

**Empathetic Leadership as a Catalyst for Enhanced Job Performance: A Conceptual
Exploration**
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In today's competitive, post-pandemic environment, organisations are striving to expand globally but face challenges, particularly in recruiting, training, and retaining a high-performing workforce. Therefore, employee job performance is crucial for gaining a competitive edge and has been a key focus in organisational behaviour research. Among the many antecedents of employee job performance, leaders and their leadership behaviours play a pivotal role in influencing followers' attitudes and job performance, both directly and indirectly. Thus, evaluating the impact of leadership styles, such as narcissism and empathy, can benefit businesses. Additionally, fostering a culture of dignity in the workplace is essential for retaining talent and enhancing job performance in the post-pandemic era.

Empathy is an effective tool for leaders to enhance employee satisfaction and performance, fostering mutual trust and respect. Lack of empathy can lead to leader-follower abuse and reduced job performance. Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to convey empathic emotion, defined as understanding what others are feeling, to enhance healthy leader-follower relationships and foster organisational growth. Therefore, empathetic leaders understand and support their followers' emotions, improving performance and creating positive states. They manage relationships by acknowledging and validating employees' experiences, showing genuine concern, and ensuring workplace security. Empathy also triggers friendly, supportive behaviours, leading to respectful interactions, better job performance from followers and a high-quality exchange relationship. Therefore, the anticipated results of this research are expected to substantially contribute to strengthening transparent leader-follower dynamics and improve performance at different organisational levels by cultivating a culture anchored in empathetic orientation.

Keywords: Empathetic Leadership, Employee Job Performance.

I certify that the above research topic aligns with the PhD research project Ms. Menaka Nishanthi Hewawaduge undertook.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of two distinct parts. The first part is a stylized 'M' followed by a small 'F'. The second part is a more complex, flowing signature that ends with a small loop.

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Professor Mario Fernando