

# **Leader Emotional Ability**

Emotionele capaciteiten van leiders

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Everyone who has worked or works within an organization has experienced, that emotions play an important role on the work floor. After all, an organization is an organized group of individuals working together towards a particular objective and these individuals experience and express emotions and act according to those emotions. Leaders in organizations have the task to mobilize other people and to motivate them in order to achieve organizational objectives. Emotions can help them with these endeavors, but they can also obstruct them. The pride that someone feels, having achieved a hard-won result can be motivational indeed. At the same time, the worry about a reorganization, for example, can hamper that very same motivation. It is the responsibility of leaders to take account of the emotions that are present and to deal with these in an effective manner; they have to do this in such a way that followers are stimulated and motivated to commit themselves to the organizational objectives. The way in which leaders deal with emotions, the individual differences in aptitude or ability and skills between leaders, the development of these skills and its consequences for leadership effectiveness, are the central topics of this dissertation.

### **The importance of emotions in leadership**

Research into and the discussion of leadership has a long tradition. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the start of research into leadership from a social scientific perspective. Mostly, this research emphasized the factors that contribute to effective leadership (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Judge, Bono, & Ilies, 2004). Social scientists have conducted extensive research into which specific abilities and skills determine the successful (or unsuccessful) influencing of followers and whether or not common objectives are reached. In recent decades we have seen a burgeoning interest in the role of emotions in relation to leadership. In addition, the research into emotions has a long tradition and the last 25 years have shown an integration of these two

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fields of research. This overlaps with the interest in affect and emotions within the field of research of organizational behavior, which some researchers refer to as ‘the affective revolution’ (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). In a sense, it is surprising that this integration is only of relatively recent times. Within organizational behavior studies, the emphasis has long been on a cognitive approach, while emotions - as mentioned - have a ubiquitous presence on the work floor, not in the least in the interactions between leaders and followers. In recent decades, however, significant advances have been made and presently it can be stated that scholars have extensively studied processes and outcomes that are related to leadership and emotions. Part of that research focuses on emotional abilities and skills of leaders themselves, both from a theoretical, as well as an empirical perspective.

In 1990, Mayer and Salovey introduced the concept of emotional intelligence, which inspired many others to conduct research into emotional ability and its outcomes. It did not take long until the concept of emotional intelligence was also applied to leadership. Many questions regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership have nevertheless not yet been answered or are the breeding ground for intense debate amongst scholars (Walter, Cole, & Humphrey, 2011).

More recently, a link has been made between emotion regulation skills and leadership (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008) Research into the application of these skills in leadership situations and its effects on followers is, as yet, largely uncharted territory.

In this introductory chapter, I present a theoretical outline of issues that are dealt with in the following chapters. First, I explain my choice to focus on the relationship between emotional intelligence, conceptualized and assessed as an ability, and leadership effectiveness. Second, I explain my choice to integrate leadership and emotional labor

research and, third, explain why I choose to focus on the relationship between emotional intelligence, captured as an ability, and emotional labor.

### **Emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness**

Increasingly, researchers are arriving at the conclusion that the ability of leaders to manage their followers' emotions contributes to their effectiveness and, possibly just as cognitive ability and personality do, represents an important individual-differences predictor of effective leadership. The concept of emotional intelligence captures that ability. However, the research into emotional intelligence in relationship to leadership effectiveness has a number of problems.

The first problem concerns the conceptual delineation of emotional intelligence. In terms of this delineation, two approaches can be distinguished. The first approach sees emotional intelligence as a specific form of intelligence; as the ability to process emotional information and to arrive at conclusions based on that. The underlying abilities are to recognize, understand, use and manage emotions. In the literature, this approach is referred to as the 'Ability' approach. The second school of thought has a wider interpretation of the concept and incorporates personality traits, such as self-monitoring, self-confidence and achievement orientation. This approach is called the 'Mixed-Model' approach (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002, Bar-On, 2000; Goleman, 2000). Since each of these two approaches has their own interpretation of the concept, the results of research concerning the effects of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness are not unequivocal and difficult to compare.

A second problem concerns the type of measurements used to measure emotional intelligence. Various researchers use self-report questionnaires. This is particularly the case for researchers in the Mixed-Model tradition, but also in the Ability tradition questionnaires are used. The use of self-reports is criticized, because it is possible only to a limited extent to realistically assess one's own (emotional) abilities (Day & Carroll, 2008; Dunning, 2005).

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Only a small group of researchers, within the Ability tradition, has made use of ability tests to measure the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership. Although various researchers claim to have found a relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, empirical evidence for this relationship is as yet lacking, from the Ability perspective and measured by an ability test. In his overview of research into emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness Walter et al. (2010) concludes that most of the research has been conducted based on the Mixed-Model approach and that subjective measurements have mostly been used. At the same time, there are indications for the existence of a relationship between ‘ability emotional intelligence’ and leadership effectiveness. For example, Coté found that emotional intelligence, conceptualized as an ability and measured as such, was a predictor of leadership emergence (Coté, Lopez, Salovey, & Miners, 2010). Although he did not examine the effectiveness of leaders, the conclusion that there is indeed a relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership emergence is nevertheless of value.

A third problem concerns the incremental value of emotional intelligence as predictor of leadership effectiveness. The question is whether the concept adds anything over and above well-researched and recognized predictors like cognitive intelligence and personality. If this is not the case, as some researchers argue (Antonakis, 2004; 2009), the concept has insufficient value. In short, incremental validity of this concept is called into question in the literature. In his study into leadership emergence, Coté et al. (2010) did control for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality facets, but, as mentioned above, his study focuses on leadership emergence instead of leadership effectiveness. The only study that can rightfully lay claim to demonstrating the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is the study by Rosette and Ciarrochi (2005). In this study, a relationship was demonstrated between ‘ability emotional intelligence’ and leadership effectiveness, whilst this study

controlled for cognitive intelligence and personality. The personality measurement, however, is not a Big Five measurement, as a result of which a measurement of ‘agreeableness’ is absent. However, it is this very facet of agreeableness that can be expected to overlap with emotional intelligence.

The fourth problem is the fact that until now hardly any research has been conducted into mediating processes, as a result of which few process models exist (Joseph & Newman, 2010). The question how emotional intelligence helps leaders to mobilize and influence followers has largely remained unanswered as yet. Important elements of effective leadership are the generation of enthusiasm and excitement and the contribution to trust and to optimism. Leaders that possess the ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions are better equipped to display such elements and, as such more effective. The relationship between these elements of emotional intelligence and leadership behavior vis-a-vis their followers is, however, largely a blind spot. It is important to understand this relationship in order to increase the validity of the emotional intelligence concept.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness might, at least partly, be mediated by the effects of emotional expressions in leader-follower interactions. Various researchers have researched the effects of affective displays by leaders on their followers. This relates to both research into displays of positive emotions (Lewis, 2000) as well as displays of negative emotions (Glomb & Hulin, 1997). Although the effects of the display of negative emotions are still the subject of discussion, it seems that the effect of the display of positive emotions is a positive predictor of leadership effectiveness. It can be expected that the ability of leaders to understand and manage emotions influences the appropriateness of display of emotions by the leaders themselves. Research into the relationship between emotional intelligence, the display of emotions by the leader and its effects on leadership effectiveness has not received much attention yet in the literature. The

same applies to the responses of leaders to the expressions of emotions by followers. Here, too, it is expected that leaders who possess more strongly-developed abilities to recognize, understand and manage emotions are more effective than leaders who possess lower levels of emotional intelligence.

### **Leader emotion regulation skills and leadership effectiveness**

Related to, but largely separate from the research into emotional intelligence, research into emotion regulation skills has made significant advances in recent decades. The concept of emotion regulation is part of emotional labor theory. In 1984, Hochschildt introduced the term ‘emotional labor’, which signifies that certain professions require that certain specific emotions be displayed as part of the occupational role. Especially in customer service roles, people are expected to display positive emotions in interaction situations with clients.

Research has shown that displaying such emotions during actual absence of these emotions requires certain skills. A distinction is made here between ‘surface acting’ and ‘deep acting skills’. Surface acting means that the emotion is indeed displayed, but that the experience that is accompanied with the emotion is actually different from that emotion. In concrete terms, in an instance of surface acting someone may force a smile, whilst the underlying feeling remains hidden. In the case of deep acting, someone will try to align the experience with the required emotional display. When the rule requires one to display cheeriness, the person in question will actually try to incite such cheeriness, either by refocusing one’s attention onto previous situations in which a cheery feeling occurred, or by labelling the present situation in such a way that it incites cheeriness.

Research shows deep acting to be a healthier and more effective strategy than surface acting. Healthier, because incongruence between emotional expressions and experiences invokes stress and in the long term is detrimental to one’s positive self-image (Brotheridge et al., 2002; Erickson & Wharton, 1997). In addition, it is also more effective because the

expression of the emotion is more authentic when there is no discrepancy between experience and expression (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Although a great deal of research has been conducted into emotional labor in customer service professions, the integration of emotional labor theory and leadership effectiveness occurred only very recently and comprises predominantly conceptual papers and, as yet, little empirical research (Rajah, Song, & Arvey, 2011). However, the further integration of these research fields appears obvious. As conceptually argued by various scholars, leaders also have to deal with various situations in which the display of emotions is important and in which their regulation skills influence their leadership effectiveness (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2011; Humphrey, 2012; Humphrey et al., 2008).

Previously we mentioned that leaders' emotional displays influence followers. The processes that underlie this are twofold. Displays influence followers by emotional contagion and by the communicative power of the displays. The concept of 'emotional contagion' refers to the social-psychological process of internalizing and experiencing observed emotions in others (Bono & Ilies, 2006; cf. Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). Various pieces of research have shown that positive emotions of followers have a positive effect on outcome variables, such as motivation and team performance (Erez & Isen, 2002; Gaddis, Connely, & Mumford, 2004). If the leader displays positive affect, by way of contagion this can also lead to positive emotions in followers with the accompanying consequences for motivation and performance. The communicative power of leader emotional displays lies in the fact that social information is communicated through emotional displays (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, & Damen). For instance, the anger of the leader can be a clear signal for the group to change, and improve, their behavior. Leaders that possess the necessary skills to regulate their displays, from a conceptual point of view would

also be seen to be more effective in influencing followers, either via contagion or via the provision of social information.

Although little empirical research has hitherto been conducted into the relationship between emotion regulation skills and leadership effectiveness, the research that has been conducted shows that emotion regulation skills have a positive influence on leadership effectiveness (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Glasø & Einarsen, 2008). It is expected that the findings from customer service situations, namely, that deep acting is healthier and more effective than surface acting, equally apply in a leadership context. Deep acted leader displays are more authentic, and hence more contagious and more informative, and they have a greater influence on followers. However, empirical evidence still needs to be provided for this. If deep acting is to be preferred above surface acting, this also creates the question whether effective regulation skills (i.e. deep acting skills) can be learnt. Earlier research points to this, although not in a leadership contexts (Gross, 1998). From a leadership development perspective, a current question is to see whether regulation skills can be developed.

### **Emotional intelligence and leader emotion regulation: Differential relationships for experiential and reasoning emotional intelligence**

While emotional intelligence has been an important theme in leadership studies, the research that has been conducted, focused primarily on emotional intelligence as an indicator of leadership effectiveness. Studies that investigate the impact of leader emotional intelligence on emotional labor are still missing (Gooty et al., 2010, Rajah et al., 2011; Walter et al., 2011). We do believe that the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor is of relevance, for that leaders' display of situationally appropriate emotions, through emotional labor strategies, is at least partially a matter of ability. The possible overlap between emotional intelligence and emotional labor techniques has been recognized by scholars, however outside of the leadership realm and seldom from an ability perspective. We

found several studies that in recent years have focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence, deep acting and surface acting (Cheung & Tang, 2009; Hur, Moon, & Han, 2013; Prati, Liu, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2009; Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou & Niakas, 2012; Sliter, Chen, Withrow, & Sliter, 2013; Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013; Zeng, Chen, & Chen, 2014). None of these studies however was conducted among leaders and none used an ability measurement to capture emotional intelligence. The fact that self-measurements were used, might be due to the fact that results among those studies differ quite extensively and the question of the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor remains open to debate (also outside of leadership research). As pointed out earlier, self-measurements pose us to some serious problems like their susceptibility to faking, socially desirable responding and poor self judgement. The only study that used an ability test found the emotional intelligence of service workers not to predict the use of deep acting and service acting directly (Brotheridge 2006). The simple and scripted work that participants in that study performed, does not apply to leadership positions and for that matter any work role, with a higher level of autonomy and more complex relationships, than brief service employee - customer interactions. It could well be argued that emotional labor in leadership positions is much more susceptible to individual differences like emotional intelligence. In other words empirical evidence is much wanted to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence (measured as an ability) and emotional labor in high-autonomy and high-relationship work roles (i.e., leadership positions).

Next to that is the question of the role of specific sub-aspects of emotional intelligence. To more fully capture the processes that underlie emotional intelligence, it is important to address its components (Joseph & Newman, 2010). In their ability model of emotional intelligence Mayer et al. make a distinction between four branches that make up for emotional intelligence: perceiving, using, understanding and managing emotions. Factorial analyses of

their ability measurement of emotional intelligence (MSCEIT) revealed a one-factor (overall emotional intelligence), four-factor (four branches of emotional intelligence) and an additional two-factor structure. The two-factor structure distinguishes between experiential emotional intelligence and reasoning emotional intelligence. Experiential emotional intelligence is the ability to read and express emotions and contains the branches perceiving and using emotions. Reasoning emotional intelligence has to do with understanding what emotions signify, where they come from and how they evolve over time, as much as how they can be managed, through predicting its (social) outcomes. It is this distinction between experiential and reasoning emotional intelligence that might be of importance for differential relationships between emotional intelligence and emotional labor techniques.

The emotional labor strategies deep acting and surface acting both differ in their outcomes and in the processes that underlie them. As argued before deep acting is to be preferred above surface acting with respect to the well-being of the performer and the influencing impact it inflicts (outcomes). The differences in processes have to do with timing. Deep acting is an antecedent focused strategy, occurs early in the emotion generative process, that is before affective display tendencies have been elicited and experiences still can be altered. Surface acting on the other hand is a response focused strategy, that occurs late in the process, after the experience and display tendencies are already there.

It could be argued that altering the emotional experience requires experiential abilities. The aptitude to read emotional cues, enables individuals to distract or focus on emotional aspects of the situation and facilitates them to stir up or downplay appropriate emotional experiences and responses, that are related to these experiences. An accurate perception also enables to select emotional cues in need of reappraisal. While the ability to accurately perceive emotions is conditional, in itself it is not enough to perform deep acting. One also has to be able to compare current emotional stimulation to previous experiences and use these

emotional experiences. Experiential emotional intelligence (being accurately perceiving and effectively using emotions) therefore might be related to deep acting. While in surface acting the experience is already there, is not being altered, experiential emotional intelligence seems of less value. Reasoning emotional intelligence however is all about understanding emotions and its consequences. Given the negative emotional impact of surface acting it might be the case that individuals high on reasoning emotional intelligence tend to avoid surface acting, for they understand its risks with respect to well-being.

### **Overview of the studies that are presented in this dissertation**

In this dissertation the emphasis lies on a number of important questions relating to the relationship between leaders' emotional abilities, leaders' emotional skills and leadership effectiveness, which until now have been overlooked in this rapidly developing field of research. I briefly discuss the studies presented in this work, in order of appearance.

In chapter 2, a study is described into the relationship between leader ability emotional intelligence, as individual difference predictor, and leadership effectiveness, whilst cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality facets are being controlled for. In addition, the study examines to process variables that possibly underlie that relationship. It was expected that a positive relationship would be found between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and that this relationship would be mediated by both the responses of leaders to emotions of followers as well as by the displays of positive affect by leaders themselves. The results suggest that emotional intelligence is a positive predictor of leadership effectiveness and that this relationship is mediated by the effectiveness of the leader's response to the emotions of followers.

In chapter 3, a study is described that aims to integrate research into leadership and research into emotional labor skills. This study examines whether training emotion regulation skills influences leadership effectiveness. It was expected that the display of positive affect

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and the use of the emotion regulation skill of deep acting is trainable and that positive affective display and deep acting would mediate the relationship between the intervention and effective leadership. The results suggest that this is indeed the case. After training, leaders displayed more positive affect and showed a greater usage of deep acting. Both variables also mediated the positive relationship between the intervention and effective leadership.

In chapter 4, the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor skills is described. The aim of the last study of this dissertation was to examine whether there is a distinction between two sub-facets of emotional intelligence: 1) the ability to experience emotions and 2) the ability to reason about emotions, in relationship to the use of various emotion regulation strategies: 1) deep acting and 2) surface acting. At the outset, we assumed that the ability to experience emotions would be a positive predictor of the deployment of deep acting and that the ability to reason about emotions would negatively predict the use of surface acting. The results suggest that this is the case. As participants are better able to experience emotions, they also deploy deep acting more. At the same time, we saw that the ability to strategically think about emotions was a negative predictor of surface acting. The following chapters describe the three studies in detail.

## **Chapter 2 - Emotional Intelligence, Management of Subordinate's Emotions, and Leadership Effectiveness**

Research in leadership has a long history in the study of leadership effectiveness – leader's success in mobilizing and motivating followers for collective ends – from a cognitive perspective (e.g., Bass, 1990; Chemers, 2001; Yukl, 2002). Increasingly, however, leadership researchers are recognizing that effective leadership may also have a strong emotional component – effective leadership may in important part rely on leader's ability to proactively and reactively manage follower emotions (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Humphrey, 2008; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Damen, 2008). In the long tradition of studying personality and individual differences as a core determinant of effective leadership (e.g., Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002), this has led to the emergence of a focus on emotional intelligence (EI) as an individual difference predictor of leadership effectiveness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Walter, Cole, & Humphrey, 2011).

As Walter et al. (2011) outline in their review of the literature, however, this research has been plagued by a number of problems – most prominently the fact that EI is most appropriately conceptualized as an ability – the ability to recognize and manage own and others' emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) – but more often than not measured through self-ratings that are inappropriate as ability measure and more akin to personality ratings (cf. Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; Locke, 2005). Research since the Walter et al. review has not addressed this issue (e.g., Boyatzis, Good, & Massa, 2012; Cavazotte, Moreno, & Hickman, 2012; Hur, Van den Berg, & Wilderom 2011; Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). As a consequence, the current state of the science is that despite much claims as to the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, we need yet to unambiguously establish this relationship by assessing EI

through ability testing and controlling for other individual difference measures that are well-established as predictors of leadership and correlates of emotional intelligence. Moreover, we need yet to identify the mediating processes in the EI-leadership effectiveness relationship.

These are the issues we aim to address in the current study. Our first objective was to provide a test of the relationship between emotional intelligence conceptualized and assessed as an ability and leadership effectiveness controlling for the most studied individual difference predictors of leadership: cognitive ability (Judge et al., 2004) and Big Five personality traits (Judge et al., 2002). Our second and related objective was to establish mediation in this relationship, focusing on leader's actions to manage follower emotions. In doing so, our study makes two important contributions to research on emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. First, we provide less ambiguous evidence for the relationship between emotional intelligence as an ability and leadership effectiveness than previous research, bolstering the confidence in conclusions regarding this relationship. Second, we contribute to the development of process models of the influence of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness by providing evidence regarding mediation.

## **Theory and Hypotheses**

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The role of affect and emotions in leadership has been given much attention in recent decades. It parallels the rise of interest in affect in applied psychology as a whole. Where cognition-focused models have long dominated research, there has been a shift towards affective models of behavior, to the extent even that some scholars have called this the “affective revolution” (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). The ascendance of emotional intelligence (EI) fits that pattern. Before we elaborate on EI, first a few words on how to define affect and emotions. Both affect and emotions refer to feeling states. Emotions are relatively short-lived, relatively intense, and target-centered (a reaction to a specific event, person, or situation) and

thus have a relatively clear cause, beginning, and endpoint. Affect is more broadly defined to encompass not only discrete emotions but also more diffuse feeling states such as moods and dispositional tendencies towards certain feeling states (Forgas, 1995; Lazarus, 1991; Russell & Barrett, 1999; Watson & Clark, 1984). In the current study, however, we are not concerned with these distinctions, because EI is seen as relating to the effective management of both emotions and moods (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and both emotions and moods are relevant to leadership effectiveness (e.g., Sy, Coté, & Saavedra, 2005; Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, & Damen, 2009).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined EI as a set of interrelated abilities for processing emotional information, where the sources of information could be both one's own and others emotions. Intelligence has been defined as the ability to process information (Hunt, 2011). With respect to different types of information, also different sorts of abilities to deal with the information can be recognized (e.g., verbal intelligence refers to the ability to process verbal information; spatial intelligence to the ability to process spatial information). Although there have been fierce discussions on how many types of intelligences exist, it is also commonly accepted that specific ability factors do exist (Carroll, 1993; Neisser, Boodoo, Bouchard, Boykin, Brody, & Ceci, 1996). Cues about one's own and others' emotions provide emotional information and dealing with this information is as much an intellectual activity as dealing with verbal material (Hunt, 2011). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) distinguish emotion and cognition as two fundamental classes of mental operations, which interact (e.g., good moods give rise to thinking positively). The interaction between emotions and cognition gives rise to EI. In that respect EI is the ability to recognize the meanings of emotional patterns and solve problems on the basis of them. Mayer and Salovey (1997) conceptualized EI as a construct with four interrelated elements, proceeding from relatively easy operations to more sophisticated ones. The first element is accurately perceiving emotions. The ability to

use emotions to facilitate thought is the second element. The third element is the ability to understand emotions. The last and fourth element is the most complex one and is being able to change emotions in oneself and others.

The academic literature concerning the concept of EI can be organized in three distinct categories or “streams” (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Stream one and two follow Mayer and Salovey (1997) in their conceptualization of EI as a set of interrelated abilities. The third stream, known as the mixed-model approach, defines EI in a broader sense, not just as an ability, but subsuming an array of different dispositions and competencies, such as self-awareness, empathy, and teamwork (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Bar-On, 2000; Goleman, 2000). From a conceptual point of view this model has been criticized in that EI should be seen as an intelligence and not as including behavioral preferences (Mayer et al., 2000). Such behavioral preferences may reflect stable individual differences, but such preferences are conceptually distinct from an ability even when they may be related to the ability (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Though the first and second stream both define EI based on the Salovey and Mayer (1990) framework as an ability, they differ in their measurement of EI. Whereas stream one relies on an ability-based EI test (the MSCEIT), stream two uses self-assessments or other reports of emotional abilities. For three reasons there are validity problems with subjective ratings as compared with ability testing of EI. First, ability-based EI tests are more closely aligned with the conceptualization of EI as an intelligence: a set of abilities for effectively dealing with emotions (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Second, ability tests are less susceptible to faking and socially desirable responding (Day & Carroll, 2008). Third, people are typically poor judges of their abilities, potentially overestimating as well as underestimating their true ability (Dunning, 2005).

Much of the controversies concerning EI and leadership revolve around these differences in conceptualization and measurement of EI. Once one accepts the conclusion, however, that the appropriate conceptualization of EI is that of an ability only, and that appropriate measurement of ability is through an ability test rather than subjective assessment, the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness is remarkably uncharted territory.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness**

It did not take long before scholars recognized the relevance of EI for leadership. Leadership is an area in which the influence of emotions should be clearly visible (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Humphrey, 2002; Lord & Brown, 2004). An essential element of effective leadership is generating and maintaining excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism in an organization (George, 2000). In that respect, leaders with the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions should be more effective leaders (George, 2000).

Walter et al. (2011) note that most empirical research on EI and leadership effectiveness has applied either a mixed-model conceptualization of EI or subjective measures (Higgs & Aitken, 2003; Kellert, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2002; Offerman, Bailey, Vasilopoulos, Seal, & Sass, 2004; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). The most appropriate type of research that both conceptualizes and measures EI as an ability – indeed, the only research that can be considered truly valid in assessing the relationship between EI and other constructs – is largely missing. The studies that are exceptions to this rule and did take an ability approach to EI measurement have yielded results that are promising in establishing correlations between EI and leadership effectiveness (Kerr, Garvin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005), even when not all of these studies observed this relationship (Weinberger, 2009). Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) also included cognitive ability and a personality measure in their study of  $N = 41$  managers. Unfortunately, however, the

16PF5 personality measure they employed does not fully capture the Big Five model of personality (i.e., it lacks in the measurement of agreeableness; Rossier, Meyer de Stadelhofen, & Berthoud, 2004; a correlate of EI; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008), which we argue below is the most relevant model for personality to control for. In their study of leadership emergence Côté, Lopes, Salovey, and Miners (2010) did control for cognitive ability and Big Five personality, yielding further indications of the promise of this perspective. Leadership emergence cannot be equated with leadership effectiveness, however, and findings for the one cannot be assumed to generalize to the other (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Judge et al., 2002). Thus, despite promising first results, the question whether EI predicts leadership effectiveness above and beyond established individual difference predictors of leadership effectiveness remains unanswered (Walter et al. 2011).

It is especially this question that has provoked fierce debate. Antonakis (2004; Antonakis et al., 2009) has even called EI of no use if its measurement cannot demonstrate incremental validity beyond established psychological factors. We agree on the importance of establishing incremental validity, but note that it is important to keep in mind that being a form of intelligence, EI should exhibit some overlap with other forms of intelligence – most notably cognitive ability. Mayer et al. (2008) have indeed reported correlations of about  $r = .35$  with verbal intelligence and  $r = .10 - .20$  with perceptual/organizational intelligence. Furthermore, EI should be relatively independent of, but still can have modest correlations with, Big Five personality traits (Mayer et al., 2008). Mayer et al. (1993) found modest correlations with openness to experience  $r = .25$  (which was to be expected, because openness often correlates with intelligences) and with agreeableness  $r = .28$  (which could also be anticipated given its relationship with empathy).

These correlations are low enough to establish EI as an independent construct, but high enough to indicate that it is desirable to establish that correlations between EI and leadership

effectiveness are not attributable to this covariation – especially in view of the fact that both cognitive ability (Judge et al., 2004) and Big Five traits (Judge et al., 2002) have been meta-analytically established as predictors of leadership effectiveness. This then underscores Antonakis' (2004; Antonakis et al., 2009) argument, and indicates that the more appropriate test of the EI – leadership effectiveness relationship is one that controls for both cognitive ability and the Big Five. An additional consideration in this respect is that, as we elaborate below, EI may also derive part of its influence from leaders' use of their own emotions, and a more indirect reason to control for the Big Five is that extraversion is associated with positive affect and neuroticism (i.e., low emotional stability) with negative affect (Steel, Schmidt, & Schultz, 2008). Clearly, affectivity cannot be equated with the display of affect, but these associations too suggest it would be important to control for the Big Five personality traits.

In addition to the problems of scarce evidence, inconclusive results, and lack of relevant controls, another issue that is important to address is that there currently are no studies that examined mediating mechanisms in the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness. Establishing mediation is important because it further establishes the validity of the EI perspective: this perspective is better supported if we not only establish a relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, but also establish that this relationship is mediated by processes closely associated with the EI perspective. We therefore also develop and test hypotheses about mediating processes.

### **The Present Study**

EI should be positively related to leadership effectiveness, because the ability to understand and manage emotions should have clear benefits in leader-follower interaction (cf. Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002). We propose that these benefits can be understood from two perspectives that are both closely aligned with the conceptualization of EI.

First, the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions should be important in

response to follower emotional expression. Follower emotion should be a regular ingredient in many of the challenges of leadership. Disappointment in response to negative feedback or frustration in the face of adversity in bringing tasks to a successful end may for instance discourage and demotivate followers, and leaders' ability to defuse such counterproductive feelings or to channel such feelings in more productive directions may be an important ingredient in leadership effectiveness. EI is likely to be positively related to the appropriateness of leader responses to follower emotion, because higher EI should render leaders more likely to recognize and understand follower emotion as well as to accurately assess what would be an appropriate and effective response to follower emotion. Such more appropriate responses to follower emotion should thus in part explain (i.e., mediate) why leaders higher in EI should be more effective, because such responses should render it more likely that the leader is effective in realizing his or her intended goal in interaction with the follower (e.g., motivating goal pursuit, building high-quality relations) , because they will invite more motivated and positive follower responses to leadership.

Second, the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions captured by EI should be important in using emotional displays to influence followers. Leader affective displays have been identified as an influence in leadership effectiveness. Leader displays of positive affect have been consistently linked to more positive evaluations of leadership both in comparison with the absence of such displays (e.g., Awamleh, & Gardner; 1999; Bono & Ilies, 2006) and in comparison with negative affective displays (e.g., Gaddis, Connely, & Mumford, 2004; Johnson, 2009; Visser, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Wisse, 2013; cf. Lewis, 2000). For effects on follower performance too, leader affective displays have been shown to be influential, although displays of positive affect are not under all conditions more effective than displays of negative affect in motivating follower performance (e.g., Damen, van Knippenberg, & van Knippenberg, 2008; Van Kleef et al., 2009; Visser et al., 2013; cf.

Newcombe, & Ashkanasy, 2002; Sy et al., 2005). Thus, as Humphrey, Pollack, and Hawyer (2008) argued in their conceptual analysis of leadership and emotions, an important element of affective leadership may be that leaders are good judges of which affective displays are appropriate in a given situation, and able to show such appropriate affect to influence followers. As our concise review of the leader affective display literature suggest, in many situations this may be positive affect, but it need not be. EI may capture an important part of leaders' ability to effectively use such affective displays (cf. Brotheridge's, 2006, suggestion that EI may be important in emotional labor as an influence on the accurate assessment of situational demands). Thus, we may advance the appropriate use of affective displays as another element of the leadership process that partly explains (i.e., mediates) the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness.

In sum, then, we expect that EI is positively related to leadership effectiveness, and we expect that this relationship obtains because leaders with higher EI respond more appropriately to follower expression of emotion, and display emotions that are more appropriate to the situation:

*Hypothesis 1:* Emotional intelligence is positively related to leadership effectiveness, controlling for cognitive ability and Big Five personality traits.

*Hypothesis 2a:* The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is mediated by the appropriateness of leader reactions to follower expressions of emotion.

*Hypothesis 2b:* The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is mediated by situationally appropriate leader affective displays.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The current study was conducted as part of a regular assessment center program at the

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Assessment and Development department of an acknowledged consultancy firm in the Netherlands. All participants took part in this program. Potential participants were asked during an interview whether they were willing to participate in a scientific study about leadership (response rate 87%). Eighty-four individuals holding a leadership position for at least a year in the public or private sector participated in this study. More men ( $N = 68$ ) than women ( $N = 16$ ) participated, with ages ranging from 29 to 59 with a mean age of 43 ( $SD = 7.04$ ). They all obtained a diploma, 23.8% on a master level, 41.5% on a bachelor level, and 34.7% on a high school level.

### **Procedure**

The regular assessment program that all participants went through included a competence based interview, cognitive intelligence tests, and a personality test. Specifically for the current study, an ability-based EI measure was added. The assessment also included a written management case (in-basket exercise) and two role play exercises. In one of the role play exercises, the leader had to confront a subordinate with failure feedback, and this role play was used to test our hypotheses through relatively unobtrusive observation of our proposed mediating and dependent variables. Participants received 10 minutes of preparation time to read a short instruction for each role play. Before the start of the role play the assessment psychologist explained to the participant that he or she should try to react as if he or she was in the workplace. To provide a specific reference point to assess leaders' responses to follower emotion (Hypothesis 2a), the role players (confederates in this study) were instructed to show non-verbal signs of worry and anxiety (looking away and avoiding eye contact, restless changing of position and picking clothes) and implement the following line during role play to signal a negative feeling state or emotion: 'It keeps me awake at night'.

## **Measures**

*Emotional intelligence.* The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test Version 2.0 (MSCEIT) was used to measure EI. The MSCEIT is an ability test that measures the four elements of EI: perceiving emotion accurately, using emotion to facilitate thought, understanding emotion, and managing emotion (Mayer et al., 1997).

The MSCEIT consists of eight subtests, two per element, and measures the ability to solve emotional problems. The first element, emotion perception, was tested by showing participants faces and pictures/designs, which indicated how well participants can perceive and appraise certain emotions. Participants needed to rate the intensity of the following emotions: anger, sadness, happiness, disgust, fear, surprise and excitement (Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). The second element, using emotions, was tested by having participants identify the specific emotions that may affect people's behavior or performance on cognitive tasks. Specifically, participants had to come up with certain emotions or moods and match them with sensations, behaviors, or tasks that typically accompany them. The third element, understanding emotions, was measured through the blends and changes subtests. Here, participants had to demonstrate an understanding of how individuals may experience several emotions simultaneously, and how some emotions, when combined form other emotions. Participants also had to identify how emotions change over time. The fourth element, managing emotions, was measured by providing participants with social situations and require them to select the most appropriate social response to achieve desired outcomes.

The reported split-half reliability for the MSCEIT EI score is .91 (Mayer et al. 2002, as cited in Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). The test-retest reliability of the MSCEIT is also very high, .86 after three weeks (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). In this study the consensus-based scoring method was used because we were interested in the emotion perception of employees who are no emotion experts.

*Leadership effectiveness.* Leadership effectiveness was measured by scoring participants on the basis of a role play. This role play was developed by an acknowledged consultancy firm and specifically designed to assess for leading positions. There were three roles to fulfill within this role play, namely the one of commercial director (participant), marketing manager (confederate 1) and observant (confederate 2). The aim of this role play is that the commercial director approaches the marketing manager with failure feedback (about not receiving his or her budget proposal) in an effective way. The confederates in this study were two experienced assessment psychologists, with at least three years of experience in the field of leadership assessments. Both confederates indicated independently on a 5-point Likert scale how effective participants were as a leader on the basis of two items that were grounded by a series of behavioral indicators; quality of task-oriented leadership (examples of behavioral indicators: ‘*appeals on responsibilities*’, ‘*corrects and adjusts*’) and quality of relationship-oriented leadership (examples of behavioral indicators: ‘*listens, shows respect and understanding*’, ‘*has a constructive attitude towards the employee*’). Because affective display and leaders’ effectively dealing with negative follower emotion (worry/anxiety) also had to be rated by the assessment psychologists, we combined ratings of the two raters only to determine interrater reliability, but used the one rater’s data for the mediating variables and the other rater’s data for the dependent variable to reduce issues with same-source data. Each role play was played according a fixed script, which was followed accurately to guarantee intern validity within the assessment as well as within this study.

*Interrater reliability.* To assess interrater reliability, we computed Cohen’s Kappa (Cohen, 1986). Because items in this study are rated on a nominal level (5-point Likert scale), we chose to calculate the weighted Cohen’s Kappa, which does not only correct for agreement by chance but also takes into account partial consensus. The literature states that k should reach a minimum of .60 to speak of an acceptable interrater reliability, while a k value

of .80 should be interpreted as ‘good’ or ‘satisfying’ (Dunn, 1989; Popping, 1983). The interrater reliability for leadership effectiveness was satisfying, weighted Cohen’s  $k = .92$ .

*Leader affective display and response to follower emotion.* Affective display and the extent to which participants responded effectively to follower emotion (the expression of worry and anxiety), were also assessed by behavioral observation of participants in the role play. To assess affective displays, we made a distinction between positive and negative affect. In the context of the role play – the challenge to prevent follower demoralization and redirect negative emotions to more productive motivation – we considered the display of positive affect more situationally appropriate, but in anticipation of potential questions regarding negative affect, we included this too. Assessors rated the participants independently on a 5-point totally disagree-totally agree scale for the following statements: ‘*The participant shows positive emotions*’, ‘*The participant shows negative emotions*’ and ‘*The participant responds effectively when follower shows uncertainty*’. Examples of behavioral indicators for effective responses were: ‘*acknowledges the emotion*’, ‘*pays attention to the emotion*’ and ‘*shows understanding*’. The interrater reliability for positive affect, negative affect and effective respond to uncertainty were also satisfying, and were respectively .87, .88, and .88.

### **Control variables**

*Intelligence – cognitive ability.* To control for cognitive intelligence, we used the Abalet, a test developed by an acknowledged test developer in Belgium, Cebir. The Abalet measures someone’s inductive reasoning ability, which is a central facet of general intelligence. More specifically, the Abalet measures someone’s capability to discover patterns in the configuration of letters. Items could vary in letter sequence and spatial position. The Abalet is an adaptive test, which adapts itself to the level of the participant, therefore it did not contain a fixed number of items. Participants received 30 minutes to solve as many items as they could, with a maximum of 153 items. The outcome of the test is compared with

empirically developed norm scores, which leads to the end score. The reliability of the test is calculated individually for every participant, for the Dutch norm group at least 95% of the participants show a reliability that is  $\geq .80$ . The Abalet correlates with other general intelligence tests, such as with the Raven. It also turned out higher educated participants scored higher than lower educated people. Therefore, we can conclude the Abalet is valid in measuring intelligence.

*Big Five personality factors.* To assess the Big Five – extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience – we used the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R), consisting of 240 items. Each item had to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Costa and McCrae (1992) showed evidence for the structural validity and reliability of the five dimensions.

*Age and gender.* We also controlled for the participants age and gender. Although EI is a relatively stable aptitude (Gohm & Glore, 2002), Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) have also found that college students scored somewhat higher than adolescent youth, suggesting that age is related to EI (although not necessarily beyond early adulthood). Gender too was found to be related to emotional intelligence (Bracket, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006).

## **Results**

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed among study variables. The results of the correlational analyses, means, and standard deviations are shown in Table 1.

### **Test Hypothesis 1**

A linear regression analysis was conducted to predict leadership effectiveness from EI, while controlling for gender, age, intelligence, and personality. The results of this analysis, displayed in Table 2, show that EI accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in leadership effectiveness when controlling for gender, age, intelligence, and personality. The

positive relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness supported Hypothesis 1.

### **Test of Hypothesis 2: Multiple mediation analysis**

To determine whether our proposed mediators were related to leadership effectiveness, we conducted a second regression analysis in which negative affect, positive affect and response to follower emotion were also added as predictor variables. Results of this analysis are also displayed in Table 2. Results indicated that only one of the three proposed mediators was significantly, and positively, related to leadership effectiveness, responses to follower emotion. In testing our mediation Hypotheses 2a and 2b, only Hypothesis 2a thus receives initial evidence in support: responses to follower emotion are predictive of leadership effectiveness, but displays of positive affect are not (and neither are displays of negative affect).

To provide a test of Hypothesis 2a as well as to include a formal test of Hypothesis 2b even though first evidence is not supportive here, multiple mediation analysis was conducted following Preacher and Hayes (2008; Hayes, 2009). In the past, researchers used a four-step approach to test for mediation based on Baron and Kenny (1986). Importantly, however, this approach is problematic because it does not include a direct test of the mediation path – the path from the independent variable via the mediator to the dependent variable. The approach advocated by Preacher and colleagues does provide such a test, and therefore is currently considered to be superior. Result of the mediation analysis as proposed by Preacher and colleagues are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

The multiple mediation analyses took into account gender, age, intelligence, and Big Five personality dimensions as controls, and the three process variables as potential mediators (i.e., strictly speaking negative affect is a control here too, because our conceptual analysis would favor positive affect as capturing the mediation proposed in Hypothesis 2b). Results of this analysis showed that the total effect of EI on leadership effectiveness was

significant, but disappeared when the effect of EI on leadership effectiveness was controlled for the mediators. Moreover, the results showed a significant positive effect of EI on the responses to follower emotion as well as from responses to follower emotion to leadership effectiveness. In accordance with the approach of Preacher et al. (2008), the statistical significance of the bootstrapped point estimates for the indirect effects are used to determine mediation. These are shown in Table 4. We found that responses to follower emotion mediated the effect of EI on leadership effectiveness. In other words, people who score higher on EI were more effective leaders at least in part because they respond more appropriately to the follower emotions. Results of mediation analysis thus supported Hypothesis 2a, but not Hypothesis 2b.

### **Discussion**

The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership effectiveness is potentially important, but surprisingly understudied from the perspective that EI should be understood as an ability and studied with appropriate ability (cognitive intelligence) and personality (Big Five factors) controls. Moreover, the mediating process model of the EI-leadership effectiveness relationship was distinctly underdeveloped and an empirical investigation of mediation for this relationship was lacking. In the present study, we addressed these issues. We found that EI is positively related to leadership effectiveness when controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits, and we established the appropriateness of responses to follower emotions as a mediator in this relationship. These findings offer a good basis for the further investigation of the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness.

### **Theoretical implications**

As Antonakis (2004; Antonakis et al., 2009) argued, it is important to establish the incremental validity of EI in leadership effectiveness above and beyond relevant ability and

personality predictors. By establishing a positive relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness controlling for the best established ability predictor of leadership effectiveness (cognitive intelligence; Judge et al., 2004) as well as the best established personality predictors of leadership effectiveness (the Big Five personality factors; Judge et al., 2002), we provide a firmer, more robust basis for the future study of the EI-effectiveness relationship. Shortcomings of past research have raised doubts about the value of EI for leadership effectiveness (e.g., Antonakis et al., 2009; Walter et al., 2011), and such doubts would discourage the further development of the EI perspective on leadership effectiveness. On the basis of the current evidence, however, these doubts can be addressed, and we can more firmly move on from the question of whether there is a relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness to the questions why (mediation) and when (moderation) that relationship obtains. Obviously, our analysis speaks to that first question. Considering answers to the mediation question also helps to consider the moderation question.

The relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness was mediated by appropriate responses to follower indications of emotion. These findings suggest that leaders higher on EI are more able to recognize and understand follower emotions and to use this ability to determine an appropriate and effective response. By defusing counterproductive feelings or channeling such feelings in more productive directions leaders high on EI are more effective in interaction with a follower. These findings are closely aligned with an understanding of EI, and thus give further confidence in our conclusions regarding the EI-effectiveness relationship.

More indirectly, this finding may also speak to potential moderating influences. Appropriately responding to follower emotions requires at least some degree of emotionality on the side of followers. In context where followers do not experience emotions, or at least not emotions that require leader actions, EI may be less predictive of leadership effectiveness

– at least in as far as its influence through responses to follower emotions is concerned. This may perhaps also be seen in the light of the fact that we did not observe a relationship between cognitive intelligence and leadership effectiveness. In combination, these findings can be understood to suggest that we studied a situation in which there was a clear call on leader EI – potentially problematic follower emotions – but a weak call on leader cognitive ability. Other leadership challenges may be of a less affective and a more intellectual nature, and accordingly EI may be less influential for such more intellectual challenges. Future research may thus fruitfully develop a conceptualization of leadership tasks or challenges in terms of how much they call on cognitive and how much they call on emotive abilities (i.e., these can be independent), and advance this as a moderating influence in the EI-effectiveness relationship (as well as in the cognitive ability-effectiveness relationship).

It is also noteworthy that we did not find evidence of mediation by leader emotional displays. In this respect, it is important to note that not only did EI not predict emotional displays, emotional displays also did not predict leadership effectiveness. In view of the evidence that leader affective displays may impact leadership effectiveness (van Knippenberg et al., 2008) one reading of these findings is that we may have studied a situation in which leader affective displays were of minor importance. If this is the case, we would have less reason to expect EI to predict affective displays, because high EI would only motivate affective displays that could be seen as appropriate to the situation. Put differently, a stronger test of the hypothesis that affective displays mediate the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness would be one in a context where a relationship between affective displays and leadership effectiveness can be established. Clearly, this is a matter for future research, but here too this interpretation of our findings would also point at potential moderating influences of the context. In this case, such contextual influence would be in terms of the extent to which the context is conducive to a positive influence on leadership

effectiveness of leader affective displays. In research to date, such contexts have often be understood as situations in which leaders should motivate performance in the absence of strong follower emotions (e.g., Johnson, 2009; Sy et al., 2005; Van Kleef et al., 2009). It is possible then, that situations that are conducive to the mediating role of leader responses to follower emotion are less conducive to the mediating role of leader affective displays and vice versa.

The situational contingencies that our discussion points to would be perfectly consistent with a trait activation theory perspective. The trait activation perspective holds that situational influences may inhibit or encourage the expression of individual traits (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Moreover, as van Knippenberg (2012) outlines, there is a good case to be made for the value of a trait activation perspective in research in leadership and personality. EI is an ability and not personality, and the proof of the pudding is in the eating, but from a trait activation perspective there is no reason why the perspective would not also apply to abilities like EI. We thus see great promise in such an approach to develop a model of the contingencies of the EI-effectiveness relationship – and in doing so also of the potential contingencies of the importance of different mediating processes.

### **Practical Implications**

Our findings that leaders high on EI are more effective in influencing and mobilizing followers above cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits have important implications for practitioners as well. Ability tests (e.g. MSCEIT) can be used in recruitment and selection for leadership positions, adding predictive power above traditional measurements, such as cognitive intelligence tests and personality questionnaires. Furthermore ability tests of EI can replace role play exercises (capturing the effectiveness of leader behavior), which are expensive (for actors and observants are needed) and time-consuming.

The findings of our research may also provide a good basis for future developments to enhance leadership development programs. We found appropriate reactions to counterproductive follower emotions to mediate the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, and it seems worthwhile to develop such skills in leaders. At the same time, we note, as per our discussion above, that our understanding of mediating processes – and thus the skills to train – would benefit from further research. We would see this training and development application thus more as an application-in-the-making than as something that would justify investment based on our study alone.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Before discussing the limitations of our research, we would like to underscore two advantages of the way we have conducted our research. First, all participants in our study were highly motivated to perform, because of the fact that they participated in a real assessment center for which their performance would be communicated to the organization they worked for or wanted to work for. The conclusions of the assessment center were of important value for their career. Furthermore our results were based on direct behavioral observations by experienced assessment center professionals, all academically educated psychologists and thoroughly trained in observing and evaluating leadership behavior, in a controlled and standardized context rather than on the much more common subjective ratings by followers in survey research where situational differences may play an unmeasured role.

Notwithstanding these advantages, this research also has its limitations. Most obviously perhaps is the fact that the gain in data quality from controlled and expert observation comes at the price of studying people outside of their work context in the setting of a role play. Despite the clear advantages of such a controlled setting (e.g., the possibility to observe actual leader behavior), it could be argued that it is a simulation and not a real life situation, and that therefore the generalizability of findings to real work settings is debatable. In a meta-

analysis of Hermelin, Lievens, and Robinson (2007), however, assessment center scores were found to correlate with supervisory on-the-job performance ratings, speaking to the generalizability of such assessments. Other research shows that the predictive validity of work sample tests (e.g., a failure feedback conversation for a manager) for overall job performance ( $r = .54$ ; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). These promising indications of the external validity of assessment center data thus gives us some confidence in the current conclusions. Even so, we would suggest that there is clear value-added in follow up research replicating and extending the current findings in surveys in organizations (even when we note that especially the assessment of leader responses to follower emotion may be more challenging in survey research).

We should recognize that the high quality of our data in the sense of its origin in behavioral observations in a standardized environment implies that by necessity we limited ourselves to one representative leadership situation that could not possibly include all challenges that leaders meet on a regular basis. As our discussion of potential situational moderators in the previous highlights, the relationship between EI and effectiveness, as well as the specific mediating processes in this relationship, may be situationally contingent. Future research mapping the EI-effectiveness relationships over a variety of situations therefore has great value in further developing our understanding of this relationship.

## **Conclusion**

Conceptual analysis (George, 2000) and scarce empirical research (Kerr et al., 2006; Rosete et al., 2005) addressed the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, concluding that EI is an important predictor of leadership effectiveness. However two major issues remained unanswered: does emotional intelligence conceptualized and assessed as an ability influence leadership effectiveness when controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits?, and, what are mediating processes in this

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relationship? With ability test data for emotional intelligence, we found EI to predict leadership effectiveness controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits. Furthermore we found that the quality of leader responses to indications of counterproductive follower emotions to mediate the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness. These findings offer a firmer basis for the future development of our understanding of the role of EI in leadership effectiveness

Table 1. Means, Standard deviations, and Pearson correlations ( $N = 84$ )

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	43.12	7.04	1	-.11	-.13	-.04	.06	-.29**	.29**	-.06	.02	-.20	-.02	.01	-.07
2. Gender	0.19	.40		1	.14	.15	.00	.02	-.07	.04	.10	-.04	.05	.05	.12
3. Intelligence	70.00	128.00			1	.10	-.21	-.18	-.14	-.05	.15	-.05	.02	-.02	.15
4. NEO Openness	163.43	15.38				1	.00	.33**	.18	-.05	.22*	.19	.07	.03	.04
5. NEO Conscientiousness	178.49	12.91					1	.32**	.31**	-.41**	.06	.07	-.05	.09	.06
6. NEO Extraversion	171.92	14.56						1	.09	-.30**	-.13	.36**	.04	.03	-.02
7. NEO Altruism	169.75	11.26							1	-.25*	.14	.04	-.03	-.03	.07
8. NEO Neuroticism	105.07	15.81								1	.02	-.03	-.09	.05	.06
9. Emotional intelligence	.44	.06									1	.20	-.07	.13	.27*
10. Leadership effectiveness	2.48	.49										1	-.03	.14	.30**
11. Negative affect	2.54	.88											1	-.44**	-.15
12. Positive affect	3.03	.93												1	.34**
13. Response to emotion	2.55	.94													1

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ . Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female.

Table 2. Linear regression analysis. Dependent variable is leadership effectiveness ( $N = 84$ )

	Model 1					Model 2				
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	<i>F</i>
Age	-.01	.01	-.10	.21	2.13*	-.01	.01	-.10	.27	2.14*
Gender	-.11	.13	-.09			-.14	.13	-.11		
Intelligence	-.00	.00	-.02			.00	.00	-.06		
NEO Openness	.00	.00	.02			.00	.00	.04		
NEO Conscientiousness	-.00	.01	-.04			-.00	.01	-.07		
NEO Extraversion	.01	.00	.37**			.01	.00	.36**		
NEO Altruism	-.00	.01	-.02			-.00	.01	-.04		
NEO Neuroticism	.00	.00	.06			.00	.00	.03		
Emotional intelligence	2.31	.99	.26*			1.76	1.00	.20		
Negative affect						.02	.06	.03		
Positive affect						.02	.06	.04		
Response to emotion						.13	.06	.25*		

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

Table 3. Unstandardised path coefficients for the affective display and uncertainty multiple mediation analysis, including covariates ( $N = 84$ )

Path and variable	<i>b</i>	SE <i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Covariates</i>				
Gender	-1.14	.13	-1.07	.29
Age	-.01	.01	-.69	.49
Intelligence	-.00	.00	-.49	.63
Openness	.00	.00	.32	.75
Conscientiousness	-.00	.00	-.53	.60
Extraversion	.01	.00	2.75	.01
Altruism	-.00	.01	-.31	.76
Neuroticism	.00	.00	.22	.83
<i>Emotional intelligence to mediators (paths a)</i>				
Negative affect	-1.28	1.97	-.65	.52
Positive affect	2.25	2.07	1.09	.28
Response to emotion	4.10	2.01	2.04	.05
<i>Mediators to leadership effectiveness (paths b)</i>				
Negative affect	.02	.06	.27	.79
Positive affect	.02	.06	.37	.72
Response to emotion	.13	.06	2.15	.04
<i>Total effect of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness (path c)</i>				
Emotional intelligence	2.31	.99	2.35	.02
<i>Effect of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness when mediators included (path c')</i>				
Emotional intelligence	1.76	1.00	1.77	.08

Table 4. *Effectiveness through mediators Bootstrap results for indirect effects of emotional intelligence on leadership (N = 84).*

Mediators	Point estimate	SE	Bootstrapping	
			BCa 95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
<i>Affective display</i>				
Negative affect	-0.049	0.198	-0.570	0.276
Positive affect	0.091	0.234	-0.226	0.811
<i>Effective responding</i>				
Response to emotion	0.560	0.377	0.023	1.527

*Note.* Bootstrap resamples = 5000. All analyses took into account the covariates. CI = confidence interval. BCa= bias corrected and accelerated.

### **Chapter 3 - Training Leader Emotion Regulation and Leadership Effectiveness**

The study of leadership research has a long tradition in the behavioral sciences, but it is only relatively recently that leadership research is considering the role of affect – moods and emotions – in leadership (Gooty, Connely, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010; Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin, 2012; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Damen, 2008). Whereas in many ways the study of leadership and affect is still an emerging field, there is increasing recognition that emotions may be an important influence in leadership effectiveness – leadership’s ability to mobilize and motivate followers (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Leaders’ use of their own emotions in particular has received attention in this respect, and evidence is accumulating that leader affective displays influence leadership effectiveness (Gooty et al., 2010; van Knippenberg et al., 2008). A key insight suggested by this evidence is that leaders’ skill in emotion regulation – the deliberate display or suppression of affective states– may be an important factor in leadership effectiveness (Ashkanasy & Humphrey; 2011; Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008). This emotion regulation perspective in leadership effectiveness is distinctly underdeveloped, however, with currently an emphasis on conceptual (e.g., Ashkanasy & Humphrey; 2011; Humphrey et al., 2008) and qualitative work (Burch, Humphrey, & Batchelor, 2013; Clarke, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2007), and surprisingly little empirical tests of the role of emotional labor as it is more broadly understood in terms of the emotion regulation strategies of deep-acting and surface-acting (Hochschild, 1983).

In the present study, we develop the emotion regulation perspective on leadership by testing the effects of an emotion regulation training for leaders – a test that is relevant both in terms of its theoretical contribution and in terms of its implication for leadership education. The training was designed to create awareness on the importance of affective displays to effective leadership, and to provide leaders with deep acting regulation skills to express

appropriate emotions. This training perspective is particularly relevant to the emotion regulation perspective. Not only does it provide insights in the relationship between leader emotion regulation and leadership effectiveness – a key test for the conceptual development of the emotion regulation perspective – it also speaks to the question of key relevance to learning and education practice: can leader emotion regulation skills be developed?

### **Theory and hypotheses**

#### **Emotional labor theory**

Hochschild (1983) introduced the concept of emotional labor. She argued that people perform emotional labor when they are expected to express emotions as part of their job role. Job roles involving emotional labor a) require direct contact (face to face or voice to voice) with others; b) expect workers to produce an emotional state in others, and c) allow the organization, through supervision and training, to exercise control over the emotional activities of employees. Elaborating on the work of Hochschild, Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argued that the emotional displays of employees are likely to have the biggest influence on others such as customers. Organizations therefore specify emotions that employees should express (display rules). When expected emotions do not correspond to actual feeling states, employees need to regulate their emotions. Waiters for example are expected to ‘serve with a smile’ even when they are not always experiencing genuine positive feelings.

There are two distinctive strategies for such emotion regulation. When expressing an emotion one is not actually experiencing (and potentially suppressing an emotion one is experiencing; e.g., displaying happiness to a customer when one is actually irritated), the emotion regulation strategy is called *surface acting*. Surface actors suppress their genuine emotions and put on a mask to show emotions required by the job. When bringing oneself in a state where one actually experiences the emotion one is required to express, one uses a *deep acting* strategy. Deep acting requires regulation before the emotion actually occurs. To align

required and true feelings, people can direct attention towards emotional memories that fit the situation (so-called attentional deployment). Consider for example, a leader who sees a need to stimulate the team at the start of an important project by expressing positive and confident emotions while having just heard that the organization will have to lay off a percentage of its management in the forthcoming period. To engage in deep acting, this leader can redirect his or her attention to memories of success to actually feel positive and confident. Besides redirecting one's attention people can also reappraise the situation (cognitive change) to induce the required emotion (Grandey, 2000). The same leader can reframe the situation as an exciting opportunity for the leader and the team to showcase their abilities.

Using a deep acting strategy is a more effective way to regulate emotions than surface acting. Surface acting leads to lower self-authenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), and inauthenticity is associated with depressed moods and stress (Erickson & Wharton, 1997), which in turn may harm performance. In deep acting there is no discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions and for that reason authenticity is not compromised (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Moreover, displaying emotions may influence others – the very reason why a leader may engage in emotional displays – and there is evidence that authentic displays have more desired effects on other individuals to the extent that people are able to differentiate between genuine and fake emotional expressions (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988).

### **Emotional labor and leadership**

Emotional labor has been conceptualized foremost as a duty of service employees, such as waiters serving with a smile, nurses displaying sympathy and concern, and bill collectors displaying irritation or even anger to get paid (Humphrey et al., 2008). In recent years however it has been suggested that leaders too are expected to express emotions as part of their job role. Leaders' displays of emotions may influence followers through emotional contagion (Bono & Ilies, 2006; cf. Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994) – the process

through which perceived leader emotions are internalized and experienced by followers – and by conveying social information (e.g., the need to improve performance conveyed by leader anger at team performance; Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, & Damen 2009). Indeed, leaders' expressed emotions can be interpreted by followers as feedback on their behavior (Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and therefore influence performance. In line with this recognition of the emotional labor aspect of the leadership role, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) found that leaders had to perform emotional labor as frequently as service workers.

Since then both conceptual papers (Ashkanasy et al., 2011; Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2011; Humphrey, 2012; Humphrey et al., 2008; cf. Rajah, Song, & Arvey, 2011) and some qualitative studies (Burch et al., 2013, Clarke et al., 2007) reflecting on the role of emotional labor in leadership have been published. Empirical research testing the role of emotion regulation in leadership has lagged behind, however, but the evidence that is there seems to corroborate the notion that emotion regulation may be important to leadership effectiveness. Glasø and Einarsen (2008) found that leaders were more likely to suppress negative emotions and to express or fake positive emotions, and moreover that suppression has a negative impact on the leader-follower relationship whereas expression of positive emotions had a positive influence (Fisk & Friesen, 2012, report similar findings, but it is not clear that their study of follower perceptions of leader emotion regulation can be interpreted in emotional labor terms, which relies on the actor's experience of emotion regulation rather than the observer's perception of emotion regulation).

Despite the underdeveloped nature of the emotional labor perspective in leadership research, there does seem to be enough circumstantial evidence to conclude that emotion regulation skills may have a positive impact on leadership effectiveness. This conclusion would be based both on the evidence that deep acting is more sustainable in terms of

individual well-being (e.g., Grandey, 2000) and in terms of the evidence that well-chosen emotional displays may contribute to leadership effectiveness (e.g., Gooty et al., 2010). Accordingly, from a leadership education perspective it would be valuable to determine whether emotion regulation skills can be developed in leadership training. Such an intervention-based test of the effects of leader emotional labor would also be valuable in terms of the quality of the evidence (i.e., experimental-causal) it would yield for theory development.

### **Training leader emotion regulation**

An emotional labor perspective would open the door for organizations to train the emotional activities of workers (Hochschild, 1983). Because deep acting is preferable over surface acting both for the actor and for the organization in terms of its effects on actor and recipients, organizations could presumably promote deep acting and prevent surface acting through targeted interventions aimed at training deep acting (Hülshager et al., 2011). Indirectly corroborating the viability of such an approach, Gross (1998) showed instruction for emotion regulation to be effective in reducing emotion-expressive behavior. Participants were shown a disgusting movie while their emotional responses were recorded. Participants received either a deployment instruction (deep acting condition), suppression instruction (surface acting condition) or no instruction at all (control condition). In comparison with the control group both deep acting and surface acting were effective in reducing emotional expressions but only deployment also reduced the disgust experience. This study shows that instruction (cf. training) can facilitate effective emotion regulation. More recently, it was also found that training police officers significantly enhanced their emotion regulation skills (Berking, Meier, & Wupperman, 2010). Direct evidence for the effectiveness of training emotion regulation in leaders is however still lacking.

### **The present study**

For leaders, we propose that using deep acting to regulate emotions is more effective because deep acted emotional expressions are more authentic and therefore more contagious and more informative, than surface acted expressions. Leaders who use deep acting in their affective expressions therefore will have more influence on the thoughts, feelings, and ultimately actions of employees. The concept of emotional labor and the extensive research on the topic is also not something leaders are well aware of (Burch et al., 2013). So, providing leaders with insights and training skills in emotion regulation could be very beneficial. For the aim of this research, we developed a training designed to achieve exactly this. The training educated leaders about why emotional expressions could help them to obtain their goals, making them aware of the importance of emotional expressions, and guided them in developing deep acting regulation skills to express appropriate emotions (the training is described in more detail in the Methods section). Thus, because of the evidence that deep acting is trainable and that leaders are typically not aware of the importance of emotional labor and deep acting in their leadership, we expected that leaders who were provided with this training would increase their deep acting.

*Hypothesis 1:* Emotional regulation training increases leader use of deep acting.

Because, as per our analysis in the previous, the expression of more deep acted emotions would benefit leaders' ability to influence followers, we also expected an increase in leadership effectiveness following the training:

*Hypothesis 2:* Emotional regulation training increases leadership effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 3:* The effect of emotional regulation training on leadership effectiveness is mediated by deep acting.

### **Leader affective displays**

Much research on the effects of leader emotional expressions is based on the notion

that showing positive affect is motivating. Displays of positive affect elicit positive feelings in employees. It may be important for employees to feel positive affect, because relationships have been found between positive emotions and organizational outcomes like motivation (Erez & Isen, 2002), creativity (George, 1991, 1996; Spector & Fox, 2002), task performance (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999), job satisfaction (Fisher, 2000), team coordination (Sy, Côté & Saavedra, 2005), and team performance (Gaddis et al., 2004). There is an important caveat, however, in that the evidence is also growing that whether leader positive affective displays or negative affective displays are more effective is contingent on characteristics of the task and the followers (e.g., Damen, van Knippenberg, & van Knippenberg, 2008a, 2008b; Sy et al., 2005; Van Kleef et al., 2009; Visser, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Wisse, 2013). At the same time, some effects seem to be consistently tied to positive affective displays rather than negative affective displays, such as positive leadership evaluations (Visser et al., 2013), or seem to be more important for leadership effectiveness on the side of positive affect (motivating cooperation; Sy et al., 2005) than on the side of negative affect (motivating competition; cf. Forgas & George, 2000). The prediction that leader display of positive affect plays a role in leadership effectiveness and the effects of emotion regulation training thus is made presuming that leaders will display relatively sound judgment in terms of their emotional displays after emotion regulation training.

*Hypothesis 4:* Emotional regulation training increases leader positive affective displays in interactions with their subordinates.

*Hypothesis 5:* The effect of emotional regulation training on leadership effectiveness is mediated by positive affective displays.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Design**

To provide a causal test of our hypotheses, we designed a field experiment with a

pretest-posttest experimental group – control group design. To assess the effectiveness of the training, we focused on subordinate ratings of leadership to measure actual on-the-job training influences (i.e., rather than an in-training assessment that does not speak to transfer to the job situation). The study combined three sources of information: the experimentally induced manipulation, leader self-ratings of deep acting (as well as gender and leadership experience as controls), and subordinate ratings of displays of positive affect and leadership effectiveness.

Participants were recruited through the leadership development network of an acknowledged consultancy firm in the Netherlands. Thirty-one individuals holding a leadership position for at least a year in the public or private sector participated in this study ( $N = 20$  men;  $N = 11$  women), with ages ranging from 32 to 56 ( $M = 43$ ,  $SD = 7.62$ ). Their experience ranged from 1 to 30 years ( $M = 10.47$ ,  $SD = 8.53$ ). Furthermore  $N = 60$  subordinates (two per participant with the exception of two participants for which only one rating was available) were involved to appraise the participants ( $N = 29$  men;  $N = 31$  women, ages ranging from 19 to 62 ( $M = 40$ ,  $SD = 10.45$ ). Whereas this sample of leaders and subordinates is clearly not large, the experimental set-up provides a much sharper contrast than the study of relationships in survey research typically does, and accordingly is associated with more power than a comparable correlation test.

Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group or the control group. The experimental group ( $N = 17$ ) started with the pretest, which consisted of a questionnaire filled in by subordinates of the participants, to measure the leadership effectiveness of the participant and his or her expression of positive affect. The pretest also contained a self-report questionnaire to measure the use of the emotional labor strategy deep acting. The pretest was directly followed by a training on the use of emotions in leadership and deep acting skills. Two weeks after the training the experimental group and the same group of

subordinates filled out the posttest, which consisted of the same measurements as the pretest.

The control group ( $N = 14$ ) and associated subordinates also started with the pretest and two weeks later completed the posttest. To be able to offer the participants in the control group the same treatment as the participants of the experimental group, they were given the training on emotional skills after they completed the posttest.

### Measures

*Leadership effectiveness.* Leadership effectiveness was assessed with a 5-item measure (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005) rated by two subordinates of the participant on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree* at the two measurement times: '*The participant is an excellent supervisor*', '*The participant is an effective supervisor*', '*The participant leads in a way that motivates people*', '*Others like to work together with the participant*' and '*The participant motivates people to work hard for their organizational unit*'. There was a satisfactory interrater agreement,  $rwg = .86$  for the pretest and  $rwg = .88$  for the posttest. Cronbach's alpha showed good internal consistency for this scale, with  $\alpha = .86$  for the pretest and  $\alpha = .88$  for the posttest.

*Deep acting.* Deep acting, was measured by the deep acting subscale of the Emotional Labor Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Deep acting is a 3-item self-rating on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. The scale consists of the following statements; '*I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others*', '*I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show*' and '*I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job*'. Overall the scale showed satisfactory reliability with Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's of .70 for the pretest and .86 for the posttest.

*Affective display.* Affective display was measured with a 5-item measure rated by the leader's subordinates. Three of these were adapted from the Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). The original PANAS intends to

measure to what extent someone experiences positive or negative affect and contains a 10-item mood scale to assess positive affect. In this study, we adapted this approach to be more specific to the high-arousal positive affect that is primarily associated with leadership effectiveness (Damen et al., 2008a). We therefore selected three positive emotions with the highest level of arousal – enthusiastic, inspired, and excited. In addition, instead of assessing a self-rating of the extent to which someone feels a certain emotion, the items were formulated to assess subordinate ratings of the extent to which the leader expresses a certain emotion. An example item was ‘*The participant expresses enthusiasm*’. We extended the scale with an additional two items: ‘*The participant expresses positive emotions*’ and ‘*The participant expresses joy*’. Ratings to these items had to be given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *seldom* to 5 = *always*. Interrater agreement was satisfactory,  $rwg = .81$  for the pretest and  $rwg = .90$  for the posttest. The scale also showed satisfactory reliability: Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .76$  for the pretest and  $\alpha = .88$  for the posttest.

*Control variables.* We included leader gender and leadership experience as controls. Leader gender was included because leader affective displays may be judged differently for male and female leaders (Lewis, 2000) even when this is not necessarily the case (Damen et al., 2008b). Leadership experience was included because leaders might learn through experience the skills targeted by the training. Pretest measures of leadership effectiveness, deep acting, and displays of positive affect were also included to more accurately capture changes in these variables as a function of the training.

### **The Training**

Based on the empirical literature on emotions and leadership described earlier, we designed a three-hour training. A maximum of eight participants per session took the training, which was supervised by two professional trainers. The aim of the training was to increase leaders’ effective use of emotional expressions to influence followers. To reach this goal, we

provided participants with insights in the affective influencing mechanisms of emotional expressions. We provided them with knowledge of emotional contagion as well as of the communicative value of emotional displays. Knowing this participants should become able to see their emotional expressions as an instrument to influence their employees.

Besides knowledge, we provided participants with an instrument called the Emotional blueprint, which is developed by Caruso and Salovey (2004). The Emotional blueprint integrates scientific theory into a practical tool (Ciarrochi & Mayer, 2007), helpful when encountering emotionally charged situations. It offers a framework to identify the emotions involved, to understand how these emotions influence cognitive processes and to determine the causes and effects of the emotions. Analyzing emotionally charged situations in a systematic way enables participants to make judgments concerning which emotional displays are more appropriate. During the training we practiced using this tool and also stimulated participants to make use of it in anticipation of a real emotionally charged interaction situations they would face in the near future.

The training especially aimed to develop deep acting skills and decrease the use of surface acting. To develop deep acting skills, participants were trained to regulate their emotions. An exercise let participants experience the power of emotional contagion. They were asked to sit across a confederate, who was given instructions to only say “NO”, with very strong negative emotional expression. The participant had to feel as much positivity as possible and keep saying “YES”. All context was removed from the exercise on purpose to keep the focus on emotional transference. In the second round, participants were told to use deep acting strategies. In this latter case, it is much easier to keep feeling positive because they not only say yes, but actually feel it. In the final part of the training, authentic and non-authentic emotions were shown to let the participants experience the difference in affective transferal.

Based on earlier research on affect and leadership, we also taught participants that showing positive emotions works motivating and contagious, positively altering employees' behavior. We advocated the use of positive emotions and warned them on the use of negative affective displays. Whereas this is not to negate that negative emotional expressions can be useful, this emphasis on positive emotions was inspired by the idea that positive emotions are more likely to be effective across situations.

If leaders want to develop emotional regulation skills, they have to practice in many situations; using it during the training is not enough. Participants should keep practicing in their own organizations. They were therefore asked to form implementation intentions – intentions targeted on the enactment of actions necessary to achieve goals – for using the skills in an anticipated situation. Recent meta-analyses revealed a medium to large effect size ( $d = .65$ ) of implementation intentions on goal achievement on top of the effects of mere goal intentions (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Webb & Sheeran, 2008).

## **Results**

### **Analyses of covariance of the effects of the training**

To test whether emotion regulation training resulted in posttest improvements deep acting, positive affect displays, and leadership effectiveness, we performed ANCOVA analyses in which we controlled for the pretest scores, experience, and gender. The results are shown in Table 1. We found an effect of the experimental manipulation on deep acting ( $F = 4.25, p < .05$ ), positive affect ( $F = 5.06, p < .04$ ), and leadership effectiveness ( $F = 6.34, p < .02$ ). The experimental group scored higher on each of the three variables: deep acting ( $M = 3.86$  vs.  $3.60$ ), positive affect ( $M = 3.82$  vs.  $3.54$ ), and leadership effectiveness ( $M = 3.96$  vs.  $3.69$ ). These findings support our Hypotheses 1, 2, and 4.

### **Mediation analysis**

Our prediction as captured in Hypothesis 3 and 5 was that the effects of the training

on deep acting and positive affect displays mediate the training's effect on leadership effectiveness. To test these hypotheses, we conducted a mediation analysis, following Preacher and Hayes (2008; Hayes, 2009), to simultaneously test the indirect effects mediated by deep acting and displays of positive affect. Because this approach includes a direct test of the mediation path – the path from the independent variable via the mediator to the dependent variable – it is superior to the four-step approach to test for mediation based on Baron and Kenny (1986) that only provides indirect evidence of mediation (i.e., the indirect path itself is not tested in the latter approach). Group served as the independent variable, posttest leadership effectiveness as dependent variable, and posttest deep acting and positive affect as mediators. We controlled for the pretest scores of leadership effectiveness, deep acting, and positive affect. We chose not to add gender and experience as control variables in this analysis, because these variables showed no effect in the ANCOVA analyses.

The mediation analysis showed evidence for both proposed mediations. The indirect effect via deep acting was significant, point estimate = .09, SE = .07, 95% CI: .004, .287, as was the indirect effect for displays of positive affect, point estimate = .05, SE = .05, 95% CI: .004, .259. Based on these results, we can conclude the effectiveness of the training is due to increases in deep acting and the display of positive affect. Hypothesis 3 and 5 were therefore supported.

### **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to test whether leaders could be trained to better regulate their emotions to contribute to their leadership effectiveness. To do so, we designed a three-hour training in which actual leaders were educated about the importance of (positive) emotional displays, were provided with a tool to analyze emotionally charged situations, and most importantly were guided in developing deep acting skills which would enable them to regulate their emotions and improve the authenticity of the displays delivered. We expected

leaders receiving this training to engage in more deep acting and to show more positive emotions, and that their leadership effectiveness would improve as a consequence. The results of a field experiment evaluating this training supported our analysis and suggest that leader emotion regulation skills can be trained to improve leadership effectiveness. These findings have important implications in supporting the conceptual notion that emotional labor is an important element of leadership (Ashkanasy et al., 2011; Gardner et al., 2011; Humphrey, 2012; Humphrey et al., 2008; Rajah et al., 2011) as well as important educational implications in demonstrating that emotion regulation skills are trainable.

### **Theoretical implications**

Our study shows that it is possible to train leader emotion regulation to increase leadership effectiveness. These findings are important from a learning and education perspective as first evidence for the effectiveness of training leader emotion regulation. The conceptual implication here is that emotion regulation at least to a trainable degree is a skill – something that can be developed through educational efforts – and not purely a trait, even when there may be trait elements to emotion regulation (e.g., Côté & Hideg, 2011).

These findings are also important from a theory development perspective, because they represent the first causal evidence that improved emotion regulation results in greater leadership effectiveness – and only the second empirical study directly linking leader emotion regulation to indicators of leadership effectiveness (cf. Glasø & Einarssen, 2008). Based on emotional labor theory, one may assume that leaders using a deep acting strategy delivered their emotional displays in a more authentic way, and that it is this increased authenticity in combination with the increased use of positive affective displays that accounts for the greater effectiveness of leaders post training.

That said, we would advance the current findings as a basis for further development of the emotional labor perspective on leadership and not as in any way representing the final

word on the issue. Indeed, helpful as they may be, the current findings still represent a relatively crude model of the role of emotional labor in leadership. Future research could use the current findings and training set-up as a basis to develop more fine-grained analyses that speak to how exactly leaders can use their emotion regulation skills beyond deep acting and the prioritization of positive affective displays per se. Important questions may for instance concern the timing/frequency of emotional displays (i.e., emotional displays presumably are also something that can be overused by leaders, and poorly timed emotional displays might backfire), and the more nuanced analysis of what emotions the leader shows exactly (e.g., enthusiasm and happiness are both positive emotions, but enthusiasm is more action-oriented than happiness, and presumably may thus also inspire more action in followers; cf. van Knippenberg et al., 2008).

It would be an empirical question if and how such more sophisticated models could effectively feed back into leadership training. Arguably, the advantage of the current training set-up was that its message was relatively straightforward with its focus on understanding and developing deep acting and positive emotional displays. More sophisticated conceptual models would suggest more sophisticated training efforts, but it would be an empirical question how such sophistication could be used in training without overloading participants. This is not to say that it could not be done – indeed, we would expect that a more elaborate and extended training would achieve its aim. Rather, our point is that trainability of more sophisticated models should not be taken for granted based on the current findings, but rather be studied in its own right.

### **Practical implications**

Turning to practice, the stakes are high in management education and training. For instance, in 2012, 25% of all Dutch organizations (the national context of the current study) had a management development policy and the average organization in the Netherlands spent

€ 2976 (USD 3990) per head on management training and education (Van Dam, Van der Spek, & Sylva, 2013). Although the investments are high, evidence-based principles are not being used to the extent that they should be in management education (Antonakis, Fenly, & Liechti, 2011). Our research provides the field of management development practitioners with evidence that emotion regulation can be trained and gives guidelines on how to do so. The value of this is all the more significant because of the fact that there is not much solid empirical research (e.g., field experiments) evaluating leadership training. Our research contribute to insights in the means to make organizational leaders more effective. Especially leaders who do have a hard time dealing with emotions could benefit from emotion regulation training. Obviously, our point here is not that emotion regulation is the end all and be all of leadership effectiveness – we can be sure it is not. Emotion regulation does represent not only an understudied aspect of leadership effectiveness but also an aspect of leadership that is underused in leadership training and development, and our findings add to the business case of investing in such training and development efforts.

### **Limitations and future research**

Inevitably, there are also limitations to our study. Given the straightforward set-up of our study as a two-group pretest-posttest field experiment, our small sample size should, and apparently did, give us sufficient statistical power for hypothesis tests. Even so, in terms of the robustness of conclusions, larger samples would always be desirable, and it would be worthwhile if future research would not only extend the current study with new insights but also include replication of the current findings to bolster the confidence in the current conclusions.

A second issue to mention here is that the measurements of deep acting, positive affective displays, and leadership effectiveness in this study were collected soon after the intervention. This is not a problem per se in that it represents a valid test of our hypothesis.

Even so, it means that we do not know whether training effects persist over time or are relatively short-lived – and if the latter, whether further development of the training such as a booster session after a couple of weeks would be able to ensure a more sustained effect. For now, this is an issue for future research to address.

The findings of our study are limited to one national setting – the Netherlands. Research in leadership and emotions (e.g., van Knippenberg et al., 2008), emotional labor (e.g., Grandey, 2000), and leader emotional labor (Glasø et al., 2008) give some confidence that these findings should generalize to other Western national contexts at least. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it would be valuable if future research would further build the evidence based relying on samples from other national contexts.

We may also note that forced by limitations to our opportunities we relied on a subjective indicator of leadership effectiveness. Follow up research with more objective, behavioral indicators of leadership effectiveness such as follower performance or creativity (cf. Visser et al., 2013) would be important here to further build the emotional labor perspective on leadership.

## **Conclusions**

Our findings add important causal evidence to the case for an emotional labor perspective on leadership. They also provide first evidence that leader emotion regulation can successfully be included in leadership training and development. Our study thus extends an invitation to leadership researchers as well as to practitioners in leadership education, training, and development to further develop the emotional labor perspective in leadership research and education.

Table 5. ANCOVA analyses on the effect of group at time 2 (experimental vs. control)

	Leadership effectiveness			Deep acting			Positive affect		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $\eta^2$
Group	6.34	.02	.20	4.25	.05	.14	5.06	.03	.16
Pretest	52.15	.00	.67	21.87	.00	.46	34.23	.00	.57
Experience	.64	.43	.02	.46	.50	.02	.01	.94	.00
Gender	1.86	.18	.07	.10	.76	.00	1.44	.24	.05

*Note.*  $N = 31$  (experimental = 17, control = 14). Covariates: Pretest, experience, and gender.

## **Chapter 4 - Emotional Intelligence and Leader Emotion Regulation: Differential Relationships for Experiential and Reasoning Emotional Intelligence**

Emotions have come to play an important role in organizational behavior research (Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010). All kinds of stimuli in the workplace lead to emotional experiences, and subsequent emotional expressions and behavior, which have been studied and found to be predictors of relevant outcomes, like for example productivity and job satisfaction. Leader emotions are of particular interest, because the emotional experiences and behaviors of leaders do not only affect their own performance but also that of their followers. This has led to a growing body of research on leader emotionality in the past decades. Empirically, however, this research has focused much more on the effects of leader emotional displays than on the antecedents of leader emotion regulation (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Damen, 2008), and this observation is the starting point for the current investigation of leader emotional intelligence as antecedent of leader emotion regulation.

Emotional intelligence, an individual difference variable reflecting the ability to recognize, use, understand, and manage emotions (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008a), has been an important theme in the study of leadership and emotions, but interestingly primarily as an influence of indicators of leadership effectiveness rather than as an influence on leader emotion regulation (Gooty et al. 2010; Rajah, Song, & Arvey, 2011; Walter, Cole, & Humphrey, 2011). We propose that a focus on leader emotional intelligence is particularly relevant to leader emotion regulation, however, because leaders' emotion regulation – their display of situationally appropriate emotions – arguably is at least in part a matter of ability.

Ever since the introduction of EI there has been much argument among scholars about its conceptualization and measurement. The core conceptualization seems to be that of Mayer

et al. who conceive of EI as a form of intelligence – an intellectual ability. In contrast to this ability approach, there is also a so-called mixed-model approach in which personality traits and behavioral preferences are also seen as part of the EI concept – an approach we consider suboptimal because it combines conceptually distinct elements into one concept (i.e., personality and ability) and is less distinct from personality concepts than ability-EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000a). From an ability perspective, it is important that EI is measured through an ability test rather than self-ratings (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Locke, 2005; Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008b) and from that perspective there currently is no empirical research in the relationship between leader EI and leader emotional labor even when the notion that emotional labor is a core part of leadership has been coined conceptually (Humphrey, Pollock, & Hawver, 2008). Our first objective of our study thus is to advance the state of the science with regard to the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional labor – specifically the emotional labor strategies deep acting (displaying emotions one truly experiences) and surface acting (displaying emotions without really experiencing the emotion; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

We propose that in analyzing the relationship between EI and emotional labor the distinction between two areas of EI is important: experiential-EI versus reasoning-EI (Mayer & Salovey, 2003). Experiential-EI captures the area of EI that deals with appropriately experiencing and using emotions. The reasoning area involves the abilities to reason strategically about emotions; to understand and foresee the consequences of emotions in social situations. We propose that experiential-EI and reasoning-EI have differential relationships with deep acting and surface acting – experiential-EI positively predicts deep acting, reasoning-EI negatively predicts surface acting.

Our study thus contributes to the leadership and EI literature by developing and testing theory about EI and emotional labor. It also contributes to the EI literature more

broadly by moving beyond the notion of overall EI and addressing the role of specific sub-aspects of EI – an area in which more theory and research is needed to more fully understand the role of EI (Joseph et al., 2010).

## **Theory and hypotheses**

### **Emotional labor theory**

Individuals perform emotional labor when they are expected to display emotions in the workplace (Hochschild, 1983). Organizations -either explicitly or implicitly- specify display rules for various job roles. Waiters for example are expected to ‘serve with a smile’ and nurses should display sympathy and concern towards patients. Individuals in these job roles need to express emotions according to formal or informal rules, even when expected emotions do not correspond to actual feelings. In case of discrepancy between genuinely felt and expected emotions, they need to regulate their emotions. Emotional labor theory distinguishes two different strategies for the regulation of emotional displays: surface acting and deep acting.

Surface acting means expressing an emotion one is not actually experiencing, or for that matter suppressing an emotion one is experiencing. Surface acting is as such a response focused strategy, meaning that it is applied after emotional experiences already have been developed. When bringing oneself in a state where one actually experiences the emotion one is required to express (or prevents oneself from experiencing emotions one should not express), one uses a *deep acting* strategy. This strategy is antecedent focused, because it requires regulation of the emotion generation process itself, and takes place before response tendencies have been developed. To do so, one can either move away from or focus on particular emotional cues that invoke emotional experiences (so-called attentional deployment) or reappraise the meaning of emotional cues as to change the emotions one experiences (cognitive change).

Deep acting is for two reasons more effective than surface acting. First, deep acting is better for personal well-being than surface acting. Surface acting leads to lower self-authenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Inauthenticity is associated with depressed moods and stress (Erickson & Wharton, 1997), which in turn may have negative effects on one's performance. Deep acting does not have negative effects on self-authenticity, while there is no discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Second, deep acting has more positive influences on interaction partners than surface acting. Evidence shows that authentic emotional displays have more desired effects on other individuals (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988).

In recent years it has been suggested that leadership roles too require the expression of emotions and therefore leaders may need to perform emotional labor (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Humphrey et al., 2008). Leadership roles differ profoundly from service roles, explicit display rules do not apply to leaders, and leader-follower relations are both more intense and more enduring than encounters with for example customers in service occupations, and accordingly leader display rules cannot be as straightforward as those found in many service jobs. Even so, leaders' displays of emotions do influence followers, and therefore some emotions may be seen as more appropriate than others. The process of influencing through emotional display goes through two routes: emotional contagion (Bono & Ilies, 2006; cf. Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994) and the conveyance of social information (expressed emotions can be interpreted by followers as feedback on their behavior; Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Leaders' emotional expressions and emotional labor skills thus can influence the performance of their followers (see van Knippenberg et al., 2008, for a review) and leader emotion regulation thus may be a substantive influence in leadership effectiveness (Humphreys et al., 2008).

Recently, research on leader emotion regulation has started to emerge (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Burch, Humphrey, & Bachelor, 2013, Clarke, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2007, Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2011; Humphrey, 2012; Humphrey et al., 2008; cf. Rajah et al., 2011). These studies, however, are either conceptual or qualitative in nature. Empirical research testing the role of emotion regulation in leadership has lagged behind. Despite the underdeveloped nature of the emotional labor perspective in leadership research, there is some evidence that emotion regulation skills may have a positive impact on leadership. It was found that leaders were more likely to suppress negative emotions and to express or fake positive emotions, and moreover that suppression has a negative impact on the leader-follower relationship whereas expression of positive emotions had a positive influence (Glasø & Einarssen, 2008; Fisk & Friesen, 2012).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

EI was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined EI as the ability to reason about and use emotions to enhance thought. Twenty-five years after the introduction, the academic literature concerning the concept of EI can be organized in three distinct schools (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). The first and second school follow Mayer et al. in their conceptualization of EI as an ability. These schools differ however in their measurement of EI. The first school uses an ability-based EI test; the ‘Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test’ (MSCEIT V2.0; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso & Sitarenios, 2003), whereas the second school relies on subjective self- or other reports. School three, known as the ‘mixed-model approach’, differs profoundly from the other schools in that it defines EI, not just as an ability, but including behavioral preferences. (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Bar-On, 2000; Goleman, 2000). Such preferences are conceptually distinct from an ability even when they may be related to the ability (Mayer et al., 1993). Like school two, school three also relies on subjective ratings, which come with validity problems. For several reasons ability-based EI

tests like the MSCEIT are preferable. Conceptually, ability-based EI tests, are better aligned with the conceptualization of EI as an intelligence (Joseph et al., 2010; Mayer et al., 2008a; Mayer et al. 2008b). From the viewpoint of objectivity, ability tests are also less susceptible to faking, socially desirable responding and poor self judgement (Day & Carroll, 2008; Dunning, 2005). We follow Mayer et al. both with respect to their conceptualization of EI as with respect to measuring EI as an ability, using an ability test to capture the construct.

Mayer et al. initially conceptualized EI as a set of four interrelated abilities for processing emotional information, which is called the four-branch model. The four interrelated abilities being perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Factorial analyses of the MSCEIT ability test revealed an additional two factor structure of EI, making a distinction between experiential-EI and reasoning-EI. Experiential-EI contains the branches: perceiving and using emotions, while reasoning-EI contains the branches: understanding and managing emotions. Mayer and colleagues define experiential-EI as the ability to read and express emotions and compare emotional stimulation to other experiences. Reasoning-EI refers to the ability to how well one understand what emotions signify and how they can be managed (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000b). It is the distinction between experiential-EI and reasoning EI, which forms the basis for our hypotheses.

### **Differential relationships for EI with emotional labor strategies**

The relationship between EI and emotional labor strategies has received scholarly attention, but seldom from an ability perspective (Cheung & Tang, 2009; Hur, Moon, & Han, 2013; Prati, Liu, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2009; Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou, & Niakas, 2012; Sliter, Chen, Withrow, & Sliter, 2013; Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013; Zeng, Chen, & Chen, 2014). Findings have been rather inconclusive. Part of the differences in results might be due to the appropriateness of measurements of EI in these studies. As

argued, our starting point is the conceptualization of EI as an ability and as such an ability test should be applied to capture the construct and test its relationship with emotional labor strategies. In reference to emotional labor, only Brotheridge (2006) measured EI as an ability. In that paper the connection between EI and emotional labor appeared to be indirect in nature; EI predicted the perception of situational demands, rather than the nature of the emotional labor strategies deep acting and surface acting. However, in that study participants were employed in service occupations in which interactions were largely scripted in nature. This simple and scripted nature of the work does not hold for leadership. Brotheridge –as we do- expected EI to have more predictive power in high-relationship, high-autonomy occupations, given that they are more ambiguously structured (Weiss & Adler, 1984). Leaders more often than not encounter ambiguous situations, in which they are expected to operate autonomously and leader-follower relations are both more intense and more enduring than the often brief encounters with customers that service employees face. In other words leaders do function in a high-relationship context and the level of autonomy of leaders far exceeds that of service employees. In that sense, emotional labor in leadership may be subject more to individual differences (i.e., EI) than emotional labor in service work, and the fact that Brotheridge (2006) did not find a relationship between EI and emotional labor may not generalize to leadership. Another reason for not finding a direct relationship between EI and emotional labor strategies in the Brotheridge study, we argue, might be the fact that the relationship is more nuanced and that different parts of the EI model relate in different ways to emotional labor strategies.

Deep acting and surface acting differ not only with respect to the outcomes they affect (well-being and influence), but also with respect to the processes that underlie both strategies. Deep acting is an antecedent focused form of emotion regulation. It affects the perception and processing of emotional cues at the onset of an emotion; that is before the emotion elicits

affective displays. Through deep acting one changes the emotional experience of the situation. Surface acting -being a response-focused form of emotion regulation- occurs late in the emotion generative process, that is after the emotional experience and display tendencies are already in place.

Because of the difference in nature of both emotional labor strategies, we propose that the two areas of EI (reasoning-EI and experiential-EI) relate in different ways to these strategies. Reasoning-EI -the ability to understand and predict emotional outcomes- does provide individuals with a framework from which they can effectively value the use of particular emotion regulation strategies. Leaders high on reasoning-EI are therefore more likely to appreciate the benefits of deep acting over surface acting and for that matter avoid surface acting. However, reasoning abilities do not provide leaders with the experiential capacity; the aptitude to experience emotions and alter these experiences, which are needed to actually perform deep acting. To alter their emotional expressions by means of deep acting, leaders need to be high on experiential-EI. Experiential-EI -accurately perceiving and using emotions- on the other hand is less likely to be related to surface acting, which is engendered once the emotional experience is already in place. In sum, we thus propose that leader reasoning-EI is negatively related to surface acting, whereas experiential-EI is positively related to deep acting.

### **Hypotheses**

While EI in the broadest sense could clearly facilitate the processes involved with of deep acting, it is especially the experiential area of EI we propose to be of relevance here. In order to perform deep acting successfully, one either has to attend to emotional cues that facilitate appropriate displays or process the emotional features of the situation in such a way that its experience aligns emotionally with an appropriate response. The ability to perceive or for that matter “read” emotional cues is essential to perform deep acting. Without an accurate

perception, individuals will not be able to distract or focus on emotional aspects of the situation that facilitate them to downplay or stir up appropriate emotional responses. Neither will they be able to select emotional cues in need of reappraisal. While emotion recognition is essential, it is in itself not sufficient, individuals also have to be able to use these cues to perform deep acting. Using emotions to facilitate performance requires the ability to compare emotional stimulation in a given situation to previous experiences. How else is one to judge whether previous stimulations lead to appropriate responses or not. We do not expect reasoning-EI to show a positive relationship with deep acting. Although deep acting evidently shows more positive outcomes than surface acting and one might make a case for a positive relationship on those grounds, we think deep acting cannot be performed without possessing experiential capacity. In other words, individuals who possess reasoning-EI do see the positive emotional outcomes that are linked to deep acting, however, when deprived from experiential abilities, they will be blocked from actual performing deep acting. Following this argumentation we come to the following hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 1: Experiential-EI is positively related to deep acting.*

We expect reasoning-EI to be negatively related to surface acting. The negative outcomes of surface acting with respect to the delivery of emotional displays and the emotional well-being should make individuals high on reasoning-EI to avoid surface acting. Important facets of reasoning-EI are the ability to predict emotional outcomes in oneself. Faking undermines one's well-being) and the emotional outcome of behavior in social interaction situations (faking undermines the impact of affective displays). While surface acting is performed in social interaction situations it is important to understand the negative emotional outcomes in others due to for example faking an emotion. We do not expect a negative relationship between experiential-EI and surface acting. While surface acting is about response modulation, it does not involve the abilities to perceive, appraise, and use

emotional cues. In other words experiential-EI is of no use once the emotional experience already elicited a response tendency. Therefore we do not think there will be a relationship between the experiential area of EI and surface acting. The previous line argumentation leads us to the following hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 2: Reasoning-EI is negatively related to surface acting.*

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants were recruited through the leadership network of an acknowledged consultancy firm in the Netherlands. Two hundred thirty-three individuals participated in previous studies for which their emotional intelligence had been measured. At that time, they were included for holding a leadership position for at least a year. For the purpose of this study they were contacted again (5 years later) and asked to participate in a follow up study with the purpose of researching the long term career effects of leader emotional competencies. In total ninety-seven individuals were included in this study. <sup>1</sup>More men ( $N = 71$ ) than women ( $N = 26$ ) participated, with ages ranging from 33 to 64 with a mean age of 47.23 ( $SD = 7.34$ ).

### **Procedure**

All potential participants received an email in which the current study was announced. On basis of this first announcement they could choose to reply if they did not want to take part in the study. Approximately one week after the announcement those who had not chosen to withdraw from the study were contacted by phone and asked whether they were willing to participate in the current study. If so, they would participate in a telephone survey, which would take about fifteen minutes of their time. They could either choose not to participate, participate right away or make an appointment to take the survey.

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<sup>1</sup> For this study, both new data is used as data that has been collected previously, and overlaps with the study which is described in the second chapter of this dissertation.

## **Measures**

*Emotional intelligence.* Experiential-EI and reasoning-EI were measured by the ‘Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test’ (MSCEIT V2.0; Mayer et al, 2003). The MSCEIT is a 141-item ability test. The test consists of eight subtasks. Experiential-EI is tested by a faces task, a pictures task, a sensations task and a facilitation task. The faces task and the pictures task indicate how well one can perceive and appraise emotions. Participants have to identify emotions in facial expressions and abstract pictures. The sensations task and facilitation task indicate the ability to identify emotions that may affect behavior or performance on cognitive tasks. Specifically, participants have to come up with certain emotions or moods and match them with sensations, behaviors, or tasks that typically accompany these. Reasoning-EI is measured through the blends, changes, emotion management and emotional relationships tasks. Participants have to demonstrate an understanding of how several emotions combine to form other emotions, need to identify how emotions change over time, are required to judge actions that are most effective in obtaining specified emotional outcomes and have to select the most appropriate social responses to achieve desired outcomes. Each of the eight tasks is made up of a number of item parcels or individual items. Response formats were intentionally varied across tasks. The reported split-half reliability for the MSCEIT EI score is .91 (Mayer et al. 2002, as cited in Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). The test-retest reliability of the MSCEIT is also high; .86 after three weeks (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). In this study the consensus-based scoring method was used.

*Deep acting and surface acting:* The emotional labor strategies deep acting and surface acting were measured by subscales of the Emotional Labor Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). The deep acting scale is a 3-item self-rating on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. This scale contains the statements; ‘*I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others*’, ‘*I try to actually experience the emotions that I*

*must show*' and *'I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job'*. The deep acting scale showed satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .63$ ). The 3-item surface acting scale consists of the following statements; *'I resist expressing my true feelings'*, *'I pretend to have emotions that I don't really have'* and *'I hide my true feelings about a situation'*. Participants were asked to rate these statements on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. This scale showed satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .63$ ).

### **Control Variables**

*Age*. Although EI is a rather stable aptitude (Gohm & Glore, 2002), Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) have found that college students scored higher than adolescent youth. This suggests a relationship between EI and age, at least in early adulthood.

*Gender*. Also gender was found to be related to EI (Bracket, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006).

*Cognitive ability*. To make sure that relationships are not attributable to overlap with other forms of intelligence, we controlled for cognitive intelligence. We used an inductive reasoning test, developed by Cebir, a test developer in Belgium; the Abalet. Inductive reasoning is a central facet of general intelligence. The Abalet captures the capability to discover patterns in the configuration of letters. Items vary in letter sequence and spatial position. The Abalet adapts itself to the level of the participant and does not contain a fixed number of items. Participants received 30 minutes to solve as many items as they could, with a maximum of 153 items. The outcome of the test is compared with empirically developed norm scores. The reliability of the test is calculated individually for every participant, for the Dutch norm group at least 95% of the participants show a reliability that is  $\geq .80$ . The Abalet correlates with other acknowledged intelligence tests, like the Raven. Higher educated participants scored higher than lower educated people. Therefore, we conclude that the Abalet is a valid measurement of intelligence.

## **Results**

### *Means, standard deviations and correlations*

Correlations, means, and standard deviations for study variables are shown in Table 1. A first indication of support for our hypotheses is found in the fact that experiential-EI was positively correlated with deep acting,  $r = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ , but unrelated to surface acting, whereas reasoning-EI was negatively correlated with surface acting,  $r = -.21$ ,  $p < .05$ , but unrelated to deep acting.

### *Regression analyses*

Linear regression analyses were conducted to predict deep acting and surface acting from experiential-EI and reasoning-EI, while controlling for gender, age, and cognitive ability. The results are displayed in Table 2. Table 2 shows that emotional experiencing accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in deep acting. Emotional reasoning accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in surface acting. Therefore we found support for Hypotheses 1 and 2.

## **Discussion**

Our study makes an important contribution to the emotional labor perspective in leadership by providing the first evidence that EI, understood and measured as an ability, predicts the emotional labor strategies deep acting and surface acting. Our work also adds more broadly to research in EI by moving beyond a focus on overall EI and establishing that the distinction between experiential-EI and reasoning-EI is important in developing theory about leader EI and leader emotional labor – experiential-EI and reasoning-EI were differentially related to deep acting and surface acting.

### **Theoretical implications**

Overall the findings of this study are theoretically important in two ways. First they add towards the integration of theory and research in EI, emotional labor, and leadership.

Conceptually, it has been well-recognized that emotional labor is part of the leadership role (Hunphrey et al., 2008), but there is hardly any research on the effects of leader emotional labor from the fundamental distinction between deep acting and surface acting (i.e., in contrast to research on leadership and emotional displays per se; e.g., Gooty et al., 2010) and the current study is the first to investigate the antecedents of leader emotional labor. The study of EI is an important angle here because it recognizes that emotional labor follows from understanding and ability related to emotions – and no individual difference variable captures this better than EI.

An important implication of the current evidence for the EI-emotional labor linkage is that factors that increase emotional understanding and skills – leadership training and development – could similarly affect leader emotional labor, and presumably improve leadership by increasing leader deep acting and reducing leader surface acting. This is a conclusion that obviously does not follow directly from our data, but it would be an important avenue for future research to complement the current individual differences perspective with such a situational influences perspective.

In the introduction, we discussed the Brotheridge (2006) evidence that EI did not predict emotional labor in service work, arguing that emotional labor in service work is perhaps too “scripted” – too well-articulated in terms of expectations for emotional displays – as compared with leadership, and that as a consequence EI makes less of a difference in service work. Extending this logic, we would argue that an interesting avenue for future research would be to capture the clarity of emotional display rules across leadership and non-leadership work roles to determine whether this indeed moderates the relationship between EI and emotional labor – both in terms of leadership versus non-leadership differences and in terms of potential differences between different leadership settings.

A second contribution of the current findings lies in that they add to the understanding

of the role of specific facets of EI. Our study indicates that the distinction between the experiential and reasoning areas of EI contributes to a fuller understanding of the relationship between leader EI and emotional labor. Deep acting requires a different set of abilities than surface acting does. To bring oneself in a state of actually experiencing an emotion, experiential capacity (the ability to perceive, appraise, and use emotional cues) is needed. The ability to reason about emotions does not provide this experiential capacity. Reasoning qualities however do enable leaders to judge the outcomes of surface acting to be suboptimal at best, and thus to steer clear of surface acting – an outcome not inspired by the experiential aspect of EI. In a field that has distinguished between leader display of different emotions but not between deep acting and surface acting ways of displaying emotions (Gooty et al, 2010; van Knippenberg et al., 2008), this is an important insight because it suggests that what may at first blush seem to be identical emotional displays may have different antecedents when they can be distinguished as deep acting versus surface acting ways of displaying the emotion. The current findings thus beg for an integration of the emotional labor perspective into the main body of research in leadership and emotions.

The findings for EI areas also add to our evolving understanding of EI more generally (cf. Joseph et al., 2010). The vast majority of EI studies focuses on overall EI even when EI theory distinguishes distinct elements of the broader construct. The present study thus can be seen as further evidence that it may pay off to look beyond overall EI and to develop and test theory regarding specific areas of EI.

### **Practical implications**

Turning to practice, the findings of this study have implication in leadership selection and development. Selection using EI measures may be a viable path for organizations, adding predictive power above traditional surveys, like measurements of cognitive intelligence and personality measurements. Particularly, applicants high on experiential-EI are in a position to

perform deep acting and therefore might experience better well-being and establish more influencing impact. This may benefit organizations through possible higher leadership effectiveness. With respect to leadership development, we do see benefits of emotional labor development programs that emphasize experiential skills. Mere knowledge on understanding and reasoning about emotions probably will not be enough to provide participants with deep acting skills. For that they possibly have to engage in actually experiencing emotions. Measuring the entire level of participants, with respect to their experiential abilities could also help to adjust the training program on to the specific needs of the participants.

### **Limitations and future research**

Inevitably, our study is not without its limitations. Although factor analyses of Mayer et al. (2003) revealed a one-, two- and four factor model of EI (experiential-EI and reasoning EI being the two factor model) and they provided scores for these areas in the MSCEIT, both the four factor model and the two factor model have been criticized (Gignac, 2005; Rossen, Kranzler, & Algina, 2008). As Joseph et al. (2010) argue, ultimately the way forward may be to develop better EI measurement that does more justice to EI subfacets, and from that perspective we should note as a limitation that even when the current ability measure of EI is the best available, its not undisputed quality may pose a limitation to the current conclusions. Ideally, then, further development of emotional labor theory in leadership from an EI perspective would rely on new, better, measurement.

Another obvious limitation is that our study focuses on the antecedents of leader emotional labor alone and not on its consequences. Whereas this obviously makes for valid research questions, it is equally obvious that a full-blown development of the emotional labor perspective in leadership requires evidence of its consequences as well as of its antecedents.

### **Conclusions**

Even when our study is modest in scope in establishing relationships between EI

aspects and emotional labor strategies, it is important in laying the empirical groundworks for an ability perspective (both in terms of EI and in terms of ability development) on leader emotional labor. As evidence for the role of emotions in leadership is amassing, it also becomes increasingly clear that an emotional labor perspective – a perspective that currently is dearly underdeveloped – need to be an integral part of this. Our study thus provides an important fundament to the future development of this burgeoning field.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics and correlations*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Deep acting	10.10	2.20						
2 Surface acting	6.37	1.83	-.08					
3 Experiential-EI	.45	.08	.26**	.04				
4 Reasoning-EI	.46	.04	.07	-.21*	.38**			
5 Cognitive ability	86.62	104.17	-.12	-.12	.01	.25*		
6 Age	47.23	7.34	.16	.03	.07	.07	-.09	
7 Gender	1.27	.45	-.09	-.15	.02	.16	.14	-.02

Note.  $N=97$ . Gender 1 = male, 2 = female. \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ .

Table 7. *Linear regression analyses. Dependent variables: deep acting and surface acting*

	Deep acting					Surface acting				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>
Experiential-EI	7.33	2.92	.27*	.12	2.11	3.55	2.54	.16	.09	1.49
Reasoning-EI	-1.72	6.43	-.03			-10.61	5.34	-.23*		
Cognitive ability	.00	.00	-.10			.00	.00	-.06		
Age	.04	.03	.14			.01	.03	.05		
Gender	-.47	.50	-.09			-.49	.42	-.12		
Deep acting						-.11	.09	-.13		
Surface acting	-.16	.12	-.13							

*Note.* *N*=97. \**p* ≤ .05, \*\**p* ≤ .01



## **Chapter 5 - General Discussion**

On the work floor, emotions matter. Both leaders and followers experience emotions, and the way in which leaders deal with these emotions, is crucially important for organizations. All kinds of stimuli in the work environment can cause these emotions. From the perspective of the affective events theory, daily uplifts cause positive emotions while on the other side hassles ignite negative emotional experiences (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). On a less conscious level people also tend to influence each other's emotions through emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). From the perspective that positive emotions among workers tend to generate favourable organizational outcomes like job satisfaction (Fisher, 2000), motivation (Erez & Isen, 2002), task performance (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999) and team performance (Gaddis et al., 2004) and negative emotions do not, it is the duty of leaders in organizations to manage emotions in such a way that employees feel stimulated and motivated to (continue to) pursue organizational objectives.

The studies, which form this dissertation, are intended to be independent studies, and also can be read as such. At the same time all three studies answer the same underlying question, namely: What is the impact of emotional abilities and skills of leaders in their behavior and effectiveness? In the following we will start discussing the three studies separately. Then we will identify what conclusions can be drawn from the joint findings and make recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of the main findings and contributions**

Study 1: This study intended to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. The relationship had been claimed many times previously, but almost no studies were known in which emotional intelligence was conceptualized and measured as an ability. Also, there was a lack of studies that controlled for

cognitive intelligence and the Big Five factors of personality. Those controls were important to demonstrate the incremental value of emotional intelligence. Another objective of the study was to gain an insight in mediating processes that could underlie that possible relationship. In this way, a contribution could be made to the construct validity of the emotional intelligence concept. The 84 participants to this study had been employed in a leadership position for at least one year. The results showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, whilst controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality characteristics. It was also found that the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness was mediated by the effectiveness of the leaders' responses to expressions of emotion by the followers.

Study 2: The second study in this manuscript had two objectives. The first objective was to research the trainability of emotional skills. The first study pointed to a relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, suggesting that emotional competencies for leaders are important to mobilize and influence followers. By extension, the developability of emotional competencies in leaders is potentially important. As its second objective, the study intended to integrate research of emotional labor into leadership research. A total of 31 leaders participated in a field experiment with a pretest-posttest experimental group – control group design. In order to gain an insight into the effectiveness of the training program, the followers were requested to assess the affective displays and the effectiveness of the participating leaders, both prior to, and following, the training program. That leaves themselves were asked, both prior to and after the training program, to what extent they used deep acting skills. The results of the study show that leaders who had received the training program were assessed as more effective by followers after the training program. This difference was absent in the control group. It also emerged that the display of positive emotions and the use of deep acting had increased after the training and that these effects

mediated the relationship between the training program and the effectiveness measurement. This allows the conclusion that it is possible for leaders to acquire emotion regulation skills and that this actually increases their effectiveness on the work.

Study 3: The first objective of this study was to contribute to the theory about emotional intelligence, emotion regulation and leadership. The research into emotional intelligence and leadership has primarily focused on the question whether emotional intelligence influences leadership effectiveness and the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation by leaders has hardly been paid attention. Besides the fact that research into emotional intelligence and leadership centered around the effectiveness question, the fact that the importance of emotion regulation was only recognized in the leadership literature recently and hardly any empirical research had been conducted also played a role. Outside of the leadership context, the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation strategies had been empirically researched already, but seldom from an ability perspective with related measurements. The second objective of this study was to contribute more generally to the development of theory regarding ability emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence concept has several facets and research into these facets would contribute to our knowledge of this concept. More specifically, a distinction was made into experiential emotional intelligence (recognizing and using emotions) and reasoning emotional intelligence (understanding and managing emotions), assuming that these facets would in different ways influence the use of the emotion regulation strategies of surface acting and deep acting. A total of 97 people participated in this study, all of whom had been in a leadership position for at least one year. Their emotional intelligence having been measured previously, the extent to which they used the emotion regulation strategies of deep acting and service acting was now being measured. The results of this study demonstrated, that emotional intelligence, conceptualized and measured as an ability, influences the use of

emotion regulation strategies by leaders. The study demonstrated that emotional intelligence is important for the effective performance of emotional labor by leaders. Secondly, the results demonstrated that it is useful to look at emotion regulation from various different facets of emotional intelligence. It emerged that deep acting requires different abilities than surface acting. Experiential emotional intelligence - the ability to recognize and use emotions - was shown to positively influence deep acting. However, reasoning emotional intelligence - understanding emotions and their (social) consequences - was shown to be a negative predictor of surface acting.

### **Conclusions and implications for future research**

#### **Theoretical implications**

One approach for studying emotions and leadership is through the lens of leader attributes such as emotional abilities and skills. Individual difference variables have been a central theme in leadership research ever since its scientific origins and over the years scholars have discovered various relationships between different leader traits and skills on the one hand and leadership behavior and leader effectiveness on the other hand (Yukl, 2002). So it might not come as a surprise that the interest in emotions in the social sciences at large and leadership research in particular, brought to the foreground the question of emotional competencies, abilities, skills and behaviors as individual difference predictors of leadership success. This has also been one of the central themes of my thesis. Two of the three competencies that have been studied for this thesis were indeed related to leadership effectiveness: ability emotional intelligence and emotional labor skills. First: Leaders high on emotional intelligence –capturing the abilities to recognize, understand, use, and manage emotions tended to be more effective than leaders low on emotional intelligence. The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness had been established previously, but seldom from an ability perspective, which is conceptually superior to other

models of emotional intelligence and never before above and beyond relevant cognitive ability and personality predictors. Second: Leaders who were more inclined to use the emotional labor technique deep acting tended to be more effective. Empirically, this relationship had never been established before, while several theoretical papers had suggested such a relationship would exist. The third individual difference variable - emotional expressiveness or leader displays of positive affect- was not found to be related to leadership effectiveness. Although these findings are important in their own right, this thesis aimed at more than just establishing these relationships. I also wanted to provide for an explanatory framework on how these competencies affected leadership success. With regard to emotional intelligence, the results indicate that this is an important predictor for both the effectiveness of the response to follower emotions (Study 1) and of the use of one's own emotions, facilitating the effective emotional labor technique; deep acting, and inhibiting the ineffective technique surface acting (study 3). This provides scholars with an answer on the question "why" emotional intelligence influences leadership success. The skillful encounter of follower emotions is conceptually well aligned with emotional intelligence abilities recognizing, understanding and managing emotions. That also counts for the skillful use of ones' own emotions. The relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor skills tended to be less straight forward however. I found the distinction between experiential emotional abilities and reasoning emotional abilities to be of relevance for the relationship with different emotional labor techniques. Establishing these distinct relations, not only added to theory about emotional intelligence and leadership skills, but also to emotional intelligence and emotional labor theory in general. Knowing that emotional intelligence abilities influence both reactions to follower emotions and the use of one's own emotions, for the future, this calls for more dynamic research, that enables analyzing the development of interactions as a derivative of both the use of one's own emotions as well as the responses to the emotions of

followers. In order to conduct such research, more complex simulations could be developed (role-play simulations, for example) or field measurements undertaken, charting this development of interactions.

Both in the first and second study it was hypothesized that leader positive affective displays would influence leader effectiveness. It was expected that emotional intelligence predicted leadership success through positive affective displays and emotional contagion (whether or not using deep acting skills). This relationship was not established, while emotion contagion theory clearly points in that direction. Maybe, the power of leader positive affective displays is refined to a specific context (for example right before the start of a project, campaign or change-operation, that calls for a boost in confidence and optimism). Future research into the relationship between emotional intelligence, affective displays and effective leadership could provide for such a context.

The results of the studies in the thesis also provide for explanatory processes with respect to when emotional abilities and skills influence leadership effectiveness. Effective responses to follower emotions and the use of one's own emotions quite obviously ask for either the presence of follower emotions, or the need of emotion regulation. So emotional abilities and skills probably predict effectiveness in situations that are emotional in nature and maybe not in situations that are mostly intellectual in nature. Future research could shed light on that question. The current study however indicates in that direction in so far that no relationship was found between cognitive intelligence and leadership effectiveness, while this is an established individual difference predictor of leadership effectiveness.

As for the development of emotional skills of leaders, the results also show that investing in training does yield rewards, whilst at the same time it is as yet unknown whether emotional intelligence abilities influence the developability of emotional competencies. An interesting research question for the future is whether emotional intelligence positively, or

indeed negatively, influences the effects of training. From an ability perspective, one could reason that leaders who possess a high level of emotional intelligence also possess a stronger learning ability to acquire emotional competencies. Conversely, it can also be argued that leaders who already possess a strong level of emotional intelligence will benefit little from additional training. Another research area could be the trainability of reactions to follower emotions. Knowing the effective encountering of others emotions to be related to emotional intelligence abilities, scholars might think of translating these abilities to practical skills and methods for training these skills.

In addition, the three studies primarily focused on leadership effectiveness, whereas for the future other outcome variables could also be studied; variables that touch on performance whilst being at least partly separate from leadership effectiveness, such as LMX, trust and cohesiveness. One could for example hypothesize that the impact of leader emotional abilities and skills on leader follower relationships exceeds the impact on leader effectiveness. Further research could also make an important contribution by focusing more on outcomes amongst followers rather than leaders. The level of analyses in the studies of these theses have been intra-individual and dyadic. Future research could also benefit from analyses on a group (for example group effectiveness, but one might also think of related concepts like group cohesiveness) or organizational level. Maybe the influence of leader emotional abilities and skills differs over groups. It could be hypothesized that some groups encounter more emotionally charged situations than others. The same could be said for different kind of organizations. While one organization operates in a highly volatile environment (due to for example political or market conditions) in which change and uncertainty are at the order of the day, the other organization might not.

### **Practical implications**

The results of the studies that are presented in this thesis have important implications for

practitioners in recruitment, selection and, management development and for leaders as well. The findings that emotional abilities and skills do have an impact on leadership effectiveness gives recruitment and selection officers the opportunity and obligation to assess these emotional competencies, especially when (potential) leaders encounter emotionally charged situations in which they have to manage others emotions and use their own. We advise recruiters to think of competence based interview questions, which enables them to address previous experiences in which leaders had to deal with emotions. They could also benefit of using ability based emotional intelligence tests and questionnaires to assess emotional labor skills. Ability based emotional intelligence test do add predictive power above traditional measurements, such as cognitive intelligence tests and personality questionnaires. These tests might also partly replace (expensive and time consuming) role play exercises, that are now capturing emotion recognition and empathy). From a management development perspective, our research provides leaders with the notion that emotional skills do matter and can be trained. The studies offer both leaders and management development professionals a rough training design, that can function as a basis for further refinement and ultimately development of emotional skills. At least the use of leader emotions can be trained and future research could help to also train appropriate reactions to counterproductive follower emotions.

Whichever the direction that further research will develop into, a good outcome of the studies presented here would be that their results will contribute to an awareness amongst scientific researchers, practitioners in the field - like consultants - and, as the most important group, leaders themselves, that emotions matter, that there may be differences in ability and that these differences are important, but that these differences need not obstruct the development of emotional competencies.

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## Summary

At work, many emotions present themselves on a daily basis. These emotions can both help organizations in their progress and throw up obstacles on their paths towards their objectives. The way in which leaders deal with emotions is, therefore, of crucial importance; emotions that these leaders experience themselves, as well as those that their followers experience. One of the ways to study emotions and leadership is by addressing the emotional ability and skills of leaders. This has been the focus of this dissertation. Three empirical studies have been conducted in order to research the impact of emotional ability on effective leadership, to what extent emotional skills can be learnt and in which way emotional ability and skills are interconnected.

In the first study, two major questions are addressed in the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership effectiveness. Firstly, does EI conceptualized and assessed as an ability influence leadership effectiveness when controlling for cognitive intelligence and Big Five personality traits? Secondly, what are mediating processes in this relationship? Ability test data for EI for  $N = 84$  leaders in an assessment center predict observations of leader responses to subordinate's emotions in a role play. The quality of these responses mediates relationships with expert ratings of leadership effectiveness. These relationships are observed controlling for cognitive ability and Big Five personality traits. It discusses how these findings constitute an important basis for the further study of EI and leadership effectiveness.

The second study aims to test whether the regulation of affective displays of leaders can be trained in terms of the emotion regulation strategy of deep acting (displaying feelings one also experiences) and display of positive affect. It is also tested whether this results in improved leadership effectiveness (i.e., a mediation model in which the training results in greater leadership effectiveness through improved emotion regulation). Data were obtained from a field experiment. Leaders ( $N = 31$ ) were randomly assigned to a control group without training or an experimental group with emotion regulation training. Before and two weeks after the intervention deep acting (leader-rated) and positive affective displays and leadership effectiveness (follower-rated,  $N = 60$ ) were assessed. The training has positive effects on deep acting, positive affective displays, and leadership effectiveness. Deep acting and positive affect mediate the relationship between the intervention and leadership effectiveness. The findings of this study represent evidence that improved emotion regulation results in greater leadership effectiveness. It is also one of the first empirical studies that integrates emotional

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labor theory to leadership effectiveness.

In the third and final study, is the relationship between leader EI and leader emotion regulation addressed, arguing that the experiential and reasoning areas of EI are differentially related to leader deep acting and surface acting. A study of  $N = 97$  leaders shows that ability measures of experiential-EI and reasoning-EI are related to leader emotional labor. Experiential-EI is positively related to deep acting, whereas reasoning-EI is negatively related to surface acting. We discuss how these findings help to build the case for an emotional labor approach to leadership and for the leadership development potential of the emotional labor perspective.

## Samenvatting (Dutch Summary)

Op het werk dienen zich dagelijks vele emoties aan. Deze emoties kunnen zowel helpen om de organisatie vooruit te helpen, alsook hindernissen opwerpen om organisatiedoelen te bereiken. De wijze waarop leiders met emoties omgaan is daarom van wezenlijk belang. Daarbij gaat het zowel om de emoties die zijzelf ervaren, als om de emoties van hun volgers. Eén manier om emoties en leiderschap te bestuderen is door te kijken naar emotionele capaciteiten en vaardigheden van leiders. Dat is de focus van deze dissertatie. Met behulp van een drietal empirische studies wordt onderzocht wat de impact is van emotionele capaciteiten op effectief leiderschap, in hoeverre emotionele vaardigheden kunnen worden aangeleerd en op welke wijze emotionele capaciteiten en vaardigheden met elkaar zijn verbonden.

In het eerste onderzoek worden twee hoofdvragen behandeld, aangaande het verband tussen emotionele intelligentie (EI) en leiderschapseffectiviteit. Ten eerste, beïnvloedt EI leiderschapseffectiviteit, indien EI wordt geconceptualiseerd en beoordeeld als een capaciteit, wanneer wordt gecontroleerd voor cognitieve intelligentie en de Big Five persoonlijkheidskenmerken? Ten tweede, wat zijn de mediërende processen in dit verband? Capaciteitentestgegevens betreffende EI van leiders ( $N = 84$ ) in een assessment center voorspellen waarnemingen van reacties van leiders op de emoties van hun ondergeschikten in een rollenspel. De kwaliteit van deze reacties medieert het verband tussen capaciteitentestgegevens en expertbeoordelingen van leiderschapseffectiviteit. Deze relaties worden waargenomen wanneer wordt gecontroleerd voor cognitieve capaciteit en 'Big Five' persoonlijkheidskenmerken. Er wordt besproken hoe deze bevindingen een basis vormen voor verder onderzoek naar emotionele intelligentie en leiderschapseffectiviteit.

Het tweede onderzoek heeft als doel om te toetsen of de regulatie van affectieve uitingen door leiders kan worden getraind, in termen van de emotieregulatie strategie 'deep acting' (het uiten van gevoelens die men ook als zodanig ervaart) en de uiting van positief affect. Er wordt tevens getoetst of dit resulteert in verbeterde leiderschapseffectiviteit (een mediatie model waarin training leidt tot grotere leiderschapseffectiviteit door verbeterde emotieregulatie). Onderzoeksgegevens worden verkregen uit experimenteel veldonderzoek. Leiders ( $N = 31$ ) werden willekeurig toegewezen aan een controlegroep zonder training of aan een experimentele groep met emotieregulatie training. Voorafgaand aan en twee weken na de interventie werden (door leiders beoordeelde) 'deep acting' en uitingen van positief affect, alsook leiderschapseffectiviteit (beoordeeld door volgers,  $N = 60$ ) beoordeeld. De training laat positieve effecten zien op 'deep acting', op positieve affectieve uitingen en op

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leiderschapseffectiviteit. ‘Deep acting’ en positief affect mediëren het verband tussen de interventie en leiderschapseffectiviteit. De bevindingen van dit onderzoek wijzen uit dat het versterken van emotieregulatie resulteert in een hogere mate van leiderschapseffectiviteit. Tevens is het één van de eerste empirische studies die theorie over emotiewerk en leiderschap integreert.

In het derde en laatste onderzoek wordt het verband tussen EI van leiders en de emotieregulatie door leiders nader bestudeerd. Daarbij wordt verondersteld dat de respectievelijke emotionele intelligentie gebieden ‘ervaring’ en ‘redenering’ een differentieel verband laten zien met ‘deep acting’ en ‘surface acting’ (het uiten van gevoelens die men niet als zodanig ervaart) van leiders. Een onderzoek onder leiders ( $N = 97$ ) laat zien dat capaciteitsmetingen van ervarings-EI en redenerings-EI verbanden laten zien met emotiewerk van leiders. Ervarings-EI laat een positief verband zien met ‘deep acting’, terwijl redenerings-EI een negatief verband met ‘surface acting’ vertoont. Er wordt besproken hoe dit ondersteuning geeft aan zowel emotiewerk als een benadering van leiderschap, alsook aan het leiderschapsontwikkelpotentieel dat een dergelijke emotiewerk-benadering te bieden heeft.

## About the Author

Peter Jurriën Edelman (1972) received his master's degree in Psychology from Leiden University in 1997. In 2007 he received his bachelor's degree in History from Utrecht University and after that he started his PhD at Rotterdam School of Management in January 2008. Currently he holds the position of Managing Director at the management consulting firm: Berenschot. In his work there, he is responsible for all the psychological evaluation, -consulting and assessment center activities. He also is a member of the Management Team of Berenschot. His expertise lies in identifying human talent, assessing the potential of people and promote their personal and professional development. Activities that go with it, include assessments, coaching and career counseling and management development.

