Internationalization: When you talk with a Dutchman, then I can orientate myself very well. But with a foreigner you miss certain antennas (language and culture). You have to put much effort in learning to know people.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
You have to get streetwise, smart in the environment in which you are.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
I have learned through my experiences in business services, to look from the outside into the inside. Super visional functions are very valuable to cultivate and explore intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
You know the business through and through. You can see the building	Prior	Mr.

bricks and know which buttons to push.	experience	Hazewinkel
You get more self confident with making decisions.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
Good experience with using intuition, you develop it, it is dynamic.	Prior experience	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition grows. Choices are now more based upon your experiences.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
Important personal developments are being more self confident and learn to use intuition, learning to reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
Subject of decisions are not continuously a surprise anymore, which gives you more peace.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
Important for success is the independency of your self knowledge and your capability to change.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
When you want to be successful internationally then you have to go in depth on the matter.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
Because you recognize situations, you are able to base your decision on your prior experiences.	Prior experience	Mr. Karis
Also with analyses itself experience plays a role. Someone that has experience can make faster associations.	Prior experience	Mr. De Becker
It is better for a CEO to stay in the same branch. Then you are familiar with the same problems.	Prior experience	Mr. De Becker
The degree of intuition and rational changes through the years.	Prior experience	Mr. De Becker
Now I make better decisions through experience and the use of intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. De Becker
Globalization gives you as a person far more responsibility to educate yourself in countries and markets. The challenge of globalization is that you become more worldly wise about the product and the market place you operate in.	Prior experience	Mr. Auld
Use anchor accounts to go in new business. Moving with your customers.	Prior experience	Mr. Auld
I make better decisions now. You cannot learn experience from books.	Prior experience	Mr. Auld
You have to be aware of the fact that you do not know everything and that you cannot always rely on prior experiences.	Prior experience	Mr. Hermans
In negotiations or meetings I rely more on my experience, negotiating skills and intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. Hermans
When you get older and become more experienced, then you get less uncertain.	Prior experience	Mr. Hermans
Intuition: Doing things subconsciously. Life experience.	Prior experience	Mr. Hermans
I don't believe in enhancing intuition by training but instead by experiencing. Life experience is training.	Prior experience	Mr. Hermans
You learn through experience that you need local market knowledge.	Prior experience	Mr. Kolk
Grew up in Zanvoort and interacted with tourists a lot. Now this helps me to interact more easily in foreign countries.	Prior experience	Mr. Kolk
Learning from others. There are a lot of resources for finding out what were the reasons for past successes.	Prior experience	Mr. Kolk
You become more self confident through experience and past successes.	Prior	Mr. Kolk

	experience	
It is mainly experience. Doing a lot of that kind of things in your life, and watching how others do it, and ask yourself: "How would I have done that."	Prior experience	Mr. Kolk
You learn to thrive more on intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. Kolk
Learn not to work with facts & figures only. Through experience you learn a role-play that you can use in different situations in the future.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
10 years ago I had a lot more anxiety for changes or new things. Now that is a lot less. You get a sort of automatism. Doubt and uncertainty diminish.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
Your self confidence gets bigger. You have seen things and know what to take into account.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
Based on intuition you choose a chapter out of your handbook with experiences and then you choose the rational approach.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
Knowledge that you did not use in the past couple of years, suddenly appears in a certain situation.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
Self confidence grows. In the past far too much analytical. Now you are more able to use your intuition and empathy to reach a decision.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
The role of intuition gets not more important, but the knowledge increase when getting older or the experiences you have had got more important.	Prior experience	Mr. Looye
I have been everywhere. You have to be able to make your moves on different tables. Then it helps a lot when you have experienced it before.	Prior experience	Mr. Provoost
Cultural baggage. You expand everything and intuitively feel how to negotiate with different cultures, partners, etc.	Prior experience	Mr. Provoost
Through my experiences I make better decisions and I have become more self confident. Intuition gives you a direction where are the possible painful subjects or possible connections.	Prior experience	Mr. Provoost
It is like a chess player, making fast moves.	Prior experience	Mr. Provoost
At first you make mistakes, you have to learn.	Prior experience	Mr. Van den Belt
The experience is that you make easier decisions. The way how to learn to know a market, that is experience. Willing to learn and listen.	Prior experience	Mr. Van den Belt
It is a mix of routine and intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. Van den Belt
You get more self confident and learn to thrive more on intuition. Often in combination with people.	Prior experience	Mr. Van den Belt
You form intuition through a lot of experience. It is subconsciously feeling the environment and people.	Prior experience	Mr. Van den Belt
Little things you see or interpret, that define success, that is what improves.	Prior experience	Mr. Van der Hoek
When you have had successes in the past, your self confidence increases and uncertainty diminishes. Recognizable situations occur, though every situation is different.	Prior experience	Mr. Van der Hoek
You have a toolbox in your head with which you can solve things. Do I take the wrench or hammer.	Prior experience	Mr. Van der Hoek
Through experience you are able to make decisions easier based upon intuition.	Prior experience	Mr. Van der Hoek
The last twenty years you can look back and be proud of yourself and your personal development. When you look back, you see that you learn	Prior experience	Mr. Van der Aa

to trust more on your intuition when taking decisions.		
You have to have faith in yourself, see the chances and opportunities and be prepared to work very hard.	Ability to learn	Mr. Faes
Creativity arises when you learn to think outside the boundaries and give your mind the freedom to come to solutions.	Ability to learn	Mr. Faes
You have to be kept informed on all kinds of different subjects, by networking, hearing things and making associations.	Ability to learn	Mr. Faes
Your scanner is constantly on. You develop a feeling for what is important and what not.	Ability to learn	Mr. Faes
Not everyone has the same feeling for intuition. Characteristics are of importance. Looking for challenges is an important characteristic. Exploring intuition.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
You learn to keep different balls in the air. That is on what you train and learn to form your judgment on.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
My whole career is a source of surprises. You change through the years and are constantly in search for new challenges.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
There is a right time and place for a CEO, horses for courses. When routine gets the upper hand above challenge, then you have to move.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition is perceived by putting time and energy in it. Actively hearing and feeling of the situation.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
You have to learn to get to know yourself.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
Learning to listen to each others intuition and try to rationalize it.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hazewinkel
Important personal developments are being more self confident and learn to use intuition, learning to reflect between rational, intuition and emotions.	Ability to learn	Mr. Karis
You must have the urge to learn. Have interest in new developments and follow these developments	Ability to learn	Mr. Karis
Important for success is the independency of your self knowledge and your capability to change.	Ability to learn	Mr. Karis
When you want to be successful internationally then you have to go in depth on the matter.	Ability to learn	Mr. Karis
Follow discussions, discussion programs on TV, read a lot.	Ability to learn	Mr. Karis
A CEO spends 90% of his time listening on all levels.	Ability to learn	Mr. De Becker
Put yourself in the position where you do not want to be. Make sacrifices.	Ability to learn	Mr. Auld
Networking inside the business is absolutely critical.	Ability to learn	Mr. Auld
The characteristics of a person are the basis for further development.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hermans
Use your network of divers relations. Share divers interests.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hermans
Always challenge yourself. Want to make the difference on the square meter.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hermans
Learning how to approach different subjects, but also learning to step aside and let others do things.	Ability to learn	Mr. Hermans
Use your internal and external network	Ability to	Mr. Kolk

	learn	
Experiencing, interests, networking, curiosity. Looking in the kitchen of others. Ask questions, learning, reading and making things your own.	Ability to learn	Mr. Kolk
The urge to change things and get people moving.	Ability to learn	Mr. Kolk
You have to bring added value to the company. As CEO you have to have the right attitude. You must be able to bring the company further.	Ability to learn	Mr. Looye
Be aware that you never find yourself in your ivory tower.	Ability to learn	Mr. Looye
You need to have windows. Otherwise you loose grip on reality.	Ability to learn	Mr. Looye
Constantly keeping your eyes and ears open. I have a reputation of asking questions. I am inquisitive and eager to learn.	Ability to learn	Mr. Provoost
Characteristics: Inquisitive, searching new challenges, opening up new horizons, not afraid for the unknown.	Ability to learn	Mr. Provoost
Comfortable outside the comfort zone.	Ability to learn	Mr. Provoost
Fundamental is the intellectual modesty, always thinking that you have a lot to learn.	Ability to learn	Mr. Provoost
Conscious of how to be a better man. You have to do something with it. Continuously searching for improvement.	Ability to learn	Mr. Provoost
Your network is everywhere, business or private, newspapers, internet, and magazines.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van den Belt
You make better decisions through learning. This has a lot to do with the life phase of a CEO. You have to be open for new developments and the time spirit of the environment, branch and organization.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Hoek
I like to gather knowledge, to combine it and create valuable things.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Aa
Always looking for new challenges. When you can not learn anymore in a certain situation then start searching for a new situation from which you can learn.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Aa
Learning happens under extreme circumstances.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Aa
Reading newspapers, networking.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Aa
Put yourself continuously in an environment in which you are challenged. New things, learning. Networks are essential. The informal basis supplies the necessary extra knowledge.	Ability to learn	Mr. Van der Aa
I do practically everything on intuition in the end, because everything is reflexive. In the end you make the decision and therefore you use your intuition.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Faes
Intuition is something we have too little in our society. Everything is rationalized. In these times we need intuitive leaders.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Faes
I am open for the use of intuition within the organization, but will not stimulate others to use it. They have to do that themselves.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Faes
I do not believe intuition can be trained, it can be stimulated, but it must be within the people themselves to do it.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Faes
Not everyone has the same feeling for intuition. Characteristics are of importance. Looking for challenges is an important characteristic. Exploring intuition.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hazewinkel

Intuition is perceived by putting time and energy in it. Actively hearing and feeling of the situation.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hazewinkel
When you share intuition then you can enhance it. Intuition has a fault margin and by sharing it you can minimize this margin.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hazewinkel
Good experience with intuition, you develop it, it is dynamic.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hazewinkel
The company accepts the use of intuition. It is a stimulant for entrepreneurship. Intuition gets more important as tool.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition grows.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Karis
Business is an emotional process, gut feeling.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Karis
Important for success is the independency of your self knowledge and your capability to change.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Karis
Acceptance of intuition: You have the responsibility to open up to intuition. But be aware that it does not take the upper hand.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Karis
90% rational and 10% intuition. I am probably not always aware that I use my intuition. Later in the interview: I notice that I use subconsciously more intuition then I thought 75% / 25%.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Becker
At a certain time he was in an environment where people considered him as an experienced man. This was a powerful tool, credibility. The use of intuition was therefore accepted very easily.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Auld
Characteristics of a person are the basis for further development.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hermans
Being able to make your decision upon rationale, emotions and intuition, results in tranquility, self confidence and independency in thinking, because you trust yourself.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Hermans
You must check your gut feeling. Be open for the use of intuition.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Kolk
Within the organization: empower people stimulate entrepreneurship	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Kolk
Ask your colleagues: "How does it feel." Brainstorming with management team.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Kolk
Through the years learned to thrive more on intuition. From 80/20 to 50/50.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Kolk
You have to learn not only to work on a rational basis with figures.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Looye
Self reflection on the manner you take a decision. Checking scenes: intuition, rationale and emotions.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Looye
The organization accepts it within limits.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Looye
Knowledge, know how and emotions, it is a mix for you must use interactively and for which you have to be open.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Provoost
On this level you can not operate without empathy and emotions. You must now what moves people in order to be able to let them do things, that is intuition.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Provoost
Reaction upon the subject intuition: Did not think about it anymore, nice to see it again	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Provoost
Intuition is often the spark.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Van den Belt
Track record, people must have faith that you are right again.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Van der

	Acceptance	Aa
Supporting intuition with post rationalizing.	Awareness & Acceptance	Mr. Van der Aa
If you do what you always did, than you get what you always got.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Faes
Creativity arises when you learn to think outside the boundaries and give your mind the freedom to come to solutions.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Faes
Self evaluation is important, the evaluation of your intuition also.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Faes
I do not believe intuition can be trained, it can be stimulated, but it must be within the people themselves to do it.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Faes
Interrupt your consciousness. Build in weird moments. In the morning don't go to your office, but just drive around or take a bath. My best ideas arise in the morning in the shower.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Faes
The funny thing of intuition is that you sometimes notice that you have turned it off and afterwards realize you should not have done that.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hazewinkel
Use self reflection and at the end of the day think about what happened that day.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hazewinkel
When you share intuition then you can enhance it. Intuition has a fault margin and by sharing it you can minimize this margin.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hazewinkel
You have to learn to know yourself very well.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hazewinkel
Good experience with intuition. You develop it, it is dynamic.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hazewinkel
Important personal developments are: Being more self confident, learn to use intuition and learn to reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Karis
Be open for intuition. Reflect between rationale, emotions and intuition.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Karis
The trick is to take time when there is time. Body and mind must be tuned upon each other. You must have a good condition to make the right decisions.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Karis
Stimulating intuition? No it is more important to stimulate the use of facts & figures. It does depend on the kind of business you are in.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. De Becker
Spark off each others ideas. Be not afraid to use any idea to start with. Create a very open environment. Brainstorming.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Auld
Self reflection is important. Be able to make yourself independent to the decision.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hermans
I don't believe in enhancing intuition by training but by experiencing. Life experience is training.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Hermans
Self reflection. Brainstorming with management team.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Kolk
I did have training in management on intuition (Ronald Jan Heijn). Was interesting. Self reflection, learning to listen to your feelings.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Kolk
You must know yourself and your shortcomings. Self reflection. Reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Looye
Brainstormssessions lead to increased use of intuition, more creativity and entrepreneurship.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Looye
Intuition can be partly learned, cultivated and activated.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van den Belt

Activating intuition within the organization has a lot to do with trust. People have to feel good. Do not pressure them in the wrong manner, but give people space.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van den Belt
Self reflection.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van der Hoek
Intuition is personal. Brainstorm with your ideas and other people, where do you stand.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van der Aa
Organizations should stimulate the use of intuition and not be afraid of it.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van der Aa
The quality of the decision increases and it is a good investment, though it should be measurable.	Activating & Cultivating	Mr. Van der Aa

Textual fragment	Moderator variables	Interviewee
It is only founding your feelings, thus being a mix between rationale and intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Faes
Intuition may not turn into gambling.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Faes
Emotions can be of influence on your gut feeling. Self evaluation is important, also evaluation of intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Faes
Intuition is the tension between instinct and intellect.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Faes
There is a lot of rationality in intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hazewinkel
First you start with intuition then you start rationalizing your choices. You need substance.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hazewinkel
You are also emotionally attached to the company. Social, emotional aspect. You can not let yourself be led solely by emotions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hazewinkel
As stock exchange noted organization you have a lot of obstacles in control statement, this tends to be close to bureaucracy. In other words a zero risks society. Entrepreneurship is not stimulated.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hazewinkel
More self confident	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hazewinkel
When you try to rationalize everything, then you stop moving.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Important personal developments are being more self confident and learn to use intuition, learning to reflect between rationale, intuition and emotions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Changes have to do with emotions. Business is an emotional process. Gut feeling.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Emotions let you create your own truth which obstructs your flexibility.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Experiences which you have had rationally and emotionally must be combined in order to found your gut feeling.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Be aware that you do not get too self confident, this is a pitfall and must not turn into arrogance.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
Obstacles for deciding solely upon intuition are the hard facts. Soft facts are more difficult to explain. Though rationale can also be a reason to block a decision by analyzing too much and not be able to make a decision. Then you probably return to your intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
More self confident	Rationale /	Mr. Karis

	Emotions	
The use of rationale depends on the impact of the decision.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Karis
You also use a lot of emotion besides rationale and intuition. Often with people.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
You can not always be emotionless. Empathy is very important.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
You always have to combine your intuition with rationality. It is a mix of rationale, intuition and emotions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
The degree of intuition and rationale changes through the years.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
When acting on intuition be aware not to get arrogant. Don't be fast in jumping to conclusions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
The degree of uncertainty and the importance of the decision conditions in which degree intuition must be supported by facts & figures.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
75/25 rational intuitive. In beginning of career naive.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. De Becker
People are looking for rational analyses; it sort of blocks the opportunity of the use of intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Auld
Intuition level depends on the decision itself, if personal faster on intuition, more corporate intuition supported by rationale.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Auld
When being alone you make key strategic decisions. But treat them properly rational and control your emotions, then you do it right.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Auld
Dealing with people, put papers over persons names, just watch what happens and what the rational implications are.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Auld
Intuition is ok but I need analyses to feel comfortable.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hermans
You learn to control wrong emotions. You have to make yourself independent from the outcome of decisions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hermans
Too impulsive emotions create unrest in the situation.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hermans
Decision making is a combination of rationale, intuition and emotions.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hermans
More self confident.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Hermans
It is a mix of rationale and feelings.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Kolk
Reflection, do not only decide on rationale. It is a pitfall to go in depth and then to realize you don't know were you started.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Kolk
More self confident. More on intuition. From 80/20 to 50/50	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Kolk
Because of our educational background we have to be aware of an overdose of rationality. Keep an eye on other things, it is the mix.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Kolk
More self confident.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Looye
Internationally: In southern countries emotions play a big role.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Looye
Through self confidence less on rationale, more on intuition and empathy. Check all scenarios: intuition, emotions and rationale.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Looye
Relation between emotions, rationale and intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Provoost

Empathy is very important. Empathy towards other people and place it in the context.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Provoost
You have a feeling but you have to check it. You never make a decision on intuition alone, you always check it.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van den Belt
In the end the decision is always based upon emotions, rationale and intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van den Belt
Often we base our outcomes too much on figures, and then we have to go back to our feelings.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Hoek
It is a mix of entrepreneurship and formality. Depends on the phase of the organization.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Hoek
Status can help to your advantage but is also a threat. Do not be too modest but don't become arrogant.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Hoek
Disconnect yourself from the company in order to be tied less emotionally and let your judgment be influenced.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Hoek
The current time frame is formalistic and does not help us to progress.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Hoek
I have rather too much information than none. You have to be able to manage the information, and then the quality rises. But be aware for too much reporting, then you can not see the important details anymore.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Aa
It is a mix of rationale and intuition.	Rationale / Emotions	Mr. Van der Aa

Textual fragment	Independent & outcome variable	Interviewee
Intuition is the tension between instinct and intellect.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Faes
Intuition is an extension of our instinct, the will to survive.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Faes
The funny thing of intuition is that you never know if you are right.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition tells me that there is somewhere a noise in the communication.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
When you share intuition then you can enhance it. Intuition has a fault margin and by sharing it you can minimize this margin.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
More self confident. Better feeling with choices.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
Good experience with intuition, you develop it, it is dynamic.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition is getting more important, intuition as a tool.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hazewinkel
Intuition can be very clarifying within the decision making process.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Karis
Now better decisions based upon experiences and intuition.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. De Becker
I make better decisions now. You cannot learn experience from books.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Auld
Intuition is allowing your imagination to provide you with answers or alternative opinions.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Auld
Intuition is doing things subconsciously based on life experience.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Hermans

Learned to thrive more on intuition.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Kolk
In the end you always use your intuition in decision making, because you never have one hundred percent certainty.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Looye
Intuition gives a survival chance in a new situation.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Looye
Intuition is the ability to feel what is relevant and important.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Provoost
Intuition is often the spark.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Van den Belt
Successes in the past diminish your uncertainty. Better judgment.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Van der Hoek
You make better decisions by learning. At all levels.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Van der Hoek
The quality of the decision increases when using your intuition.	Intuition / effective internationalization	Mr. Van der Aa

“Nemo regere potest nisi qui et regi”

“There is no one who can rule unless he can be ruled”

(Seneca, De ira 2,15,4)