

1 Leader behaviour, emotional intelligence, and team performance at a UK Government  
2 Executive Agency during organizational change

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## Abstract

1  
2 This manuscript presents three studies exploring the relationship between performance  
3 psychology variables and performance within a UK Government Executive Agency during  
4 substantial organizational change. Study 1 examined relationships between transformational  
5 leadership behaviors, emotional intelligence, cohesion, and team performance. Task cohesion  
6 interacted with emotional intelligence to predict performance. Specifically, it was found that use  
7 of emotions for performance partially mediated the relationship between cohesion and team  
8 performance. Study 2 interviewed team leaders about their emotional intelligence and leadership  
9 behaviors and how these influenced cohesion and performance during this organizational  
10 change. Team leaders reported using a number of different strategies with their team for  
11 cohesion and performance benefits. Study 3 interviewed the head and deputy head of the leaders  
12 from study 1 and 2 about how our findings had been received and were being used. Reported  
13 findings from study 1 and 2 resonated well with the head and deputy, and had been used to  
14 develop a leadership charter and skills matrix to monitor leadership behaviors and identify areas  
15 for improvement. These studies offer a unique insight into the behaviors of team leaders within  
16 the agency, emphasizing the perceived importance of effective leader behaviors and emotional  
17 intelligence for team member cohesion and performance.

18 *Keywords:* Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Cohesion, Performance, Strengths-based  
19 psychology

## Introduction

1  
2  
3       In order for organizations to survive and prosper they must be knowledgeable about how  
4 to implement appropriate changes that will be embraced by their employees. Indeed, such  
5 change management processes are imperative for achieving sustainable competitive advantage  
6 in the increasingly turbulent and unpredictable business landscape of the 21st Century. Given  
7 these requirements, substantial work has been conducted to identify key factors that change  
8 agents should incorporate into planning, implementing, and evaluating organizational  
9 transformations (see, for a review, Armenakis & Harris, 2009). One such factor relates to the  
10 importance of effective, cohesive teams that are competently led. That is, because cohesive  
11 teams have enhanced satisfaction and reduced intentions to turnover (Onağ & Tepeci, 2014),  
12 and can better provide a directed and collaborative effort to address change challenges,  
13 organizations around the world have significantly increased their dependency on teams (Salas  
14 Dickinson, Converse, & Tannenbaum, 1992). Although research on change management has  
15 increased drastically since the early 1980s, research surrounding the performance of teams  
16 *during* periods of organizational change has not been able to keep pace with the growing need  
17 for understanding how teams can achieve more effective performance (Stout, Salas, & Fowlkes,  
18 1997). In this article our aim was to investigate the importance of a range of individual and  
19 group level performance psychology variables during organization change - the downsizing of a  
20 UK Government Executive Agency. To address our research aims, three studies were  
21 conducted. Study 1 employed a quantitative questionnaire design to examine the relationships  
22 between transformational leadership behaviors, cohesion, emotional intelligence, and team  
23 performance during a period of organizational change at a UK Government Executive Agency.  
24 Study 2 aimed to add to these findings by conducting semi-structured interviews with team  
25 leaders regarding perceived best practice during organizational change. Using the data gleaned  
26 from studies 1 and 2, key recommendations were made to the government agency. Study 3 was  
27 conducted four months after these recommendations were made and entailed an interview with

1 senior leaders (i.e., Head and Deputy Head) at the specific department of the agency regarding  
2 the extent to which these proposals were beneficial and what, if anything, had been put in place  
3 to guide future leadership training and monitoring.

#### 4 **Study 1**

5 In this study we tested the relative importance of a range of performance psychology  
6 variables on team outcomes during the downsizing of a government agency. The variables were  
7 selected based on previous research, which has indicated their potential salience for both team  
8 performance and change, and included: transformational leadership behaviors, emotional  
9 intelligence, team cohesion, and performance.

#### 10 **Leadership Behaviors**

11 Transformational leadership behaviors have been shown to positively impact a wide  
12 range of individual and organizational outcomes in a variety of contexts including military, sport  
13 business, the public sector, and education (see, for reviews, Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, &  
14 Hardy, 2009; Hardy, Arthur, Jones, Shariff, Munnoch, Isaacs, & Allsopp, 2010). Hardy et al.  
15 (2010) recently developed the Differentiated Transformational Leadership Inventory (DTLI) as  
16 a transformational leadership assessment for performance domains and includes six  
17 transformational behaviors: individual consideration; inspirational motivation; intellectual  
18 stimulation; fostering acceptance of group goals; high performance expectations; appropriate  
19 role modeling; and a transactional behavior, contingent reward.

20 For some time, researchers have highlighted the interrelationships between  
21 transformational leadership and team outcomes such as cohesion and performance (e.g., Dionne,  
22 Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). Further, the salience of leadership to the change  
23 management process is underscored by the fact that change, by definition, requires creating a  
24 new system and then institutionalizing the new approaches. Indeed, although change  
25 management depends on leadership to be enacted, there has been little integration of these two  
26 bodies of literature (Eisenbach, Watson & Pillai, 1999). This is surprising given that

1 transformational leadership is primarily concerned with the capabilities required to enact change  
2 successfully.

### 3 **Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

4 EI has received substantial research attention within psychological, educational, and  
5 management domains and has generated considerable debate regarding its definition and most  
6 appropriate scholarly domain. However, there is general consensus that EI relates to an  
7 individual's competency in dealing with emotions and includes the ability to: appraise and  
8 express emotion in the self; appraise and recognize emotion in others; use emotion to facilitate  
9 performance; and, regulate emotion in the self (e.g., Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; Mayer,  
10 Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). As with the converging consensus on the definition of EI as an  
11 ability, there is a growing agreement that ability-based measures of EI might be necessary for  
12 conceptual synergy (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2004). Ability measures assess EI directly  
13 by asking individuals to solve emotional problems or tasks aligned with EI ability dimensions  
14 (Matthews et al., 2004).

15 Huy (1999) asserted that organizations should develop their employee's capability to  
16 respond to emotions when attempting to facilitate organizational change as managers high in EI  
17 will be able to identify and respond to emotional reactions to change in employees (Jordan,  
18 2005). Elsewhere, research findings have indicated positive relationships between EI,  
19 transformational leadership, and performance (e.g., Duckett & Macfarlane, 2003; Sosik &  
20 Megerian, 1999). Researchers have also highlighted that research into group-level EI has a  
21 stronger conceptual and empirical base than the variable at the individual-level, but noted that  
22 this has not been related to change (e.g., Jordan, Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Hooper, 2002; Druskat &  
23 Pescosolido, 2006). Within the performance psychology domain, research has indicated that EI  
24 is salient for, and can be developed to enhance, individual, team, and organizational functioning  
25 (see Wagstaff, Fletcher, & Hanton, 2012a; Wagstaff, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2013).

### 26 **Cohesion**

1           The area of team cohesion has received substantial research attention across performance  
2 domains. Carron (1980) defined a cohesive team as having three characteristics, namely, a  
3 collective identity, a sense of shared purpose, and structured patterns of communication.  
4 Research on group cohesion in performance domains has been predominantly based on Carron,  
5 Widmeyer and Brawley's (1985) conceptual model of group cohesion. According to this model,  
6 there are two major categories of group cohesion: group integration (i.e., ones' perceptions of  
7 how the group functions as a unit); and, individual attraction to the group (i.e., how attractive  
8 the group is to the individual). Each of these categories is divided into two further categories:  
9 task cohesion (i.e., the degree to which the team-members work together to achieve specific  
10 team goals and social); and, social cohesion (i.e., the degree to which the team-members like  
11 each other and have good social relationships).

12           Reviews of this literature have consistently found strong positive correlations between  
13 cohesion and performance (see, for meta-analyses, Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003,  
14 Mullen & Copper, 1994), with this effect being stronger in smaller groups than in larger groups.  
15 In an earlier meta-analysis, Mullen and Copper concluded that the cohesion-performance effect  
16 was due primarily to commitment to task (task cohesion) rather than interpersonal attraction or  
17 group pride (social cohesion). Findings from Callow et al. (2009) showed transformational  
18 leadership dimensions to predict task cohesion and that this relationship was moderated by  
19 performance level. That is, depending on the performance level of the team, leadership  
20 behaviors can positively influence the cohesion of the team. Given that a wealth of scholars  
21 have argued that cohesion (see, for review, Beal et al., 2003) and leadership (see Carron et al.,  
22 1985) are salient for team performance, we would also posit that leadership behaviors might act  
23 as an antecedent to the relationship between cohesion and performance.

24           Given the apparent salience of the variables discussed above for team performance, they  
25 are also likely to be important during periods of organizational change. Indeed, the link between  
26 emotional intelligence, leader behaviors, and team outcomes is under-developed and would

1 appear to be a fruitful avenue for research. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the  
2 relationships between leadership, emotional intelligence, and cohesion with team performance.  
3 The value of such research lies in the identification of psychosocial factors that might promote  
4 organizational functioning during change. Specifically, we hypothesized that: transformational  
5 leadership behaviors would be related to both team cohesion and performance; that team  
6 cohesion would be related to team performance. Further, we hypothesized that the emotional  
7 intelligence of team leaders would mediate the relationship between team cohesion and  
8 performance. Figure 1 provides an outline of the underpinning model of leadership, emotional  
9 intelligence, and team outcomes proposed here.

## 10 **Methods**

### 11 **Participants**

12 Team leaders (N = 14) and team members (N = 92) comprising fourteen intact teams  
13 ( $M^{\text{teammembers}} = 6.6$ , S.D = .93) were sampled.

### 14 **Measures**

15 **Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS).** Wong, Law, and Wong (2004)  
16 developed a 40-item forced choice EI scale consisting of two parts: the first part contains 20  
17 scenarios and respondents are asked to choose one option that best reflects their likely reaction  
18 in each scenario, and the second part contains 20 ability pairs and respondents are asked to  
19 choose one out of two types of abilities that best represent their strengths. The measure provides  
20 four dimensions of EI: Self Emotional Appraisal (SEA); Other's Emotional Appraisal (OEA);  
21 Regulation of Emotion (ROE); and, Use of Emotion (UOE). Wong et al. (2004) reported an  
22 internal consistency reliability value for the WEIS of .83.

23 **Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ).** The GEQ (Carron et al., 1985) was used  
24 to assess employee perceptions of team cohesion. While the GEQ was developed in the sport  
25 domain, a substantial number of studies have supported the validity of the GEQ across a variety  
26 of groups and performance domains (see, e.g., Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998; Chang,

1 Duck & Bordia, 2006). The GEQ contains 18 items that measure four dimensions of task and  
2 social cohesion: attraction to group-task (ATGT), group integration-task (AIT), attraction to  
3 group-social (ATGS), and group integration-social (GIS). Each item is measured on a 9-point  
4 scale anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). In line with Carron and Brawley's  
5 (2000) recommendations for use of the GEQ in non-sport domains, stem adjustments were made  
6 to 5 items to better account for the present research context. For example, the item "Our team  
7 would like to spend time together *in the off season*" was changed to "Our team would like to  
8 spend time together *outside of work*". Internal consistencies for the subscales have been reported  
9 to be above .82 (Callow et al., 2009).

10 **Differentiated Transformational Leadership Inventory (DTLI).** The DTLI comprises  
11 26 items aligned with six transformational leadership behavior dimensions: inspirational  
12 motivation (IM), provides an appropriate role model (RM), fostering acceptance of group goals  
13 and team work (FAGG), high performance expectations (HPE), intellectual stimulation (IS),  
14 individual consideration (IC), and contingent reward (CR). The scale has been used in various  
15 high performance domains including military and sport. Items are rated using a 5-point Likert  
16 scale anchored by 1 = not a tall, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, and 5 = all  
17 of the time. Hardy and colleagues' (2010) research supports the factorial, discriminant, and  
18 predictive validity of the inventory. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha values of .70 to .78 have  
19 been reported for the subscales (Hardy et al., 2010).

20 **Performance.** The organization from which the participants were sampled uses a traffic  
21 light performance system based on objective outcomes allied with the standardized targets set  
22 for each team. Team performance is assessed each month and used these data to divide teams  
23 into three categorical performance classifications. Teams who exceeded their targets were  
24 awarded a score of 3, teams who met their goals were given a score of 2, and those who did not  
25 achieve their goals were given a score of 1.

26 **Procedure**



1 Data were collected from 14 teams across three data collection points using an online  
2 survey software tool. Questionnaires were spread across three data collection points to promote  
3 engagement and reduce common method bias. The first data collection point assessed team  
4 members' ratings of their leader's use of leadership behaviors. The second data collection point  
5 assessed leader's self-report ratings of their use of leadership behaviors. The third data  
6 collection point assessed all employees' emotional intelligence abilities and perceptions of team  
7 cohesion. Participants were briefed by the researchers on the purpose of the study, anonymity,  
8 and the voluntary nature of the research. After informed consent was obtained employees were  
9 emailed a link to the questionnaires, which they completed at their convenience.

## 10 **Results**

### 11 **Regression Analysis**

12 Descriptive statistics of and correlations are provided in Table 1. Logistic regression  
13 analyses were conducted using the ENTER method to determine the influence of the main  
14 variables (leadership, emotional intelligence, and group cohesion) on performance. From the  
15 various models run, the variables providing the most parsimonious fit were UOE and Group  
16 Integration-Task (GIT) as predictors of performance. A test of the full model against a constant  
17 only model was statistically significant, indicating that the predictors, as a set, reliably  
18 distinguished between the performance scores,  $\chi^2 (4 \text{ df}, N = 106) = 32.226, p < .001$ .  
19 Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  of .521 indicated a moderately strong relationship between predictors and  
20 performance outcome. The Wald criterion demonstrated that UOE (6.93,  $p < .001$ ) and GIT  
21 (6.32,  $p < .001$ ) made significant contributions to the prediction of performance and neither of  
22 the independent variables had a standard error larger than 2.0, thus supporting the inclusion of  
23 both independent variables. Exp(B) values for UOE (.229,  $p < .001$ ) and GIT (.263,  $p < .001$ )  
24 were observed. Transformational leadership behavior ratings did not predict team performance.

25 **Mediation analysis.** Despite the lack of support for transformational leadership  
26 behaviors predicting team performance, the significant positive relationship between group

1 integration-task and performance partially supporting our model (see Figure 1). Consequently,  
2 we further examined our model by investigating whether UOE mediated the relationship  
3 between group integration-task and performance. We conducted bootstrapping analysis to  
4 examine the indirect effect of group integration-task on performance via use of EI using the  
5 PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013), which uses a regression-based path-analytical  
6 approach to testing mediation. The model, conducted with 5,000 bootstraps yielded a mean  
7 estimate of the indirect effect of  $-.058$ . Confidence intervals that do not include zero indicate a  
8 significant indirect effect (mediation). As the confidence intervals observed ranged from  $.011$  to  
9  $.133$  we concluded that the UOE mediated the relationship between group integration-task and  
10 performance (see Table 2).

### 11 **Discussion**

12 The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between a number of  
13 performance psychology variables and team outcomes during the downsizing of a government  
14 organization. The findings indicated that leadership behaviors were not significantly related to  
15 team performance during a period of change, but that team task cohesion and emotional  
16 intelligence were. More specifically, these data indicated that the way the team functions to  
17 achieve important team goals was directly related to team performance and that this relationship  
18 was mediated by the team's use of their own emotions for performance benefits.

19 That individual's attraction to the work team was not a predictor of team performance  
20 echoes findings from elite sport, where task cohesion has typically been the "the cohesion  
21 dimension most closely linked [conceptually] to performance outcome" (Widmeyer, Carron, &  
22 Brawley, 1993, p. 686). That UOE also explained part of the cohesion-performance relationship  
23 supports research that has found EI to act as "the glue that holds organizational structures  
24 together" (e.g., Wagstaff et al., 2012a, p.33). Indeed, amid the "sea of relationships" (Wagstaff  
25 et al., 2012a, p.32) within organizations, it is likely that such **EI** abilities will be salient for  
26 intelligently harnessing cohesion for performance outcomes. Such findings have important

1 implications for those responsible for leading organizational change in government agencies.  
2 Specifically, change leaders should seek to promote clarity regarding the way the team functions  
3 during change, whilst promoting the intelligent use of emotion to maximize interpersonal  
4 influence and positive emotional contagion.

5 In view of the finding that leadership behaviors were not significant predictors of team  
6 performance during change, there are several potential explanations. The use of performance  
7 psychology measures originally developed in the sport domain presents the possibility that  
8 findings are due to a measurement-related type I error. Future research might seek to validate  
9 the DTLI for use in Government agency organizations. However, it is also possible that certain  
10 leader behaviors are more salient for team outcomes during change. In order to ascertain the  
11 existence of such relationships, multilevel moderated-mediation models should be run which  
12 would require a larger sample. Alternatively, researchers might examine the best practice  
13 behaviors of those leading teams during change using qualitative designs. Indeed, although these  
14 findings go some way to addressing calls for researchers to examine the relationship between  
15 transformational leadership behaviors and organizational change (see Eisenbach et al., 1999), it  
16 would appear that further research is required to more fully answer this question.

## 17 **Study 2**

18 The purpose of study 2 was to add to the findings of study 1 by examining in more detail  
19 the emotional intelligent capacities and leadership behaviors of a selection of the team leaders  
20 during a time of organizational change through semi-structured interviews. Specifically,  
21 examining the responses of leaders who oversaw teams that underachieved, reached their  
22 targets, or over achieved. Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate to gain in-depth  
23 clarification and understanding of participants' experiences (Patton, 2002). Consideration was  
24 also made for the perceived impact of such capacities/behaviors on cohesion and/or  
25 performance. A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate to glean an in-depth insight  
26 into, and explanations for, leader behaviors. Specifically, we used semi-structured interviews

1 because the individual and open-ended nature promotes clarification and understanding of each  
2 participant's unique experiences (Patton, 2002).

### 3 **Method**

#### 4 **Participants**

5 Eight of the team leaders involved in study 1 agreed to provide an interview. Three of  
6 the leaders' teams had overachieved their performance targets over the previous month, two had  
7 reached their target, and three had not reached their target.

#### 8 **Interview Guide**

9 An interview guide was created based on the items of the questionnaires used in study 1  
10 and contemporary leadership, and emotional intelligence literature (interview guide available  
11 from lead author on request). Specifically, questions focused on the emotional intelligence and  
12 leadership behaviors demonstrated during a time of organizational change. Example questions  
13 included: *To what extent do you feel that you inspire and motivate your team? To what extent*  
14 *do you have high performance expectations of your team? How would you know if one of your*  
15 *team were unsatisfied with their job/work? and To what extent do you feel that your team*  
16 *communicates effectively?*

#### 17 **Procedure**

18 Following ethical approval granted from the lead author's University Ethics Committee  
19 through devolved responsibility to department level, all team leaders who participated in study 1  
20 were sent an email invitation to be interviewed in study 2. The email included a participant  
21 information sheet and informed consent form for them to print out and sign. Eight of the  
22 participants accepted the invite and arrangements were made to interview each of them  
23 individually at a location of their choice to minimize work related interference with the  
24 interview process and their responses (Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009). One week  
25 prior to interview, the participants were sent an email with a one page document that signposted  
26 the themes that would be discussed (i.e., emotional intelligence capacities and leadership

1 behaviors). Within the email, we asked the participants to think about any situation during their  
2 organization's change that they may have used the identified capacities or behaviors. This  
3 approach gave the participants sufficient time to familiarize themselves with what would be  
4 asked and to recall any experiences related to the themes. Interviews lasted between 35 and 45  
5 minutes and resulted in a total of 130 pages of double spaced text (39, 357 words).

## 6 **Data Analysis**

7 Interviews were transcribed verbatim and then sent back to the participants for  
8 verification (Kvale, 2007). All team leaders were asked to scrutinize their interview transcripts  
9 to confirm that what was written was an accurate account of the recorded discussion *and* of their  
10 opinion(s) of the matters discussed. Once all the leaders had verified the accuracy of the content  
11 within their own transcripts, the lead author read the transcripts several times for familiarity.  
12 Data was then analyzed deductively by the lead and second author; shaped by the existing  
13 literature that informed the questions in the interview guide. Specifically, quotes relevant to  
14 emotional intelligence or leadership behaviors were coded – ‘tagged’ through the comment box  
15 option in Microsoft Word. The lead and second author discussed each ‘tag’, discussing any  
16 differences in interpretation against contemporary theory and literature.

17 A content analysis was then created that identified: each leader by pseudonym (names  
18 only identifiable by the research team); whether the performance target allocated to each  
19 leader's team had been achieved (Target Achievers: TA), over achieved (Over Achievers: OA),  
20 or not achieved (Under Achievers: UA); the general category of each given quote (i.e.,  
21 leadership behavior or emotional intelligence); 1<sup>st</sup> order themes under each general category  
22 (e.g., ‘Contingent Reward’ under the general category of ‘Leadership Behavior’); the 2<sup>nd</sup> order  
23 themes categorized under the 1<sup>st</sup> order theme (e.g., ‘always give team members positive  
24 feedback when they perform well’ under the 1<sup>st</sup> order theme of ‘Contingent Reward’); and,  
25 finally, the actual quote from the transcript. The content analysis resulted in 200 rows of data.  
26 Once completed by the lead author, the second author challenged each row of the content

1 analysis. At this stage no discussions were apparent due to the rigorous process underwent after  
2 the ‘tagging’ phase.

3 Once data analysis was completed, a further stage of member checking was performed to  
4 verify our interpretations and improve the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).  
5 Specifically, the content analysis of each team leader was sent to them for further verification –  
6 that is, whether they agreed with our interpretations of their views expressed during the  
7 interviews. Once each team leader had confirmed the accuracy of the information and that they  
8 were happy with our coded interpretation (no team leader identified any concerns), the content  
9 analysis informed the representation of findings to be used for this study and for the Executive  
10 Agency.

## 11 **Results**

12 From the 200 rows of raw data (i.e., quotations relevant to the purpose of the study), a  
13 total of 31 different themes of leadership behaviors ( $n = 25$ ) and demonstrations of emotional  
14 intelligence ( $n = 6$ ) were reported by the leaders (see Table 3). Additionally, 12 areas for  
15 improvement were also provided (see Table 4). The following account is divided into 4 sections  
16 and provides examples of these leadership behaviors and emotional intelligence, along with the  
17 highlighted areas for improvement through the use of leaders’ quotations. For brevity, only a  
18 selection of quotations will be provided.

### 19 **Leadership Behaviors**

20 Leadership behaviors were the most frequently reported behaviors by the participants.  
21 The 1<sup>st</sup> order themes that fell under this general category included: being an appropriate role  
22 model to the employees; providing contingent reward when employees do good work;  
23 attempting to foster acceptance by the team members of group goals (FAGG); demonstrating  
24 high performance expectations; having consideration for each individual employee; offering  
25 inspirational motivation to the employees; providing intellectual stimulation within the job role;  
26 and, being proactive in communication.

1           **Appropriate role model.** Being an appropriate role model was reported more frequently  
 2 in the interviews by the OA leaders than those in the other two groups. The two 2<sup>nd</sup> order themes  
 3 within this 1<sup>st</sup> order theme involved *leading by example* and *leading by 'doing' rather than*  
 4 *'telling'*. Focusing on the latter theme, *leading by 'doing' instead of 'telling'* was highlighted  
 5 by all leaders, with an OA leader emphasizing the importance of this behavior on team  
 6 performance when being understaffed through the organizational change:

7           ... if it means me sitting there on a computer and knocking out 5-600 statistics myself -  
 8 then I'll do it. If it means me standing at the filing cupboard filing 1000 pieces of  
 9 correspondence - then I'll do it. There's the difference between me and a lot of others  
 10 [leaders], I won't ask anyone to do anything I'm not prepared to do and I'm willing to  
 11 get my hands dirty... and it's because you care, if you care about the work the team will  
 12 never be in a bad position.

13           **Contingent reward.** This 1<sup>st</sup> order theme was split into *always give team members'*  
 14 *positive feedback when they perform well, personally praise team members when they do*  
 15 *outstanding work, and provide more opportunities for high achievers.* All leaders identified  
 16 giving positive feedback when their team members performed well. Despite not reaching the  
 17 performance targets of the previous month, one UA leader reported the importance of focusing  
 18 on the good work to help maintain good performance, instead of constantly on individuals who  
 19 need to improve:

20           I recognize it [good work] and value it quite well. If I can see people that are doing well,  
 21 I will give them a bit of praise, because you don't want to be focusing all your time on  
 22 people who are not hitting performance or are on the borderline... you've got to focus on  
 23 both, I think, to show I value it and to help motivate them to keep hitting the targets.

24           **FAGG.** Attempting to foster acceptance of group goals was split into: *developing a team*  
 25 *spirit and attitude among employees; encouraging employees to be team players; fostering trust*  
 26 *within the team; getting the team to work together for the same goal; promoting open and*

1 *honest communication within the team; and, promoting team activities outside of work.* During  
2 the organizational change, an OA stated the importance of encouraging employees to be team  
3 players:

4 ... that [being team players] has been achieved over the last year. We've done a lot of  
5 changes within the team that I made sure we all did as a team together... this helped a  
6 lot because they've worked together to get there, so they feel like it is their input rather  
7 than being told something.

8 An UA leader emphasized how daily meetings (called Alamos) throughout the change period  
9 helped the employees work together better towards the same goal:

10 Duties have changed daily because our department has gone through a major transition  
11 in the last few months. We've had a situation where daily we've communicated via  
12 Alamos to get what the team expectation is, but also we've had new targets in place so  
13 people know what individual targets are as well. This has helped the work towards the  
14 expectations.

15 A TA leader reported the way that they have promoted open and honest communication within  
16 the team, specifically focusing on explaining their views on work related matters to prevent  
17 potential issues during change:

18 I am making sure that they [employees] all speak openly and honestly in front of each  
19 other. And also when people do say what their views are, [there has to be] a bit of  
20 explanation behind it, so then other people can fully understand the way that they're  
21 processing and thinking about things – which reduces issues.

22 **Individual consideration.** Having consideration for each individual was split into the  
23 following 2<sup>nd</sup> order themes: *consider that each employee has different strengths and*  
24 *weaknesses; providing a variety of roles for the employee; spend time teaching and coaching*  
25 *team members; treat each team member as an individual; paying attention to individual needs;*



1 *and, promoting autonomous working.* An OA leader identified the importance of knowing the  
2 strengths and weaknesses of the team members, especially in times of change:

3 I know who our highest performers and our lowest are. [My team] know where they are  
4 and they have an idea where someone else is, but obviously if I'm putting two to sit by  
5 two people, the two weaker ones know those with them are the highest achievers. If they  
6 were at an even keel, then I could throw in some healthy competition, but right now I  
7 have a couple who aren't up to that. They need confidence at this time, but I don't want  
8 to shatter what little bit they do have, I want to bring it [confidence] up slowly.

9 A TA leader provided an example of treating an employee as an individual when challenging  
10 them in the one-to-one meetings:

11 When you challenge them, it depends on the person really... everybody on the team is  
12 different. It depends on how you approach them to how they're going to react. If you  
13 know you've got somebody defensive on your team, you don't go in there and be  
14 blurting it out in front of all the team members, because you know exactly that the wall  
15 is going to go up and they'll get defensive straight away. So, I make sure that if I  
16 challenge something it's not very often where they can't answer or they don't know.  
17 Like I said it depends on the person, you've got to judge it differently. You've got to be  
18 careful of who it is you're speaking to, how you speak to them, and kind of pre-plan it  
19 before you go in.

20 An UA Leader discussed the importance of paying attention to the individual needs of the team  
21 members:

22 When all the changes were coming in and we were training in all the new staff, I was  
23 supporting them with the changes. So because I know exactly what their work is and I  
24 was part of the change from the start to the end, I can identify what their needs are in  
25 their role.

1           **Inspirational motivation.** Second order themes under inspirational motivation included  
2 *communicating that change is a good thing, encouraging team members to take on extra duties,*  
3 *setting high standards, talking enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished, and*  
4 *talking optimistically about the future.* Focusing on the communication that change is a good  
5 thing, all the OA leaders reported disseminating this message. One of these leaders provided the  
6 following example, emphasizing the benefit of such communication:

7           When the change was communicated from higher up I don't think it was communicated  
8 in a right way. My team waited for me to come in to say what they wanted to say. I  
9 defused it by sitting them down and explaining it - if it had been done better to begin  
10 with I wouldn't have had to do it. Coms is key, it's about saying what the changes are,  
11 how they impact us, and what I'm going to do as a manager to support them through it. I  
12 let them know what we are doing, why we are doing it, the benefit of it to them and why  
13 I need them to participate and get it right because in the end it means this [outcome]. As  
14 long as I do that I never get any comeback.

15           **Proactive communication.** The only 2<sup>nd</sup> order theme under proactive communication  
16 was *regularly update team members about organizational change.* One UA leader stated how  
17 they keep their team updated about changes for the benefit of trust:

18           There's always going to be changes... the way we work as an agency and as a  
19 department, there's going to be constant changes. Sometimes they could be delivered  
20 better, as sometimes we find out either as it's happening or after it's happened. So I'm  
21 trying to keep everyone in the loop... it's trying to give them the info as I'm getting it  
22 and being honest with them, if I know about it I'll try to tell them as much as I can... It  
23 goes back to honesty, you don't want to be hiding anything from them, because they'll  
24 hear it in the smoking shelter or off another team and then you would lose trust from  
25 them.

26           **Emotional intelligence**

1 Emotional intelligence was identified the least frequently by the participants for best practice  
2 during change. Of the examples mentioned, participants focused on the leaders' ability to  
3 perceive and understand the emotions of the people around them and their ability to understand  
4 and express naturally their own felt emotions.

5 **Other's emotional appraisal (OEA).** Responses under this 1<sup>st</sup> order theme were  
6 separated into the following 2<sup>nd</sup> order categories: *consider the emotions of employees; helping*  
7 *employees to manage their own emotions; listening to employees who are demonstrating*  
8 *negative emotions; managing others' emotions; and, being approachable.* The following quote  
9 from a TA leader emphasizes the perceived benefit of listening to team members who may be  
10 demonstrating negative emotions:

11 I think people need time away from the whole team to speak to their manager and  
12 sometimes it can be a bit of a buffer, as the issue is addressed straight away... a bit like  
13 therapy - you get a few things off your chest... I can see that somebody's been a bit  
14 stressed for a day or two, especially during this period [of change]... so as soon as you  
15 have that one-on-one, you might first be talking about performance but then gradually  
16 they'll start to explain what's been going on in the background... they can then go back  
17 to team absolutely brand new all over again. So I think it is a bit of therapy, they let  
18 everything off their chest and then they kind of feel alright then, all the hot air's gone.

19 An UA leader identified being sensitive to the emotions of others when experiencing difficulties  
20 outside of work, consequently managing others' emotions during work:

21 If somebody's got any issues or problems outside of work I ask them to let me know,  
22 even if they don't want to go into detail on it, but just so as I'm aware. I then put them on  
23 different duties or try to make them as comfortable as possible... there are other duties  
24 that we can do within our job that maybe aren't as stressful where you haven't got to get  
25 your brain working as much.

1           **Appraisal and expression of emotion in the self (SEA).** This 1<sup>st</sup> order theme of  
2 emotional intelligence only provided one example from an OA leader. This was categorized  
3 under *hide own emotions during work*. The OA leader recognized the importance of not  
4 showing emotion within the work place, as it could be contagious, ‘if you’re feeling frustrated  
5 while at work, you’ve got to hide that a lot more as it could affect others on your team – it isn’t  
6 good to pass your problems on to others.’

### 7 **Areas for improvement**

8 Areas for improvement were either identified by participants or highlighted by us during our  
9 analysis of provided quotations. For example, where leaders stated they didn’t cope with or  
10 manage a situation well.

11           **Leadership behaviors.** The areas for improvement either identified by the participants  
12 for leadership behaviors or observed from their responses included: *being an appropriate role*  
13 *model; providing contingent rewards; fostering acceptance of group goals; being considerate of*  
14 *each individual; inspiring motivationally; managing organizational change; and, proactive*  
15 *change communication*. One UA leader identified a need to improve team cohesion during the  
16 time of change through team building activities:

17           I’d like to do more team building, I feel at the moment we are pressured regarding  
18 targets and goals and the current business needs, but when we weather that storm and are  
19 back to full capacity I think it would be quite portent from me as a line manager to do  
20 some team building because the team I’ve got now are one third established staff here  
21 from Jan 2013, another third filtered in midway through and another third of the 12 are  
22 brand new and been here less than a month because of the change.

23 Being more proactive with communication related to change was acknowledged by an UA  
24 leader, due to the impact job uncertainty was having on their team members during  
25 organizational change:

1 Our team has been left in the lurch, we're just an add on and we've always been the last  
2 team to go through the changes that the rest of the Centre's gone through... [the new  
3 changes] are going to affect us most, they're looking into what we're doing last, so how  
4 do I let them know what's happening so they can keep focus on their targets?

5 **Emotional intelligence.** Identified ways to improve emotional intelligence focused on  
6 both the leader and the team members. Specifically, for the leader, improvements in *regulation*  
7 *of emotion in self* and *understanding other's emotional appraisal* were identified. The areas for  
8 improvement within the team members were *managing others* and *own emotions*. Focusing first  
9 on the leader, an UA leader identified the need to improve their own regulation of felt emotions,  
10 'I can pick up on someone else's mood in seconds and the same for me, because I'm a relatively  
11 open book, whereas I should bracket certain things off, but I don't, and I can't help it...' With  
12 regards to the emotional intelligence of the team members, one UA leader identified the impact  
13 that team members can have on each other when they don't manage their own emotions:

14 I have one team member who is very abrupt - to an extent where I had to tread on  
15 eggshells when I first met her. If she's having a bad day others will know about it and it  
16 all kicked off in January and I had to take her into a room and say to her that this  
17 behavior continuing will make it a conduct issue. I had to then review her based on the  
18 objectives for this year - she goes and hits all her targets but the culture side of things  
19 and the impact her behavior had on others, she lost 11 of her marks. She would not even  
20 have achieved her objectives for the year and seeing that in black and white has  
21 completely changed her around, when she's in work she knows that even if it's a façade  
22 she knows she has to keep things inside and she can't take out her mood on people. We  
23 have a few people like that who need to improve on it [emotional intelligence].

## 24 **Discussion**

25 The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the self-reported perceived best use of  
26 emotional intelligence capacities and practiced leadership behaviors of team leaders within the

1 UK Government Executive Agency during organizational change, with consideration for the  
2 perceived impact on cohesion and/or team performance. Analysis of the interviews revealed that  
3 the team leaders reported using a number of different strategies with their team members, with  
4 those falling under the leadership behavior category being most frequently cited. In this context,  
5 transformational leadership behaviors were used to help promote a team focus towards  
6 performance goals, inspire team members, and to improve the working experience of the  
7 individual (i.e., individual consideration). Such behaviors should be advantageous through  
8 organizational change in order to engage the employees within a challenging environment,  
9 motivating them to support the organizations' direction (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008).  
10 However, such findings are contradictory to Study 1 where leadership behaviors did not predict  
11 cohesion or performance. This could be explained by the different approaches to this  
12 examination – where one approach was more prescriptive (i.e., questionnaires), leading  
13 participant responses, while the other was more open and allowed for participants to express  
14 their thoughts in a less restrictive fashion (i.e., through interviews). These findings potentially  
15 support the need for multiple insights into perceived behaviour (Smith, 1988). Despite these  
16 suggestions, a limitation of this study was that the effects of these reported leadership strategies  
17 on employee engagement and performance were not evidenced, advocating the need for future  
18 research to consider the views of all team members and to observe the impacts of leadership  
19 behaviors on employee performance. Nevertheless, the descriptions provided by the team  
20 leaders were detailed and did give an informative insight into what the leaders do, and why, in  
21 relation to team performance during change.

22         There were fewer reported examples of using emotional intelligence as best practice than  
23 leadership behaviors. Of those emotional intelligence related strategies identified, some of the  
24 team leaders inferred that they understood the emotions of others and, as a result, aimed to help  
25 them manage these emotions for the benefit of their well-being and work related performance.  
26 Such findings support the salience of emotionally intelligent leaders during organizational

1 change (Jordan, 2005), especially when the leaders are supporting employees' emotion  
2 management by providing an appropriate outlet to vent emotions and the flexibility to  
3 temporarily move to less stressful roles within the workplace, as exemplified by these data.  
4 Interestingly, there was no obvious difference in the number and quality of examples of using  
5 emotional intelligence given by the leaders from each performance category. An explanation for  
6 such findings may be due to memory decay or a result of the leaders finding it difficult to  
7 articulate examples of when they were emotionally intelligent. Indeed, models of emotional  
8 intelligence in performance domains (see Wagstaff, Fletcher & Hanton, 2012) outline self-  
9 awareness as the foundation dimension on which this capacity is based.

10         The applied implications of this particular study will focus on the report presented to the  
11 head of this particular department, and the deputy, at the UK Government Executive Agency.  
12 This report was informed by the findings of study 1, our interpretations of the findings in study  
13 2, and the areas for improvement identified by the team leaders. Focusing first on the positive  
14 feedback, we leaned on the findings of study 1 that supported the use of own emotions to  
15 facilitate performance, and the results of study 2 that gave insight into some of the types of  
16 leadership behaviors and emotional intelligence that the team leaders had reported practicing for  
17 the benefit of cohesion and team performance through change. It was proposed that these  
18 strategies could be monitored in all staff, with potential training in such areas offered for new  
19 staff or those who perceived they needed improvement. Consequently, a number of areas where  
20 the organization could immediately focus training were identified. Specifically, it was suggested  
21 that the organization could consider monitoring and training their leaders on the following areas:

22         1) *Maintaining / improving emotional intelligence* through training team leaders to: be  
23                 more aware of the emotions of others; improve their knowledge of the implications  
24                 of individuals' demonstrating their emotions at work; and, help their employees  
25                 manage their own and others emotions;





1 and, 3) where the agency see the research going in the future. As we were unaware of whether  
2 the heads of department had utilized the information we provided from study 1 and 2, we used  
3 these specific themes to guide the discussion, with probes used where needed to glean more  
4 specific information. For example, after the deputy head had given some detail on why the  
5 findings of study 1 and 2 were viewed positively, the leader author probed, ‘Specifically, why  
6 do you think it’s successful?’

## 7 **Procedure**

8 Four months after the completion of study 2 and the report being presented to the head  
9 and deputy of the UK Government Executive Agency, both leaders were sent an email invitation  
10 to be interviewed in study 3. The email included a participant information sheet and informed  
11 consent form. Both agreed to participate, with the interview being conducted at the UK  
12 Government Executive Agency. The interview lasted one hour and resulted in 25 pages of  
13 double spaced text (9833 words).

## 14 **Data Analysis**

15 The interview was transcribed verbatim and then sent back to the head and deputy head  
16 of the agency for verification. After the accuracy of the information had been verified, the lead  
17 and second author read the transcripts several times for familiarity. Both the lead and second  
18 author analyzed the data against the three main themes that shaped the interview. Specifically,  
19 how the information was received by the agency, what they have done with the findings in the  
20 report, and where they feel the project should go next. As in study 2, quotes relevant to each  
21 theme were ‘tagged’ by the lead and second author in one session. That is, the lead and second  
22 author worked through the interview together, discussing what the general and 1<sup>st</sup> order themes  
23 should be. This stage was straight forward given that the interview discussions followed the  
24 three main themes of the guide. Following this process, each general theme, 1<sup>st</sup> order theme, and  
25 associated quote were transferred to a content analysis table. The table included columns  
26 labeled: 1) ‘participant’ (i.e., head or deputy); 2) general theme (e.g., how findings resonated; 3)

1 1<sup>st</sup> order theme (e.g., findings verified what the agency needs); and, 4) quote. Once populated by  
2 the lead author, our interpretation was sent back to the participants for further verification.

### 3 **Results**

4 Guided by the themes adopted in the interview guide, this section will be separated into  
5 the following subsections: How the report resonated with the agency; How the findings have /  
6 will be used by the agency; and, Future projects.

#### 7 **How the Report Resonated with the Agency**

8 Both the head and deputy of this section of the agency identified the benefits of  
9 conducting study 1 and 2, based on the information that was found. Specifically, that the  
10 findings verified what they thought was happening at the agency, reassured that a lot of good  
11 work was being conducted, and provided detail on what needs to be done in the future to train  
12 leaders. The deputy identified how the findings gave a more clear understanding of current  
13 leadership practices:

14 ... it has given me an understanding of what I thought was happening; it's given me the  
15 confirmation about what was going on, whereby we've got a strong group of case  
16 workers that can more or less manage themselves and where the area of focus would  
17 need to be is at the first line manager stage and also the grade above that in order not  
18 only to improve performance, but also to work on emotional intelligence. So it  
19 reinforced some of what I thought was happening. Secondly, because it's coming from a  
20 well-respected third party, the information we've got isn't just our views, it's an  
21 objective analysis of the working environment, which hasn't been done before in this  
22 sort of building environment.

23 The head of the department within the agency emphasized how future research could also help  
24 influence training:

25 ... when we had the presentation on the findings, as [deputy] said, it really struck me that  
26 what we thought [was going on] was evidenced... but the thing I was surprised at, and

1 pleased at, I guess, is that we've still got some great output, we've still got some great  
2 teams... just think of the potential there if they all actually had effective leaders as well!  
3 Just think what they could achieve, because they're achieving that in spite of the  
4 environment they're in. Imagine what we could achieve if they were actually inspired to  
5 do things and take on additional things and how much untapped talent there is in that  
6 band of people - that nobody's looking for and nobody's nurturing. So it really gives you  
7 that kind of drive to think, 'Well we've got some serious challenges. We've got a lot of  
8 new work, we've got a lot of project change, we've got a lot of cultural change and we  
9 know we're not going to get any more resources, so everything we have to do we have to  
10 self-fund.' And the only way to do that is to get more from people and it really  
11 underpinned for me that we have a critical gap in our front line managers and that's our  
12 big block. So we have to convert that data into something like this and say, 'Actually we  
13 have to tap into the people who are actually delivering the goods for us and inspire them  
14 to be the best they can be.'

### 15 **How the Findings Have / Will be Used by the Agency**

16 An initial outcome from the findings of studies 1 and 2 was that the agency had started to  
17 develop a leadership charter and monitoring system (i.e., a skills matrix) that would inform  
18 training for their leaders. Focusing first on the leadership charter, the deputy head described  
19 where it originated from and how it is designed:

20 ... what we've tried to do over recent weeks is to put together, just a toe in the water, a  
21 kind of leadership charter that we've brainstormed from the output of the analysis - from  
22 the presentation, which then became more detailed following the summary notes you put  
23 together for us. We broke down each part of the presentation into the main categories, of  
24 which we interpreted as six. [We] put together a skills matrix, a simple representation of  
25 what we would assess managers in the first instance against an analysis of what skills are  
26 required etc. This is the first time [head] would have seen this - it's quite hot off the

1 press. One of the first thoughts from [assistant to deputy head] and me is to make this  
2 meaningful, it shouldn't be for a one-off occasion; it's something we should revisit if we  
3 believe it's the right way of improving the area. So some sort of leadership charter,  
4 whether it's in this format or not - this is just a first draft - and having a matrix of skills  
5 that we could regularly go in and assess people against as in, have they had training?

6 Are they being trained? Are they fully proficient? Are they then sharing best practice?

7 The leadership charter included six main themes of what the agency expected from their leaders.  
8 These included: 1) Inspire; 2) Emotional Intelligence; 3) Communication; 4) Continuous  
9 Professional Development; 5) Performance and Recognition; and, 6) Manage Organizational  
10 Change. Each theme had a list of specific 'actions' that brought each theme to life. For example,  
11 within the general theme of 'inspire', there were five actions, one of which was *set bespoke*  
12 *goals based on each team members' motives*.

13 The deputy then elaborated upon how the matrix could be used, focusing on monitoring  
14 and training:

15 ... what you see in front of you [leadership charter] is that first step of using the data  
16 [from study 1 and study 2] and turning it into something that could be used  
17 meaningfully. My intention, if [head] gives it blessing, is to cross-reference this content  
18 with what's on the current [agency] Training, People and Performance Program, which  
19 is what our first-line managers will be going through. So what we're not doing yet is  
20 sitting down with the person and asking what were their pre-learning goals before they  
21 go [on training] and when they come back ask, 'did the course meet what you expected  
22 to learn?' If it did then, 'okay, so in your action plan over the next month, what  
23 opportunities are you going to take to harness your new learning?' and I can then give  
24 you feedback based on the charter. So there's a loop we need to close there, which is  
25 involved with a training review; that will need to be undertaken. So that's the first part

1 of it... you could reinforce it through monthly conversations, or daily conversations,  
2 when you've got your teams together.

3 The head of the department further emphasized the importance of monitoring so that appropriate  
4 support and training can be provided for the team leaders, due to the adverse effect that  
5 ineffective leadership behavior could have on the rest of the team:

6 The key thing in all that [leadership charter and skills matrix] is that it's very much about  
7 support... because often people see that kind of close scrutiny as quite claustrophobic  
8 and quite punishing, quite controlling. But it's actually about understanding somebody;  
9 so if somebody's very talented, what can you do to help them to progress? And if  
10 somebody needs more support how can you identify it and help them? Because again,  
11 for me, that underpins people's behavior and people's behavior impacts on everyone else  
12 around them... as a team leader if you're not confident and you don't feel comfortable  
13 and you don't feel supported, you're not going to reflect that onto anybody else.

14 The head of the department also commented on the need for emotional intelligence  
15 training for their team leaders for the benefit of dealing with the concerns of team members:

16 I think what it [the report] does do is illustrate that some of the findings you gave us,  
17 often it will be 'this is my issue, my problem or my idea' and it will be reference to 'I've  
18 spoken to my manager, but... It's either been ignored, it's been closed down, it's been  
19 fobbed off, it's been mismanaged, etc.' And that's the interesting part to me, because  
20 people are raising difficult things and there's often quite a challenging statement in there  
21 sometimes and people take it personally, because you're often talking about the person  
22 who's managing you or the environment you're in. And instead of leaders taking that and  
23 depersonalizing it, 'It's not about me as me, it's about this role, is there anything I can  
24 do?' People go on the defensive and they get quite aggressive. 'Well, no one else has  
25 said it. Therefore...' It takes a brave person sometimes to challenge and just because it's  
26 one voice doesn't mean it's not one voice representing one hundred. It's quite difficult

1 sometimes to be that one person, who says ‘Actually, this isn’t right.’ And I would see  
2 success as being less of that stuff [issues] being raised to me in the first instance and less  
3 being raised to [deputy], because actually for once the incident hasn’t occurred because  
4 the manager is intelligent enough to understand that what’s happening, because it’s  
5 impacting on people... so, if something does happen and it’s raised to a manager, the  
6 manager deals with it and deals with it effectively, so it doesn’t become something that  
7 people become frustrated with.

## 8 **Future Projects**

9 As a result of the program of research, the head and deputy of the agency confirmed the  
10 need to run a similar design out with the rest of their specific section and to potentially then  
11 influence the training of leaders at the agency. The deputy identified the benefit of the project  
12 and why it needs to be run out with the rest of the agency:

13 I like the study you did because that gives us a yardstick of how much ground has been  
14 gained and there are some things we could tweak from the previous [research] process.  
15 There are things we can learn from it. So having your team coming in as often as  
16 possible was a good thing and it also gives us a yardstick of how we’re progressing. I  
17 think one of the options that [head] and I have talked about [for the future] is seeing  
18 whether we can release a role model from our environment to come up to you, to get  
19 some specialist assistance / training if need be to run a larger project here... there’s  
20 definitely a knowledge share opportunity here, for the wider business not just across the  
21 [department] so what I need to do is talk to [head] and [head’s] subsequent boss and see  
22 if we will be supported in doing that. But there’s certainly an appetite here to do it. We  
23 recognize the potential and the unique opportunity this gives us.

24 The head of the agency corroborated this statement and emphasized one potential area of  
25 training that came from our report, focusing on developing the motivation and management  
26 skills of the leaders:

1 I think we need to talk to [Agency Head] and we need to talk to HR. That's the next step.  
2 And it's interesting because of the engagement and the competence in our managers, not  
3 in work-related matters, they're very good at pushing work around and getting the  
4 widgets out of the door, but their ability to motivate and manage people is a real focus at  
5 the moment because it's clearly something that we're not great at. So it's quite timely.

## 6 **Discussion**

7 The findings of this study verify the utility of the report provided post study 1 and study 2 of  
8 this paper. Specifically, the agency acknowledged the importance of effective leadership  
9 behaviors, along with effective use of emotional intelligence for the benefit team cohesion and  
10 team member performance. This was accentuated in the development of a leadership charter and  
11 skills matrix to inform the bespoke training of leaders. Such potential outcomes demonstrate the  
12 agency's acknowledgement of the importance of leaders who inspire, communicate  
13 appropriately and effectively (e.g., when giving praise), consider each team member's needs,  
14 and have the emotional intelligence to manage their own and others feelings – especially during  
15 organizational change. The outcome of such leadership could, from the perspective of the  
16 agency head and deputy, positively influenced cohesion and team performance. This outlook is  
17 coherent with past performance psychology research that has advocated the benefit of leaders  
18 who are transformational in their style (Callow et al., 2009; Hardy et al., 2010), who aim to  
19 nurture the potential of each individual through bespoke coaching (Wagstaff et al., under  
20 review), and who are in touch with their own and others emotions (Wagstaff, Fletcher &  
21 Hanton, 2012b). Nevertheless, it is imperative for our research to evaluate the impact of this  
22 charter, skills matrix, and any potential training on the development of leadership behaviors and  
23 emotional intelligence of the team leaders.

## 24 **General Discussion**

25 This paper presented a project consisting of three studies focusing on the leadership behaviors  
26 and emotional intelligence of team leaders within a UK Government Executive Agency with

1 consideration for the perceived impact on cohesion and team performance. Taken together, the  
2 studies offer some valuable theoretical implications. For example, the finding that dimensions of  
3 emotional intelligence and cohesion interact to predict performance in the workplace during  
4 organizational change emphasizes the need for leaders to help develop the emotional  
5 intelligence of their team in preparation for such difficult times. In addition, the qualitative  
6 findings give specific insight into proposed effective use of emotional intelligence and  
7 leadership behaviors by leaders for the benefit of team cohesion and performance. It was,  
8 therefore, satisfying that the head and deputy head of this department of the UK Government  
9 Agency are considering using emotional intelligence and transformational leadership themes to  
10 underpin their team member reviews and training.

11         Focusing on the findings of study 1, although the size of the relationship between  
12 emotional intelligence, cohesion, and performance was modest, such effects are perhaps not  
13 unsurprising given the scope of this work. Further research, therefore, is required to shed more  
14 light on the predictive nature of the main variables included in the present program of work.  
15 Incorporated with such investigations might be the extension of the possible role of leadership  
16 behaviors as antecedents to cohesion. That is, it is possible that leadership behaviors might act  
17 as indirect predictors of performance via their influence on the team culture (e.g., cohesion)  
18 rather than directly predicting performance during change. For example, the ratings of discrete  
19 leadership behaviors might have limited interaction with performance per se, but might  
20 influence team cohesion via the process of positive emotional contagion. This could be tested in  
21 a moderated-mediation model with a larger sample of workers. A second theoretical  
22 consideration emanating from the present research relates to the extent to which the main  
23 variables of interest differed in terms of their objectively (i.e., questionnaire) subjectively (i.e.,  
24 interview) determined relationships with performance. The use of emotions for performance  
25 (i.e., emotional intelligence) was the only mediator of the cohesion-performance relationship  
26 from the study one questionnaires. However, the leaders interviewed within study 2 reported the



1 use of emotional intelligence less than transformational leadership behaviors during the  
2 organizational change. Such findings indicate that employees might have a poor working  
3 knowledge of emotional intelligence, and that the reviewing and training proposed by the heads  
4 of department within study 3 are potentially timely.

### 5 **Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research**

6       The mixed method approach across the three studies allowed for insight into the  
7 leadership behaviors, and use of emotional intelligence, of the team leaders and the perceived  
8 impact on team cohesion and performance. Specifically, the quantitative approach in study 1  
9 was added to by the qualitative insight offered in study 2, with the combined findings offering a  
10 unique perspective into the use and impact of leadership related behaviors within the agency.  
11 The findings of these studies also informed the initiatives the head and deputy are considering  
12 for their leaders, verified in study 3. Despite the utility of this project, the approach adopted did  
13 only provide a snapshot of leadership behaviors within the agency. In addition, *actual* leadership  
14 behaviors were not evidenced due to the subjective nature of the research design. A more  
15 longitudinal approach would have gleaned potentially more accurate data regarding the use and  
16 impact of leadership related behaviors, while observations of leadership behavior and/or team  
17 member perceptions of leader reported behaviors would have corroborated the efficacy of the  
18 information offered in study 2. Consequently, this project offers a platform for a more ongoing  
19 and in-depth examination of leadership within the agency, adopting multiple methods of inquiry  
20 such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations through a case study approach or through a  
21 more in-depth ethnographic approach (see, for example, Wagstaff et al., 2012). This initiative  
22 could also be extended across the whole of the agency to offer a more complete insight into the  
23 existing landscape regarding leadership and emotional intelligence – a venture advocated by the  
24 head and deputy head in study 3. It is likely that any such follow up research would require  
25 large data sets and might incorporate more advanced multilevel regression models to examine  
26 the interactions of the variables included here. From an applied perspective, it would also be

- 1 important to monitor and evaluate the impact of the leadership charter and skills matrix on the
- 2 competencies of the leaders – with particular interest paid to the types of training the agency
- 3 may use to educate and up-skill their workforce.

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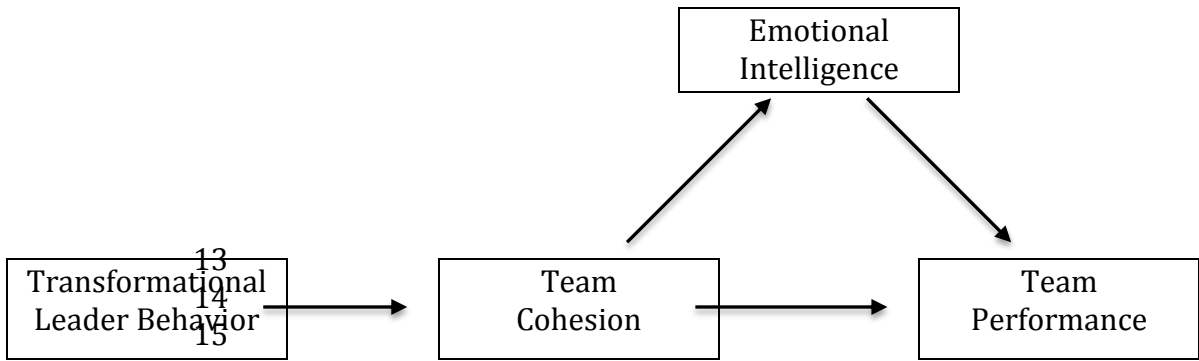
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1 Figure 1. Underpinning model of leadership, emotional intelligence, cohesion and team  
2 performance

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1 Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations between main variables

Variable	Mean (s.d.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ATGS	1.42 (1.64)															
ATGT	3.68 (1.68)	.435**														
GIS	4.42 (1.64)	.883**	.435**													
GIT	3.72 (1.62)	.358**	.971**	.358**												
SEA	3.41 (1.43)	.186	.086	.188	.130											
ROE	4.48 (1.84)	-.034	.172	.034	.172	.498**										
OEA	3.81 (1.62)	.155	.131	.155	.125	.476**	.451**									
UOE	4.37 (1.97)	.231*	.222	.231	.312*	.310*	.253*	.238*								
IM	4.1 (.86)	.125	.053	.125	.109	.108	.050	.164	.062							
RM	4.02 (1.04)	.003	.067	.003	.025	.134	.077	.103	.082	.739**						
FAGG	4.27 (.85)	.080	.009	.080	.156	.038	.092	0.72	.015	.781**	.810**					
IC	4.00 (.81)	.077	.001	.077	.117	.036	.086	.078	.015	.660**	.768**	.798**				
HPE	4.03 (.80)	.006	.046	.006	.157	.733	.139	.230	.122	.652**	.505**	.548**	.477**			
IS	3.39 (.96)	.193	.111	.193	.008	.115	.160	.048	.078	.575**	.607**	.670**	.758**	.547**		
CR	3.89 (.97)	.249	.040	.115	.124	.115	.112	.112	.125	.564**	.622**	.627**	.749**	.467**	.708**	
Performance	2.06 (.90)	.198	.355**	.194	.450**	.183	.003	.168	.459**	.184	.147	.171	.093	.147	.154	.126

2 \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$



1 Table 2 Summary of mediated regression analyses: direct and indirect effects of Group  
 2 Integration-Task on Performance through the Use of EI  
 3  
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	$\beta$	$SE$		
IV (Group Integration-Team) to MV (Use of EI)	.376*	.999		
MV (Use of EI) to DV (Performance)	.155**	.999		
Direct effect of IV on DV	.167**	.061		
Standardised bootstrapped indirect effect estimates and bias corrected and accelerated	CI 95%			
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Total indirect effect	.058	.029	.011	.133

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

LL=lower limit; CI=confidence interval; UL=upper limit.

<sup>a</sup> Indirect effects are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

<sup>b</sup> 95% confidence interval does not encompass zero.

1 Table 3 Frequency of reported leadership behaviors and emotional intelligence

2	General Category	1 <sup>st</sup> Order Theme	2 <sup>nd</sup> Order Theme	OA N = 3	TA N = 2	UA N = 3
	Leadership Behaviors	Appropriate Role Model	Lead by 'doing' rather than 'telling'	5 (3) <sup>a</sup>	1 (1)	2 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Appropriate Role Model	Leading by example	4 (2)	2 (1)	3 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Contingent Reward	Always give team members positive feedback when they perform well	2 (2)	1 (1)	4 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Contingent Reward	Personally praise team members when they do outstanding work	6 (2)	4 (2)	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Contingent Reward	Provide more opportunities for high achievers	2 (2)	5 (2)	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Develop a team spirit and attitude among employees	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Encourage employees to be team players	3 (3)	1 (1)	10 (3)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Fostering trust within the team	2 (2)	0	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Getting the team to work together for the same goal	7 (3)	1 (1)	5 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Promoting open and honest communication within the team	6 (3)	5 (2)	3 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Fostering acceptance of group goals	Promoting team activities outside of work	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	High Performance Expectations	Show the team I expect a lot	1 (1)	0	2 (2)
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Consider that each employee has different strengths and weaknesses	3 (2)	0	0
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Providing a variety of roles for employees	2 (1)	0	2 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Spend time teaching and coaching team members	0	0	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Treat each team member as an individual	10 (3)	2 (2)	0
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Paying attention to individual needs	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Promoting autonomous working	1 (1)	0	0
	Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Communicating that change is a good thing	3 (3)	0	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Encourage team members to take on extra duties	1 (1)	0	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Set high standards	1 (1)	0	2 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	2 (2)	2 (2)	0
	Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Talk optimistically about the future	0	2 (2)	1 (1)
	Leadership Behaviors	Intellectual Stimulation	Get team members to re-think the way they do things	0	2 (1)	0
	Leadership Behaviors	Proactive Communication	Regularly update team members about organizational changes	1 (1)	0	6 (3)
	Emotional Intelligence	Other's emotional appraisal	Consider the emotions of employees	1 (1)	1 (1)	0
	Emotional Intelligence	Other's emotional appraisal	Helping employees to manage their own emotions	4 (3)	0	2 (1)
	Emotional Intelligence	Other's emotional appraisal	Listening to employees who are demonstrating negative emotions	6 (3)	2 (1)	1 (1)
	Emotional Intelligence	Other's emotional appraisal	Managing others emotions	3 (2)	6 (2)	5 (2)
	Emotional Intelligence	Other's emotional appraisal	Being approachable	0	0	2 (1)
	Emotional Intelligence	Self emotional appraisal	Hide own emotions during work	0	1 (1)	0

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Note: <sup>a</sup> Number of times the theme was identified by the participants and the number of participants who identified the theme (in brackets); OA = Over achievers; TA = Target achievers; UA = Under achievers.

1  
2 Table 4 Areas identified by leaders for improvement

General Category	1 <sup>st</sup> Order Theme	2 <sup>nd</sup> Order Theme	OA N = 3	TA N = 2	UA N = 3
Leadership Behaviors	Appropriate Role Model	Leading by example	0	1 (1)	0
Leadership Behaviors	Contingent Reward	Always give team members positive feedback when they perform well	0	2 (1)	0
Leadership Behaviors	FAGG	Developing a team spirit and attitude among employees	2 (1)	0	2 (1)
Leadership Behaviors	FAGG	Promote open and honest communication within the team	0	0	2 (2)
Leadership Behaviors	Individual Consideration	Treat each team member as an individual	0	1 (1)	0
Leadership Behaviors	Inspirational Motivation	Talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	0	0	1 (1)
Leadership Behaviors	Managing Organizational Change	Managing conflict within a team during organizational change	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Leadership Behaviors	Proactive Change Communication	Reassuring employees about their work related future	0	3 (2)	0
Emotional Intelligence (of the Team Members)	Other's emotional appraisal	Managing others emotions	1 (1)	2 (1)	0
Emotional Intelligence (of the Team Members)	Regulation of emotion in self	Managing own emotions	0	0	1 (1)
Emotional Intelligence (of the Leader)	Other's emotional appraisal	Managing others emotions	0	2 (1)	1 (1)
Emotional Intelligence (of the Leader)	Regulation of emotion in self	Managing own emotions	0	0	1 (1)

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