

Distributed Leadership and Emotional Intelligence in Managing Organizational Change: A Case Study of GBS Malta Office Relocation

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Global Banking School In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MBA Marketing

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study examined the role of distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in managing organisational change during the relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta office. Although distributed leadership is related to shared, team, situational, and democratic leadership, it remains conceptually distinct from these approaches. Organisational change refers to deliberate modifications aimed at improving organisational effectiveness, while emotional intelligence involves recognising, understanding, and appropriately managing one's own and others' emotions. The study adopted a qualitative research design involving five management staff of GBS Malta. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and data were collected using open-ended questionnaires. Thematic analysis was employed, supported by manual coding and NVivo 12 software.</i> Keywords: Distributed Leadership, Organisational Change, Emotional Intelligence
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Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Shina Abayomi Raji. (2026). Distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in managing organizational change: A case study of GBS Malta office relocation. UKR Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 2(10). 69-87.	

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation/consultancy project is my original work. Wherever the words, ideas, interpretations, expressions, or written contributions of other authors have been incorporated, they have been appropriately acknowledged and, where necessary, presented as quotations in accordance with accepted academic conventions.

I further declare that this dissertation/consultancy project represents original work and has not previously been submitted, in whole or in part, for the conferment of any other degree or academic qualification at any institution.

I confirm that the required ethical approval was obtained before the commencement of the fieldwork. The relevant data extraction is included in the appendix to support the research process and findings.

I acknowledge that this project may be subjected to a viva voce examination and that I may be required to defend the research, methodology, findings, and conclusions during an oral examination.

Signed,

1.1 Background to the Study

Organisations operate in environments characterised by continuous internal and external pressures, making organisational change unavoidable. The nature and extent of such change may differ across organisations, but it generally involves deliberate modifications to important organisational elements in order to enhance effectiveness. These elements may include the organisation's mission and vision, strategy, objectives, structure, processes, systems, technology, and people. When such components are intentionally modified, organisations may improve their capacity to create value for the individuals and groups they serve. Organisational change is therefore generally purposeful and involves a deliberate decision to alter an established aspect of the organisation. Some changes are more tangible and easier to implement, particularly those involving structures, systems, procedures, reward arrangements, or job designs. For instance, restructuring an assembly line, introducing a new reward system, or redesigning a job can be clearly defined and documented (Obi et al., 2016).

Other forms of change are considerably more complex because they affect deeply embedded organisational characteristics. Changes involving organisational culture, for example, are more difficult to implement than modifications to visible structures or processes. Although an organisation may formally decide to move from an authoritarian culture towards a participative one, translating such an intention into actual behaviour requires careful planning, implementation, and sequencing. Similarly, introducing a new vision or strategy does not necessarily produce meaningful organisational change unless employees' behaviours, practices, and underlying assumptions also change.

Organisational change has become an established feature of contemporary organisations, affecting employees, functions, and organisational systems (Nelson & Quick, 2003). The need for change often becomes evident when managers identify weaknesses in organisational activities, objectives, or values. Such a need may arise when there is a clear difference between what an organisation intends to achieve and what it is actually accomplishing. Gronn (2002) noted limitations in the available theories, models, and leadership preparation required to equip individuals to manage leadership responsibilities and organisational change. This gap remains relevant to the present study. Effective managers must therefore regard change management as a core organisational responsibility and respond promptly to identified deficiencies (Steers, 1991; Gibson et al., 1997). Adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness are particularly important characteristics for

organisations seeking to remain effective under changing and competitive conditions (Obi et al., 2016). Consequently, managers need to be capable of addressing both planned and unplanned change, making leadership an important mechanism for facilitating organisational transformation. Within this context, distributed leadership provides a relevant leadership perspective.

Distributed leadership places greater emphasis on leadership as a collective practice than on individual leaders or formal leadership positions. Although it has similarities with situational, team, shared, and democratic forms of leadership, these concepts should not be treated as identical to distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005, 2006). Spillane (2006) conceptualised distributed leadership as a different way of understanding leadership practice, with emphasis on the interactions among leaders, followers, and the surrounding situation. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2009) explained that individuals across an organisation, irrespective of formal rank or position, may assume leadership responsibilities according to the requirements of their work. Distributed leadership therefore emphasises relationships, interactions, and connections among individuals occupying both formal and informal leadership roles rather than focusing solely on the actions of designated leaders.

Harris (2014) argued that distributed leadership can strengthen organisational capacity for development, improvement, and change by creating opportunities for individuals in formal and informal leadership positions to collaborate and provide mutual support. Collaboration among professionals in addressing significant organisational challenges can also encourage shared learning. Furthermore, involving individuals with different knowledge, skills, experiences, and backgrounds can broaden the basis for organisational decision-making and contribute to better decisions (Harris, 2014; Koemhong, 2021).

In complex and demanding environments such as educational institutions, it is unrealistic to expect a single leader to possess all the expertise required to achieve organisational success. Spillane (2006) therefore argued that leadership responsibilities should extend across the organisation so that relevant skills and expertise can be mobilised. Distributed leadership consequently encourages staff members to participate in leadership activities and share organisational responsibilities. Its central concern is leadership practice and the interaction between individuals rather than leadership being confined to particular people, positions, or formal structures (Spillane, 2008). This emphasis on interaction is also reflected in the work of Ho and Ng (2017), Harris and DeFlaminis (2018), and Tian et

al. (2016), who highlighted the movement from an individual-centred understanding of leadership towards a focus on collective practice and interaction.

Emotional intelligence is another important consideration in human resource management and organisational behaviour because of its relevance to employee behaviour and performance. Interest in emotional intelligence has contributed to the development of programmes designed to strengthen employees' emotional capabilities in the workplace (Miruthula & Shanmugapriya, 2023). The concept was introduced prominently by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and subsequently developed within the academic literature. Mayer and Salovey (1997) described emotional intelligence in terms of the ability to perceive, distinguish, understand, and use emotional information to guide thought and behaviour. It involves awareness of one's own emotions and those of others, together with the ability to regulate and appropriately respond to emotional experiences. Individuals with developed emotional intelligence may therefore be better equipped to recognise emotional states, manage behaviour, address interpersonal issues, and function effectively in settings where social interaction is important.

Employees may strengthen emotional intelligence through learning, reflection, and appropriate workplace development initiatives. Training and organisational practices can influence employee attitudes and behaviours in positive ways (Vasudevan et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence may also assist managers and employees in responding effectively to the needs of colleagues and customers, thereby supporting employee performance, commitment, and service satisfaction.

Emotional intelligence can also be understood as the capacity to recognise, evaluate, and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of other individuals and groups. Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are generally better able to understand their own emotional responses and recognise emotional cues in others (Goleman, 1995, 1996).

Existing literature highlights the importance of managerial approaches that enable leaders to engage employees appropriately and respond effectively to workplace demands. However, a continuing gap exists between theoretical perspectives and their practical application in organisational settings. Dervitsiotis (2001) observed that rapidly changing business environments require management approaches capable of responding to emerging organisational challenges. There is therefore no single managerial approach capable of addressing every organisational situation or employee need. Despite the growing relevance of emotional intelligence and distributed leadership, their application within Maltese organisations

remains insufficiently explored. This gap is particularly important given the effects of globalisation, competitive pressures, changing work environments, mergers and acquisitions, workforce diversity, and employee turnover, which make the effective management of organisational change increasingly necessary.

1.2 Statement of the problem

With regard to the relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta office, the process is likely to have influenced several aspects of administration and the way work processes are carried out. Such changes can create challenges for management, particularly where employees experience uncertainty or resistance. Resistance to organisational change therefore remains an important issue that requires attention during the relocation process.

The contemporary business environment is highly dynamic, with organisations experiencing rapid changes over relatively short periods. These changes may involve organisational structures, technology, employees and their perceptions, production methods, and approaches to business management. Organisations must respond quickly to such developments in order to remain competitive and sustain their operations. This is also applicable to business schools such as GBS Malta. Effective organisational communication is therefore essential for facilitating and supporting successful change initiatives within an organisation (Christensen, 2014).

Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) associated organisational change with organisational transformation, while Szabla (2007) maintained that implementing change is more complex and demanding than it is sometimes perceived. It has consequently been suggested that a significant proportion of organisational change initiatives fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al. (1999) similarly reported that many organisational change efforts do not succeed despite the increasing attention given to change management (as cited in Wim, 2005). The objectives of organisational change are diverse, but they largely include improving performance, preventing or resolving organisational crises, and strengthening the capacity of organisations to respond to competition and environmental uncertainty (Isern & Pung, 2007). Effective communication is therefore necessary throughout a planned change process to explain the reasons for change, help employees understand its potential benefits, identify weaknesses within the implementation process, and maintain continuous communication as the process develops. Failure to implement organisational change successfully may be associated with limited shared responsibility, poor communication, inadequate empathy, lack of openness and trust, and insufficient employee involvement in decision-making.

Organisational change commonly emerges when organisations identify gaps or pressures resulting from changes in their external and internal environments. It may involve a series of activities aimed at improving the capabilities of individuals and groups within the organisation (Kassim et al., 2010). Daft (2010) further explained that organisational change can result from alterations in business activities as well as from managerial perceptions, decisions, and actions. Nelson and Quick (2003) identified globalisation, workforce diversity, technological developments, and the management of ethical behaviour among the important external forces that stimulate organisational change. Changes in the organisational environment may also arise from government legislation, including employment regulations that introduce new expectations concerning equity and employment practices. Against this background, the present study seeks to examine how distributed leadership can influence organisational change in relation to the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta office.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study aims to examine how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence influence the management of organisational change following the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine how shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust support organisational change.
2. Assess the moderating effect of emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy, on distributed leadership and change management.
3. Determine how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence jointly affect organisational adaptability, responsiveness, and effective communication during the relocation process.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the foregoing, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. How do shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust support organisational change at the Global Banking School Malta Office?
- ii. How does emotional intelligence, through self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy, moderate the relationship between distributed leadership and organisational change?
- iii. How do distributed leadership and emotional intelligence jointly affect organisational adaptability,

responsiveness, and communication during the change process?

1.5 The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study defines the areas covered by the research and provides boundaries for the investigation. The study focuses on distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change in relation to the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

1.5.1 Content Scope

The study covers distributed leadership, shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, openness and trust, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and organisational change, including adaptability, responsiveness, and communication effectiveness.

1.5.2 Geographical Scope

The study is limited to the Global Banking School Malta Office and focuses on managers involved in or affected by the organisational relocation and change process.

1.5.3 Unit Scope

The unit of analysis is the organisational level, with particular attention to managerial personnel. The respondents will therefore comprise managers of the Global Banking School Malta Office who have relevant knowledge or experience of the relocation and organisational change process.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will be useful to managers, employees, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders interested in leadership and organisational change. It will provide insights into how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence can support effective management of organisational change.

Practically, the findings may assist managers in improving collaboration, communication, adaptability, and responsiveness during organisational transitions. The study may also help human resource and organisational development professionals develop approaches for managing employees during periods of change.

Academically, the study will contribute to existing literature on distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change. It may also serve as a useful reference for future researchers and students undertaking related studies.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Adaptability and Responsiveness: Refers to the ability of employees and the organisation to adjust to changing

situations, respond effectively to new demands, and remain focused on achieving organisational goals.

Empathy: Refers to the ability of an individual to understand and appropriately respond to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of others within an organisation.

Emotional Intelligence: Refers to the ability to recognise, understand, regulate, and manage one's own emotions and those of others in ways that support effective leadership and organisational outcomes.

Openness and Trust: Refers to the practice of maintaining transparency, fairness, honesty, and confidence in relationships between leaders and employees within an organisation.

Organisational Change: Refers to the process through which an organisation moves from an existing state to a

desired state by introducing changes to its structures, processes, people, or practices.

Self-Awareness: Refers to an individual's ability to recognise and understand their own emotions, behaviours, strengths, weaknesses, and the possible effects of their actions on others.

Self-Management: Refers to the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviour appropriately when responding to different situations in the workplace.

Shared Responsibility: Refers to the distribution of leadership duties, roles, and decision-making responsibilities among leaders and employees rather than concentrating them in one individual.

Literature Review

2.1 Theories of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become an important concept in understanding leadership behaviour and organisational change. It concerns the ability to recognise, understand, regulate, and appropriately respond to emotions in oneself and others. Three major perspectives are particularly relevant to this study: the ability model of Salovey and Mayer, Goleman's competency model, and Petrides' trait emotional intelligence model.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualised EI as an ability involving the perception, understanding, use, and regulation of emotions. Their model suggests that individuals who can accurately identify emotions and regulate them appropriately are better positioned to manage interpersonal relationships and make effective decisions. In the context of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta Office relocation, this perspective is useful for examining how leaders and employees recognised and managed emotional reactions associated with uncertainty, pressure, and organisational change.

Goleman (1998) developed a broader competency-based perspective of EI, emphasising self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. This approach is particularly relevant to leadership because it connects emotional competencies with workplace behaviour and relationships. During organisational relocation, leaders may need to manage their emotions, understand employees' concerns, maintain trust, and encourage cooperation. Therefore, Goleman's framework provides a useful basis for examining how emotional

competencies can support distributed leadership, communication, and adaptability.

Petrides (2009), through the Trait Emotional Intelligence approach, views EI as a collection of emotional self-perceptions located within an individual's personality. Unlike the ability model, which focuses on emotional abilities, the trait approach emphasises how individuals generally perceive and respond to their emotional experiences. This perspective may help explain differences in how employees respond to organisational uncertainty and change. Some individuals may naturally demonstrate greater emotional composure, empathy, or confidence, which can influence their contribution to informal leadership and teamwork.

Although the three perspectives differ in their conceptualisation of EI, they share an interest in how emotional capabilities influence individual and interpersonal behaviour. Salovey and Mayer emphasise emotional abilities, Goleman focuses on competencies and workplace behaviour, while Petrides concentrates on emotional dispositions. These differences provide complementary perspectives for understanding emotional responses during organisational change.

For this study, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy are particularly important. Self-awareness enables leaders and employees to recognise their emotions and understand how their behaviour may affect others. Self-regulation supports appropriate management of emotional reactions during stressful situations, while empathy enables individuals to understand and respond to the concerns of colleagues. Together, these competencies can support trust,

collaboration, communication, and adaptability during organisational change.

The relevance of EI to distributed leadership lies in its potential to strengthen relationships among individuals who share leadership responsibilities. Distributed leadership requires cooperation, openness, communication, and mutual trust. Where individuals possess appropriate emotional competencies, they may be better able to manage disagreements, understand different perspectives, and contribute constructively to collective decision-making.

Overall, emotional intelligence provides an important theoretical foundation for examining how distributed leadership can function during organisational change. The theories reviewed suggest that emotional capabilities may influence how leaders and employees respond to uncertainty, collaborate with one another, and adapt to changing organisational circumstances. This provides a basis for investigating the role of EI in managing the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

2.2 Distributed Leadership: Origins and Practice

Distributed Leadership (DL) developed as an alternative to traditional leadership models that concentrate authority in a single individual. It views leadership as a collective process involving different individuals according to their roles, expertise, and organisational context (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). This perspective is relevant to the relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta Office because organisational change often requires cooperation, shared responsibility, and participation across different levels of the organisation.

Spillane (2006) conceptualises distributed leadership as a practice that emerges through the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation. His approach shifts attention from individual leaders to the activities, relationships, and contexts through which leadership is exercised. This provides a useful framework for examining how leadership responsibilities were shared during the relocation process.

Gronn (2002) similarly explains distributed leadership through the concept of **concertive action**, where leadership develops through collaboration and interaction among individuals. This perspective highlights the importance of collective effort and shared decision-making. In the GBS Malta context, it provides a basis for examining whether employees participated meaningfully in decisions associated with the organisational transition.

Harris (2013) emphasises the contribution of distributed leadership to collective responsibility and staff participation, particularly within educational organisations. Such participation can encourage employees to take ownership of organisational initiatives and respond more

effectively to changing circumstances. Bolden (2011), however, notes that distributed leadership may be ineffective where organisational structures do not provide sufficient trust, communication, and support. This suggests that simply distributing responsibilities does not necessarily guarantee effective leadership.

The perspectives of these scholars indicate that distributed leadership depends on both the distribution of leadership activities and the organisational conditions that support collaboration. Shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust are therefore important dimensions for understanding the effectiveness of distributed leadership during organisational change.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Change Leadership

Emotional intelligence (EI) is particularly relevant to leadership during organisational change because change often creates uncertainty, pressure, and emotional reactions among employees. Clarke (2010) suggests that emotional competencies can support effective leadership behaviour by improving interpersonal relationships and the management of workplace challenges.

Self-awareness enables leaders to recognise their emotions, strengths, limitations, and the effects of their behaviour on others. During organisational change, this awareness can help leaders communicate more effectively and respond appropriately to employee concerns. Self-regulation enables leaders to control emotional reactions and remain composed when facing pressure, disagreement, or uncertainty. These qualities can contribute to trust and stability during change.

Empathy is equally important because employees may experience organisational change differently. An empathetic leader is better positioned to understand employees' concerns and respond appropriately to their experiences. Kotter (1996) and Armenakis and Harris (2009) emphasise communication, participation, and shared understanding as important elements of successful change processes. EI can therefore strengthen these processes by improving the quality of interactions between leaders and employees.

In a distributed leadership environment, these emotional competencies become relevant because leadership responsibilities are shared among several individuals. Effective collaboration requires participants to understand different perspectives, regulate their reactions, and maintain constructive relationships. EI therefore provides an important behavioural foundation for effective change leadership.

2.4 Distributed Leadership in Organisational Change

Distributed leadership can support organisational change by encouraging participation, shared responsibility, and

collective problem-solving. Rather than relying solely on senior managers, leadership responsibilities can be undertaken by individuals with relevant knowledge or expertise (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2013). This can be particularly useful during organisational relocation, where different activities may require specialised knowledge and coordination.

Collaborative decision-making can also increase employee involvement in change processes. When employees participate in decisions that affect their work, they may develop greater understanding and ownership of the change process (Leithwood, Mascal, & Strauss, 2009). Similarly, openness and trust can facilitate information sharing and encourage employees to communicate concerns and suggestions.

However, distributed leadership also presents challenges. The sharing of responsibilities may create uncertainty about accountability when roles are not clearly defined. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) identify role ambiguity as a potential limitation, while Harris (2008) highlights the possibility of communication difficulties within distributed arrangements. Effective coordination is therefore necessary to ensure that shared leadership does not result in duplication, conflicting decisions, or gaps in responsibility.

For the GBS Malta Office, distributed leadership can therefore be understood as a balance between shared participation and clear organisational coordination. Its effectiveness depends not only on distributing leadership responsibilities but also on maintaining communication, accountability, and trust throughout the relocation process.

2.5 Intersection Between Emotional Intelligence and Distributed Leadership

The relationship between emotional intelligence and distributed leadership is important because distributed leadership operates largely through interpersonal relationships and collaboration. While distributed leadership determines how leadership responsibilities are shared, emotional intelligence can influence how individuals perform those responsibilities.

Self-awareness can help individuals understand their own behaviour and recognise how it affects colleagues. Self-regulation can assist them in managing disagreements, pressure, and uncertainty, while empathy can support understanding of the experiences and concerns of other employees. These competencies are particularly relevant where leadership responsibilities are shared among individuals with different roles and perspectives.

The combination of EI and DL may therefore enhance organisational adaptability, responsiveness, and communication. Clarke (2010) and Hur et al. (2011)

suggest that emotional competencies can contribute to effective leadership relationships and team outcomes. Similarly, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) emphasise the importance of emotional competencies in building effective interpersonal relationships.

However, distributed leadership does not automatically become effective simply because leadership responsibilities are shared. It requires supportive relationships, clear communication, trust, and appropriate coordination. Emotional intelligence can contribute to these conditions by helping individuals manage emotions, understand others, and communicate constructively.

Therefore, this study considers emotional intelligence as a moderating factor in the relationship between distributed leadership and organisational change. The study specifically examines whether self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy strengthen the effectiveness of shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust in managing the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

2.6 Relevance to Higher Education and Office Relocation

The relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta Office represents an organisational change that requires effective leadership, communication, coordination, and employee participation. Distributed leadership (DL) provides a framework for sharing leadership responsibilities among individuals, while emotional intelligence (EI) explains how emotional competencies can support effective interaction during change (Spillane, 2006; Goleman, 1998).

Spillane (2006) and Gronn (2002) emphasise collective participation, shared influence, and collaboration as important features of distributed leadership. These principles are relevant to the GBS Malta relocation because different employees may contribute to decision-making and implementation according to their roles and expertise. Shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust can therefore support effective management of the relocation process.

Emotional intelligence provides an additional dimension to distributed leadership. Goleman (1998) highlights self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy as important emotional competencies, while Petrides (2009) focuses on individual emotional dispositions. These perspectives suggest that individuals involved in shared leadership need the ability to understand their emotions, manage their reactions, and recognise the concerns of others.

The integration of DL and EI is particularly relevant during organisational change because relocation may create

uncertainty, pressure, and changes in established work practices. Emotionally intelligent behaviour may strengthen communication, cooperation, and trust among individuals sharing leadership responsibilities. In this regard, EI may moderate the relationship between distributed leadership and effective organisational change.

Change theories also provide support for this relationship. Kotter (1996) emphasises communication, participation, and leadership alignment, while Armenakis and Harris (2009) focus on readiness and employees' perceptions of change. Although these models differ in their approaches, both highlight the importance of leadership behaviour and employee engagement during change.

Therefore, this study integrates distributed leadership and emotional intelligence to examine how shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, openness and trust, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy influence the management of organisational change at the GBS Malta Office. The framework further considers their relationship with organisational adaptability, responsiveness, and communication effectiveness.

2.7 Gaps in Existing Literature

Existing studies have examined distributed leadership and emotional intelligence extensively, but relatively limited

attention has been given to their combined role in managing organisational change. Distributed leadership research has largely focused on shared leadership, collaboration, and decision-making, particularly within educational settings (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2013). Similarly, emotional intelligence research has mainly examined individual leadership competencies and interpersonal effectiveness (Goleman, 1998; Jordan & Troth, 2011).

A further gap exists in understanding how self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy influence distributed leadership during organisational transitions. Much of the existing literature also focuses on teaching, curriculum, and instructional leadership, with less attention to administrative and operational changes such as institutional relocation.

In addition, limited empirical attention has been given to the role of emotional intelligence as a moderating factor between distributed leadership and organisational change. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining how emotional intelligence influences the effectiveness of distributed leadership in managing the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office, with particular attention to adaptability, responsiveness, and communication effectiveness.

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. It discusses the research philosophy, approach, design, strategy, data collection methods, sampling, data analysis, ethical considerations, and procedures used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study adopts an interpretivist philosophy, which is appropriate for understanding participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of organisational change. Interpretivism recognises that social reality is shaped by individual experiences and interactions. It is therefore suitable for examining how managers perceive distributed leadership and emotional intelligence during the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

3.3 Research Approach

The study adopts a qualitative research approach. This approach allows the researcher to obtain detailed information about participants' experiences and views regarding distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change. It is particularly suitable because the study seeks to understand how shared

responsibility, collaborative decision-making, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy operate during the relocation process.

3.4 Research Design

A qualitative case study design is adopted. The design enables an in-depth investigation of a specific organisational situation within its real-life context. The case in this study is the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

3.5 Research Strategy

The study uses a **case study strategy**, focusing specifically on the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office. This strategy provides an opportunity to obtain detailed information from managers who have direct knowledge or experience of the organisational change process.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Primary data will be collected through an open-ended questionnaire. The questions will allow participants to provide detailed responses concerning their experiences and perceptions of distributed leadership, emotional

intelligence, communication, adaptability, and organisational change.

3.6.1 Primary Data

The primary data will be obtained directly from selected management staff of the Global Banking School Malta Office through open-ended questionnaires.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary information will be obtained from relevant textbooks, academic journals, dissertations, reports, and credible online sources relating to distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change.

3.6.3 Justification of Methods

The use of open-ended questionnaires is appropriate because they provide participants with sufficient opportunity to explain their experiences and perspectives in their own words. This approach is consistent with the qualitative nature of the study and supports the development of themes from participants' responses.

3.7 Sampling Strategy

The study adopts a non-probability sampling strategy because participants are selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their direct knowledge of the organisational change under investigation.

3.7.1 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling will be used to select participants who occupy management positions and have relevant knowledge of the relocation of the Global Banking School Malta Office.

3.7.2 Sample Size and Participant Selection

The study will involve five (5) management staff of the Global Banking School Malta Office. The participants will be selected based on their managerial responsibilities and direct involvement or knowledge of the relocation process.

3.7.3 Justification of Sampling Approach

Purposive sampling is appropriate because the study requires participants with specific knowledge and experience relevant to distributed leadership and organisational change. Selecting knowledgeable participants can provide rich and meaningful information for addressing the research questions.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data will be analysed using thematic analysis. This method is suitable for identifying patterns, meanings, and recurring themes within qualitative responses.

3.8.1 Method of Analysis

The study will follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis process:

1. Familiarisation with the data.
2. Generation of initial codes.
3. Searching for themes.
4. Reviewing themes.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Producing the final report.

3.8.2 Analysis Procedure and Tools

The responses will be organised, transcribed where necessary, and carefully reviewed. Relevant statements will be coded and grouped into themes relating to the research questions. NVivo 12 may be used to assist in organising, coding, and managing the qualitative data.

3.8.3 Link to Research Questions

The questionnaire items will be developed directly from the three research questions. The responses will therefore be analysed according to themes corresponding to distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, organisational adaptability, responsiveness, and communication effectiveness.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles will be observed throughout the research process. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, their expected involvement, and their rights as research participants.

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Participants will be informed about the purpose and nature of the study before participation. Their participation will be voluntary, and informed consent will be obtained before collecting data.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participants' identities and personal information will be protected. The information provided will be used strictly for academic purposes and will not be disclosed to unauthorised persons.

3.9.3 Data Protection and Ethical Approval

Research data will be securely stored and accessed only for legitimate research purposes. The researcher will comply with relevant institutional requirements concerning ethical approval and data protection.

3.10 Trustworthiness and Rigour

Trustworthiness is important in qualitative research because it demonstrates the quality, credibility, and dependability of the research process and findings. The study will address credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility will be enhanced by obtaining information directly from participants with relevant managerial experience and ensuring that the analysis accurately reflects their responses.

3.10.2 Dependability

Dependability will be supported by maintaining a clear and consistent record of the data collection and analysis procedures. The same analytical process will be applied systematically to the participants' responses.

3.10.3 Confirmability

Confirmability will be achieved by ensuring that the findings are based on participants' responses rather than the researcher's personal opinions or assumptions.

3.10.4 Transferability

The study will provide sufficient contextual information about the GBS Malta Office and the participants to enable

readers to determine whether the findings may be relevant to similar organisational change situations.

3.10.5 Minimising Bias

The researcher will minimise bias by using neutral questions, maintaining objectivity during data analysis, and avoiding the imposition of personal assumptions on participants' responses.

3.11 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology adopted for the study. The research uses an interpretivist philosophy, qualitative approach, and case study design. Purposive sampling will be used to select five management staff of the Global Banking School Malta Office, while open-ended questionnaires will provide the primary data. The responses will be analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, with NVivo 12 used where appropriate to support data organisation and coding. Ethical principles and measures of trustworthiness will also guide the research process.

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in managing organisational change during the relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta Office. Data were obtained from five purposively selected management staff with relevant knowledge of the relocation process. The responses were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings related to the research questions.

4.2 Method of Analysis

The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. The process involved familiarising with the responses, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming them, and presenting the findings. Manual coding, supported where necessary by NVivo 12, was used to organise the responses. Eighteen themes emerged from the analysis and were grouped according to the three research questions.

4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Research Question One

How do shared responsibility, collaborative decision-making, and openness and trust support organisational change at the Global Banking School Malta Office?

Theme 1: Shared Responsibility Across Roles

Participants indicated that responsibilities were shared across different roles during the relocation. Staff often performed duties beyond their normal job descriptions to

meet operational needs. One participant explained that "every one of us was taking care of everything," demonstrating the broad distribution of responsibilities.

Theme 2: Decentralised Leadership

The findings showed that leadership responsibilities were not restricted to one individual. Participants were given opportunities to take responsibility and make contributions based on their abilities and experience. One participant stated that management gave them "full responsibility and full accountability" gradually.

Theme 3: Clear Delegation

Although responsibilities were widely shared, participants reported that tasks were communicated clearly. Effective communication helped employees understand their roles and contributed to a smoother relocation process.

Theme 4: Leadership by Necessity

Limited staffing contributed to the distribution of responsibilities. Participants explained that employees worked together regardless of their formal positions because completing the relocation required collective effort.

Theme 5: Flexible Role Performance

Participants reported performing different tasks as new needs emerged. This included activities outside their regular responsibilities, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness during the relocation.

Theme 6: Collective Participation

The findings indicated that employees' contributions were valued regardless of their formal positions. Participants described an environment where staff worked together and contributed to organisational decisions and activities.

Research Question Two

How does emotional intelligence, through self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy, moderate the relationship between distributed leadership and organisational change?

Theme 7: Trust and Empowerment

Participants described leadership as trusting employees with responsibilities according to their experience and abilities. This trust encouraged staff participation and increased their sense of responsibility.

Theme 8: Emotional Safety and Openness

Participants reported that they were able to express concerns and make mistakes without excessive fear of punishment. This supportive environment encouraged learning, openness, and cooperation.

Theme 9: Awareness of Employees' Emotional Needs

Participants indicated that management paid attention to employees' emotional experiences. The open office arrangement was described as a way of maintaining closer interaction between management and staff.

Theme 10: Recognition of Emotional Demands

The relocation created additional pressures, including extended working hours and responding to student concerns outside normal working periods. Participants indicated that management recognised and supported these demands.

Theme 11: Respect for Employees' Experiences

Participants reported that management involved staff in practical decisions affecting their work environment. Such involvement contributed to a feeling of inclusion and respect.

Theme 12: Emotionally Supportive Work Environment

The findings suggested that the physical and social work environment was designed to encourage interaction between staff, students, and management. This supported communication and strengthened workplace relationships.

Research Question Three

How do distributed leadership and emotional intelligence jointly affect organisational adaptability,

responsiveness, and communication during the change process?

Theme 13: Adaptability and Agility

Participants reported that staff adapted quickly to changing demands during the relocation. Employees worked extended hours and adjusted their activities to meet operational deadlines.

Theme 14: Team Cohesion and Mutual Support

The findings revealed strong cooperation among staff. Participants described supporting one another both during and outside working hours, which strengthened team relationships.

Theme 15: Collective Problem-Solving

Problems were generally addressed through teamwork rather than individual action. Participants described discussing challenges and determining collectively who would take responsibility for resolving them.

Theme 16: Feedback and Immediate Adjustment

Participants reported that management regularly sought their views and, where necessary, made immediate adjustments based on the feedback received. This encouraged participation and responsiveness.

Theme 17: Flexibility in Decision-Making

The relocation required continuous adjustment because some plans could not always be implemented as initially intended. Participants indicated that management responded by modifying plans according to emerging circumstances.

Theme 18: Emotional Intelligence as a Change Enabler

Participants associated emotionally supportive leadership with employee commitment, morale, and productivity. The findings suggest that respect for employees' emotional needs strengthened their willingness to contribute to the relocation process.

4.4 Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings indicate that distributed leadership supported the relocation through shared responsibility, decentralised participation, clear delegation, flexibility, and collective problem-solving. Emotional intelligence strengthened these practices through trust, emotional awareness, supportive relationships, empathy, and respect for employees' experiences. Together, these factors appeared to support staff adaptability, responsiveness, communication, and cooperation during the relocation of the GBS Malta Office.

The study identified 18 themes from the qualitative analysis of responses provided by five purposively selected management staff of the GBS Malta Office. The themes demonstrate how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence operated during the relocation process and provide insight into the organisational, relational, and emotional dimensions of managing change.

The first theme, shared responsibilities across roles, demonstrates that staff members frequently contributed beyond their formal job descriptions. Participants described situations in which employees assumed additional responsibilities in areas such as marketing, information technology, student operations, and recruitment. This finding supports Spillane's (2006) conception of distributed leadership as a practice that extends beyond formal leadership positions. It also reflects Gronn's (2002) argument that leadership can emerge through the coordinated contributions of individuals working together toward a common objective.

The second theme, decentralised leadership practice, further demonstrates that responsibility was distributed across different organisational levels. Participants reported being given significant responsibility and accountability for specific tasks. This finding is consistent with Harris' (2013) view that distributed leadership involves extending leadership opportunities beyond senior management and enabling organisational members to contribute to decision-making and implementation.

The third theme, clarity in delegation, indicates that the distribution of responsibilities did not necessarily create confusion. Participants reported that communication and delegation were sufficiently clear to support the relocation process. This finding is important because some literature has identified role ambiguity as a potential challenge associated with distributed leadership. In the present case, however, clear communication appeared to support rather than undermine the distribution of responsibilities.

The fourth theme, leadership by necessity, shows that limited human resources contributed to the redistribution of responsibilities. Participants described circumstances in which organisational members worked across traditional boundaries because of the immediate operational demands of establishing the relocated office. This suggests that distributed leadership can develop not only as a deliberate management strategy but also as a practical response to changing organisational circumstances.

The fifth theme, responsiveness in role shifting, demonstrates the flexible nature of staff contributions during the relocation. Employees undertook tasks according to emerging organisational needs rather than

relying exclusively on predetermined job boundaries. This finding supports the situational dimension of distributed leadership described by Spillane (2006), where leadership practice is influenced by the context in which organisational work occurs.

The sixth theme, functional egalitarianism, further illustrates the collective character of the relocation process. Participants indicated that staff remained connected and that responsibility was not determined solely by formal status. This finding is consistent with Gronn's (2002) concept of concertive action, where leadership emerges from coordinated contributions rather than from individual authority alone.

The seventh theme, trust and empowerment, highlights the relationship between distributed leadership and emotional intelligence. Participants reported that leaders demonstrated confidence in their abilities by assigning them important responsibilities. Trust therefore appeared to facilitate empowerment and encourage employees to take ownership of their roles. This finding supports Bolden's (2011) argument that trust is an important condition for effective distributed leadership.

The eighth theme, emotional safety and openness, demonstrates the importance of creating an environment in which employees could make mistakes, receive support, and participate without excessive fear of blame. Such an environment is consistent with the relational dimension of emotional intelligence, particularly the ability to recognise and respond appropriately to the emotional experiences of others.

The ninth theme, awareness of the emotional climate, illustrates the importance of leadership visibility and emotional connection. Participants described leadership practices that enabled management to remain close to employees and aware of their experiences. This finding corresponds with the emotional intelligence perspective that effective leadership requires awareness of both personal and interpersonal emotional conditions.

The tenth theme, recognition of emotional labour, indicates that the demands of relocation extended beyond formal working hours and routine responsibilities. Participants described responding to student concerns and providing assistance when problems arose. The findings therefore suggest that effective change management required recognition of the emotional and practical pressures experienced by both employees and students.

The eleventh theme, respect for emotional experience, shows that employees were given opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their working

environment. Their involvement in matters such as workspace arrangements demonstrates that management recognised employees as active participants in the change process rather than merely recipients of organisational decisions. This finding supports the broader principle of participation within distributed leadership.

The twelfth theme, emotionally intelligent space design, further demonstrates how consideration of employees' and students' experiences extended to the physical working environment. Participants associated the design of the new environment with interaction, connection, and inclusiveness. This finding indicates that the relocation was experienced not simply as a physical movement but as a broader organisational transition involving relationships, identity, and workplace experience.

The thirteenth theme, adaptability and agility, illustrates how staff responded to changing operational demands. Participants described extended working periods, including weekend work, in order to complete relocation-related activities. This finding demonstrates the capacity of staff to adjust their efforts in response to situational demands and supports the view that distributed leadership can facilitate organisational responsiveness by mobilising expertise across different roles.

The fourteenth theme, team cohesion and informal support, highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships during the relocation. Participants described cooperation among staff and interaction that extended beyond formal working responsibilities. This finding reinforces the relational character of both distributed leadership and emotional intelligence, as trust and interpersonal support can strengthen collective efforts during periods of uncertainty.

The fifteenth theme, collective problem-solving, demonstrates how staff worked together to address practical challenges as they emerged. Participants described handling issues on a case-by-case basis and determining who would take responsibility for particular tasks. This finding supports Spillane's (2006) argument that leadership is enacted through practice and interaction and

demonstrates the value of collective expertise during organisational change.

The sixteenth theme, real-time feedback and adjustment, indicates that staff feedback contributed directly to decisions during the relocation. Participants reported being asked for their views and seeing changes implemented promptly. This reflects participatory leadership and demonstrates how communication can operate as a two-way process during organisational change.

The seventeenth theme, flexibility in decision implementation, demonstrates that relocation plans were adjusted when circumstances changed. Participants explained that some decisions had to be reconsidered because of practical conditions at the new premises. This finding highlights the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in change management and demonstrates that distributed leadership operated within an environment requiring continuous adjustment.

The eighteenth theme, emotional intelligence as a change enabler, brings together the relationship between the two central constructs of the study. Participants associated respectful and emotionally responsive leadership with their ability to cope with the demands of relocation and continue working toward organisational objectives. This finding supports the argument that emotional intelligence can strengthen the relational conditions under which distributed leadership is enacted.

Taken together, the empirical findings indicate that distributed leadership contributed to the relocation through shared responsibility, decentralised participation, flexible role allocation, collective problem-solving, and participatory decision-making. Emotional intelligence complemented these practices through trust, emotional awareness, empathy, supportive relationships, and respect for employees' experiences. The findings therefore suggest that the effectiveness of leadership during the relocation was associated not only with how responsibilities were distributed but also with how organisational members experienced and responded to the emotional demands of change.

Summary, Conclusion, And Recommendations

6.1 Summary

This study examined the relationship between distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in managing organisational change during the relocation of the Global Banking School (GBS) Malta Office. The study focused particularly on how shared responsibility, collaborative

decision-making, openness and trust, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy shaped organisational adaptability, responsiveness, and communication during the relocation process.

A qualitative case study approach was adopted, with data obtained from five purposively selected management staff

who had relevant knowledge and experience of the relocation. The data were analysed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis. The analysis generated 18 interrelated themes that captured participants' experiences of leadership, emotional relationships, communication, collaboration, and adaptation during the organisational transition.

The findings indicate that although strategic direction and some aspects of decision-making remained centrally guided, the practical implementation of the relocation involved substantial distributed leadership. Staff members assumed responsibilities beyond their formal roles, participated in decision-making, responded to emerging operational needs, and worked collaboratively to resolve problems. Shared responsibility, decentralised leadership, clarity in delegation, responsiveness in role shifting, and collective problem-solving were therefore important features of the relocation process.

Emotional intelligence also emerged as an important relational dimension of the change process. Participants described experiences involving trust, emotional safety, awareness of the emotional climate, recognition of emotional demands, empathy, and respect for individual experiences. These practices appeared to support staff morale, cooperation, and willingness to contribute during demanding periods.

Overall, the findings suggest that distributed leadership and emotional intelligence operated in complementary ways. Distributed leadership created opportunities for shared participation and responsibility, while emotional intelligence supported the interpersonal relationships and emotional conditions necessary for effective collaboration. Together, these practices were associated with staff adaptability, responsiveness, communication, and cooperation during the relocation.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that distributed leadership and emotional intelligence were important dimensions of the organisational change process at the GBS Malta Office during its relocation. The findings show that while strategic leadership remained present at the organisational level, the implementation of relocation activities involved considerable participation and responsibility across staff members.

Distributed leadership was reflected in the sharing of responsibilities, decentralised participation, flexible role allocation, collaborative problem-solving, and staff involvement in decisions affecting the relocation. Employees were able to contribute beyond their formal positions when emerging operational demands required additional support. This suggests that leadership during

organisational change can be enacted through everyday interactions and collective practices rather than through formal authority alone.

Emotional intelligence complemented these leadership practices by supporting trust, emotional awareness, empathy, openness, and supportive relationships. Participants' experiences indicate that emotionally responsive leadership helped create conditions in which staff could communicate concerns, seek support, adapt to changing circumstances, and remain engaged with organisational tasks.

The findings further demonstrate the importance of adaptability and responsiveness during organisational change. Relocation involved changing circumstances, operational pressures, and unexpected challenges that required staff to adjust plans and responsibilities. The combination of distributed participation and emotionally supportive relationships appeared to facilitate this adjustment.

The study therefore concludes that effective management of organisational change requires attention not only to structures, plans, and responsibilities but also to the human and relational dimensions of change. Leadership practices that encourage participation, trust, communication, flexibility, and emotional awareness can provide supportive conditions for employees navigating significant organisational transitions.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing qualitative evidence on the relationship between distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in the context of organisational change. Much of the literature considers distributed leadership and emotional intelligence as separate areas of leadership research. This study brings the two perspectives together and demonstrates how they can operate concurrently during a significant organisational transition.

First, the study contributes to distributed leadership literature by demonstrating how leadership can be enacted through shared responsibility, flexible role allocation, collaborative decision-making, and collective problem-solving during organisational change. The findings show that distributed leadership may emerge through practical organisational demands and staff interactions rather than exclusively through formal delegation.

Second, the study contributes to the understanding of emotional intelligence by highlighting its relational and organisational dimensions. Emotional intelligence was reflected not only in individual emotional capabilities but also in trust-building, emotional support, awareness of staff

experiences, empathy, and the creation of an open working environment.

Third, the study provides an empirical case from a higher education organisation undergoing physical and operational relocation. The findings provide contextual insight into leadership and change management within a relatively small and dynamic organisational setting. This adds to the literature by illustrating how leadership practices operate during a real organisational transition involving changing roles, operational pressures, and interpersonal demands.

Finally, the study contributes to the emerging discussion on the intersection of distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change. It suggests that the effectiveness of shared leadership practices may depend partly on the emotional and relational conditions within which those practices occur.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for organisations and leaders managing similar organisational transitions:

1. Encourage shared responsibility: Even where strategic leadership remains centralised, employees should be encouraged to take ownership of appropriate tasks and responsibilities within clearly defined boundaries. This can strengthen participation, responsiveness, and commitment during organisational change.

2. Develop emotional intelligence capabilities: Organisations should provide opportunities for leaders and employees to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. These capabilities can support constructive communication and relationships during periods of uncertainty and pressure.

3. Recognise informal contributions: Management should acknowledge contributions that employees make beyond their formal job descriptions, particularly where such contributions support organisational continuity during periods of change. Recognition can encourage initiative and reinforce a culture of shared responsibility.

4. Strengthen communication: Organisations should maintain timely, transparent, and two-way communication throughout change processes. Regular communication can reduce uncertainty, clarify responsibilities, facilitate feedback, and strengthen trust between management and employees.

5. Maintain flexibility in implementation: While clear strategic objectives and responsibilities are important, change plans should allow sufficient flexibility for organisations to respond to unforeseen circumstances.

Feedback from employees and other relevant stakeholders should be considered when adjustments become necessary.

6. Promote team cohesion and supportive relationships:

Organisations should create opportunities for employees to interact, share concerns, provide mutual support, and develop constructive working relationships. Regular informal check-ins and collaborative activities can help strengthen cohesion during demanding transitions.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted as a qualitative case study of the relocation of the GBS Malta Office. The focus on a single organisational setting provided detailed and contextualised insights into participants' experiences; however, it limits the extent to which the findings can be transferred directly to other institutions, organisational sectors, or larger organisations.

The study also involved five purposively selected management staff. Although the participants possessed relevant knowledge and experience of the relocation, their perspectives may not represent the experiences of all employees or other stakeholder groups, including students and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, data were collected at a particular stage of the relocation process and therefore provide a contextual account of participants' experiences rather than a longitudinal assessment of organisational change. The study did not examine the longer-term effects of distributed leadership and emotional intelligence on organisational culture, employee retention, job satisfaction, or organisational performance.

Finally, as with qualitative research generally, the interpretation of participants' accounts involved researcher judgement during coding and thematic development. Although appropriate procedures were applied to support credibility and consistency, the possibility of interpretive influence cannot be completely eliminated.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In view of the findings and limitations of the study, further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. Comparative studies across GBS campuses: Future researchers could compare distributed leadership and emotional intelligence practices across GBS campuses in different countries. Such research could examine how cultural, institutional, and regulatory contexts shape leadership practices and employee experiences during organisational change.

2. Longitudinal research on emotional intelligence: Future studies could examine the longer-term relationship between emotional intelligence and outcomes such as

employee retention, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and workplace relationships following relocation or organisational restructuring.

3. Mixed-method research on institutional transitions:

Future research could adopt a mixed-method approach to examine how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence relate to student engagement, student support services, employee experiences, and organisational outcomes during major institutional transitions such as mergers, relocation, restructuring, or digital transformation.

4. Research involving multiple stakeholder groups:

Future studies could include management, employees, students, and other relevant stakeholders to provide a broader understanding of how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence are experienced across different organisational groups.

5. Cross-sector studies: Researchers could examine the relationship between distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and organisational change across different sectors, including higher education, healthcare, non-governmental organisations, and private businesses, to determine how contextual differences influence these leadership practices.

In conclusion, further research can build on the present study by using larger and more diverse samples, multiple organisational settings, longitudinal designs, and mixed-method approaches. Such studies would provide additional evidence on how distributed leadership and emotional intelligence interact in different organisational change contexts.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE GLOBAL BANKING SCHOOL MALTA OFFICE RELOCATION

Section A: Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. I am conducting a research study on the relationship between distributed leadership and emotional intelligence in managing organizational change, using the GBS Malta Office as a case study. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used purely for academic purposes. There are no right or wrong answers, we are only interested in your honest opinions and experiences. With your permission, I would like to record this session to ensure accuracy in data collection. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any point.

Section B: Background Information

1. What is your current role at Global Banking School Malta?

2. How long have you been with the organization?
3. Have you been involved in any organizational change initiative at GBS Malta?

Section C: Interview Questions

1. What was your role at the time of the GBS Malta office relocation, and how (if at all) were you affected by the process?
2. Did you notice any patterns in how leadership responsibilities were shared or distributed across different people or departments during the relocation?
3. Even if you were not directly involved in decisions, were there opportunities to contribute your views or feedback during the relocation process?
4. Did it feel like leadership during the relocation was centralised or more distributed? How did this affect staff experience and engagement?
5. In your opinion, were responsibilities during the move delegated clearly and fairly, or was there confusion about who was leading what?

6. To what extent did leaders or managers show awareness of the emotional impact the relocation might have on staff?
7. Were there moments during the process where emotions such as stress, anxiety, excitement became visible in the team? How were these managed?
8. Did you observe any efforts from leadership to maintain trust, morale, or cohesion during the relocation?
9. How would you describe the communication style from management during the change? Was it timely, transparent, and reassuring?
10. Were any emotional reactions (positive or negative) dismissed or overlooked by leaders? How did this affect the atmosphere at work?
11. Did the relocation create a sense of uncertainty or instability? If so, what leadership behaviours helped reduce or increase this feeling?
12. Were people encouraged to support each other informally, even if they weren't part of formal leadership?
13. How flexible and responsive do you feel the organisation was when unexpected issues arose during the move?
14. Do you think emotional intelligence played a role whether positive or lacking in how the relocation was handled overall? Please explain.
15. If the organisation were to go through a similar change again, what would you advise leaders to do differently in terms of sharing leadership and managing emotions?

APPENDIX II

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Participant ID	Gender	Role at Time of Relocation	Department	Length of Service
P1	Male	Director of Operations / Project Lead	Executive / Operations	3+ years
P2	Female	Admin Officer / Early Hire	Administration	3+ year
P3	Male	Group HR / Strategic Liaison	Human Resources	3+ years
P4	Male	Visa & Compliance Officer	Compliance / Student Support	2+year
P5	Male	Senior Compliance Officer	Compliance / Operations	3+ years

APPENDIX III

RAW DATA TABLE SHOWING DERIVATION OF THEMES

Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Final Themes
Taking multiple roles across departments; stepping outside KPIs	Multi-role engagement	Shared Responsibilities Across Roles
Leadership responsibilities given gradually; autonomy with guidance	Progressive delegation	Decentralised Leadership Practice
Seamless task clarity; clearly assigned roles	Clear communication of duties	Clarity in Delegation
Everyone did everything; hierarchy ignored	Role blending by necessity	Leadership by Necessity
Shifting roles to accommodate emerging tasks	Flexibility and responsiveness	Responsiveness in Role Shifting
Hierarchy didn't matter; mutual contributions valued	Egalitarian decision-making	Functional Egalitarianism
Trust from leaders in junior staff; responsibility based on competence	Empowerment and trust	Trust and Empowerment
Supportive correction, not punishment; rebuild culture when errors occur	Safety in error and response	Emotional Safety and Openness
Layout encourages connection; senior leaders co-located with staff	Intentional proximity and visibility	Awareness of Emotional Climate

Emergency phone duty rotation; personal time sacrifice for students	Emotional burden recognised	Emotional Labour Recognition
Input on workspace arrangement; participatory decisions	Personalised attention and respect	Respect for Emotional Experience
Open office design; same space for staff and students	Spatially designed for inclusivity	Emotionally Intelligent Space Design
Working weekends; no complaints; problem-solving mindset	Agile and self-directed team spirit	Adaptability and Agility
Socialising after work; mutual assistance across teams and students	Informal collaboration and community	Team Cohesion and Informal Support
“Case-by-case” issue resolution; shared decision responsibility	Joint accountability in resolution	Collective Problem-Solving
Asked for feedback; changes made quickly	Fast reaction to staff input	Real-Time Feedback and Adjustment
Reacting flexibly to unexpected outcomes; adapting to delay	Dynamic implementation	Flexibility in Decision Implementation
EI acknowledged as key to success; staff felt emotionally respected	Emotional culture as success driver	Emotional Intelligence as a Change Enabler