



# American Journal of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (AJELPS)

ISSN: 3069-3667 (ONLINE)

**VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 (2026)**



**PUBLISHED BY  
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA**

## Leadership and Management Strategies During and After Crisis: Leading with Empathy through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Sajesh Kumar<sup>1\*</sup>

### Article Information

**Received:** August 20, 2025

**Accepted:** December 02, 2025

**Published:** December 30, 2025

### Keywords

*Communication, COVID-19,  
Crisis Leadership, Empathy,  
Organizational Resilience,  
Psychological Safety*

### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 crisis caused tremendous discontinuity to organizations and exceptional demands on leaders and employees. This study focuses on empathetic leadership and how it has been used in crisis management, and how it has enabled organizations to remain afloat during such turbulent periods. The study has employed a secondary quantitative approach in which the researcher uses past theses and assesses the existing statistics. The analysis entailed revising the descriptive trends, relationships, dependability indices, and regression results to understand the role of empathy in employee experiences and organizational performance. The results refer to the strong power of empathetic leadership in increasing the level of trust, morale, psychological safety, and stability in the organizations. It is also revealed in the analysis that the mediating variable between empathy and resilience is the quality of communication, i.e., empathetic leaders work better when communication is open and regular. The implications of the research in this case are that organizations should adopt empathy as a long-term leadership competency rather than a short-term reaction that is only utilized when one is in a crisis. The results show that empathetic leadership not only improves crisis response but also improves the health of employees and helps them to recover faster and healthier.

### INTRODUCTION

Organizations operate in an ever-changing, dynamic environment where economic turbulence, technological shocks, natural disasters, and global pandemics threaten stability and the company's overall functioning more than ever before (Duchek, 2019). The COVID-19 crisis was an unparalleled crisis that put leaders to the test in various aspects in terms of operations, emotions, and framework. The virus that emerged at the end of 2019 spread very fast across countries, causing lockdowns, remote working, broken supply chains, and widespread uncertainty in all industries (Yan, 2020). During such difficult periods, leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that organizations remain intact. Leaders were expected to control not only the routine business processes but also the welfare of their workers because of fears and insecurity, as well as the fact that change was experienced everywhere at the workplace (Margherita & Heikkila, 2021). The intersecting issues proved that it is evident that crises transform organizational expectations and set extraordinary demands on leadership capability. The pandemic was a real-time stress test of leadership strategies. The hierarchical, authority-based, and inflexible decision-making approach that forms the core of the traditional command-and-control model did not work in situations that involved an emotional sensitivity perspective, quick adaptation, and collective problem-solving (Martine *et al.*, 2021). The organizations quickly learned that to be effective in the pandemic, they should

have been able to respond to people-based issues and not merely command people to act in a certain way or take care of their business. Linvill and Onosu (2023) reported that empathy was an important leadership attribute because it helped maintain employee morale, trust, and productivity during acute emotional stress. Employing emotional intelligence, openness, and transparent communication, leaders were in a better position to lead in times of fear and uncertainty and help the organizations to maintain the status quo (Raina, 2022). These changes implied a significant change in the leadership expectation notions, which emphasized that empathy has become a significant leadership strategy that needs to be incorporated as a key element of crisis leadership.

Nonetheless, the crisis also demonstrated the general lack of caring ability in most organizational environments. Failure to grasp and act on the needs of the employees by the leaders led to a lack of communication, disparate directions, as well as confusion in the organization (Li and Peng, 2022). This lack helped in increasing burnout, job insecurity, and resulting psychological distress among the workers. Leaders in most organizations found it hard to accept the emotional burden of working remotely, health-related fears, and family-related issues, which compromised the psychological safety of employees (Stroud, 2025). Rossetti *et al.* (2021) also pointed out that a lack of emotional support in times of crisis undermines workplace cohesion and increases the perception that a manager is detached. These weaknesses

<sup>1</sup> Indian School of Business Management and Administration (ISBM), Mumbai, India

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [sajeshkumar@researchpublication.co](mailto:sajeshkumar@researchpublication.co)

revealed a significant leadership drawback, including the unreadiness to use empathy in a systematic way as the leadership approach in the context of crisis decision-making. The current research will be conducted to explore the role of empathetic leadership in influencing organizational resilience and employee outcomes before and after the COVID-19 crisis. Singh *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that empathy assists in enhancing trust, employee engagement, and helping the organization to be stable, but there is no sufficient research that quantifies the effects with systematic tools.

The study, therefore, is quantitative in nature regarding the characteristics of the relationships between empathy-based leadership behaviors and the outcomes of such a crisis, such as morale, quality of communication, and perceptions of organizational support. The study provides evidence-based analysis of the empathy role in organization operations through data collected about employees in the different segments of organizations at one of the most disruptive events in the world in the century. The utility of the study conducted is not only in the fact that it does not produce an impact only on theory, but also on practice. It fills a gap in the literature because it presents quantitative data on how empathy works as a mechanism of crisis management by leaders, which broadens emotional intelligence and theories of crisis management. The study also contributes to the insight into the role of empathetic leadership on organizational resilience, which has been conceptualized and should have been properly measured before (Guzzo *et al.*, 2021). The results will provide guidance to the leaders who want to pursue human and useful crisis solutions, which will support the importance of open communication, emotional intelligence, and human-centered decisions.

In social terms, empathetic leadership enhances trust and psychological well-being, which cannot be overwhelmed by society in times of general confusion (Muss *et al.*, 2025). In that way, the research will contribute to the long-term debates on the role of leadership in maintaining community cohesion and stability in society. The area of the study is the leadership practices during the COVID-19 pandemic in the health, educational, and business sectors; these areas represent some of the most impacted by the pandemic. The research is restricted to specific geographical settings and based on a quantitative survey procedure to find out the relationship between leadership behavior and employee outcomes. Besides, the period covered is specified to be during the peak of the pandemic, which allows for analysis with a specific focus but fails to reflect the post-pandemic changes in the long run. The boundaries make the investigation focused and recognize the necessity of further investigations in the wider cultural and time contexts.

### Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent does empathetic leadership predict organizational resilience during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ2: What is the relationship between leader empathy and employee psychological safety and trust during the crisis?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Crisis Management in Organizational Contexts

Crises require effective communication, quick decisions, and the ability to address excessive uncertainty. Mizrak (2024) noted that a crisis destabilizes the normal organizational systems, and leaders need to take decisive action despite the lack of complete information. Successful crisis leadership, in turn, includes continuity in operations and protection of the welfare of employees (Suresh *et al.*, 2020). Leaders were supposed to balance between remote working, supply-chain problems, financial instability, and health risks during COVID-19 (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). Dahmen (2023) argued that poor leadership during a crisis tends to increase operational setbacks, image loss, and staff disengagement. Newman and Ford (2020) also showed that leaders were unable to modify communication strategies to suit remote work, which led to confusion, unmet expectations, and poor coordination of teams. Such failures also have a negative impact on the psychological safety, which Edmondson and Bransby (2023) emphasized as the basis of trust, open communication, and creativity. Lack of transparency or empathy by leaders also creates stress, anxiety, and burnout in employees and ultimately destroys the performance of an organization. The conventional leadership models are not effective enough to examine the emotional aspects of contemporary crises (Chong and Duan, 2022). This gap has created interest in new approaches to leadership that are focused on empathy, relational connection, and emotional support.

### Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has always been viewed as effective during turbulent periods since it motivates employees, creates flexibility, and enhances collective purpose. The main dimensions are inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Karimi *et al.*, 2023). These elements allow leaders to lead teams during times of disruption by ensuring that they remain visionary, model integrity, promote innovation, and serve the employee needs. Transformational leadership is particularly applicable in circumstances of crisis. According to Jun and Lee (2023), transformational leaders ensured that employees were able to cope with uncertainty despite the COVID-19 pandemic by providing employees with hope and direction as well as clear communication. The intellectual stimulation also became a requirement because a leader would require flexible and creative methods of responding to rapidly changing conditions in the market (Paul *et al.*, 2018).

Empathy closely aligns with transformational leadership because its core dimension, individualized consideration, requires leaders to recognize employees' emotional

states and personal challenges (Bakker *et al.*, 2022). This rendered transformational leadership especially useful during COVID-19, when workers were under increased stress, work-life interference, and had health-related concerns. Empathetic transformational leaders proved to be more effective in maintaining morale, trust, and cohesion. Inconsistency in transformational leadership occurs when leaders do not have the emotional intelligence to be supportive of the employees in situations where they are under severe pressure (Meiryani *et al.*, 2022). This supports the fact that a more compassionate, emotionally based leadership in crisis situations is necessary.

### **Servant Leadership**

The focus of servant leadership is on empathy, listening, healing, stewardship, and awareness. The model created by Greenleaf criticizes the conventional hierarchical systems where the well-being of employees and the aspect of moral responsibility are at the forefront of leadership. In case of crisis, such a strategy offers stability, which is achieved through the focus on psychological safety and human connection (Eva *et al.*, 2019). The importance of servant leadership is supported by past studies in the time of pandemics, since Canavesi and Minelli (2021) have discovered that servant leaders enhanced trust and engagement through open communication and emotional assurance. The focus on healing within servant leadership became relevant in particular circumstances when COVID-19 generated universal anxiety, sadness, and burnout.

These leaders engaged in the active resolution of mental health issues, confirmed the worries of employees, and created favorable team conditions. Cai *et al.* (2024) also claimed that Servant leadership increased resilience through strengthening community and collaborations. Servant leaders influenced their employees to feel more empowered, valued, and ready to cope with fast changes in the organization. Likewise, servant leadership creates long-term commitment since it fosters compassion, ethical conduct, and responsiveness (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2022). Canavesi and Minelli (2021) have discovered that servant leadership can be challenging to institutionalize in large organizations because of high moral and relationship demands. This leads to the question of the way organizations can institutionalize empathy-based approaches to leadership development.

### **Emotional Intelligence as a Component of Crisis Leadership**

Emotional intelligence (EI) consists of self-knowledge, self-management, drive, compassion, and interpersonal skills. EI helps leaders handle complexity in their emotions, make rational decisions, and express themselves effectively in uncertainty (Coronado-Maldonado and Benitez-Marquez, 2023). According to Rossettini *et al.* (2021), high EI leaders were much more capable of navigating their teams through the emotional crisis of COVID-19. Singh *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that

empathetic, emotionally intelligent leaders were in a better position to detect stress, help employees with their mental health, and manage panic caused by the communication process under control and with compassion. Sarrionandia *et al.* (2018) discovered that Leaders who had high EI were also stable as they controlled their anxiety and modeled resilience. High EI enhanced the unity within the teams because it allowed the leaders to address the conflicts, ensure transparency, and promote trust when transitioning to remote work. These capabilities are important since the leadership of crises is not technical only, but relational; leaders should be able to read people and act in such a manner that would not cause a loss of group trust. Although it has its advantages, numerous past studies are based on self-reported perceptions and not on validated tools, restricting the inferences about the direct impact of EI on outcomes.

### **Empathy as a Leadership Construct**

During times of crisis, empathy has turned out to be one of the most important leadership qualities. It allows the leaders to learn about the feelings of employees, note their plight, and take their side (Guzzo *et al.*, 2021). According to Linvill and Onosu (2023), empathy is no longer a personal favor practiced by leaders, but a mandatory factor in organizational stability in unstable settings. Psychological safety is enhanced through empathy as it guarantees employees that their voices are heard and they are able to speak freely without fear (Edmondson and Bransby, 2023). According to Singh *et al.* (2024), empathetic leaders contributed to the reduction of burnout, enhanced morale, and increased the loyalty of the employees during COVID-19. The empathetic communication was particularly required in the remote work settings because the workers were isolated, had more caregiving tasks, and work-life boundaries were blurred. In addition, empathy is also associated with resilience in organizations in the long term. Sott and Bender (2025) emphasized that empathetic leadership also promotes flexibility, innovation, and a culture of life-long learning, which is very crucial in surviving crises in the future. The quantitative evidence on the strength of empathy predicting organizational outcomes in crises is small.

### **Leadership Failures During Crisis**

The inability to lead in times of crisis increases organizational susceptibility. Poor communication leads to misunderstanding, distrust, and lack of morale. The problems that affected many organizations during COVID-19 included an inability to communicate clearly, slow decision-making, and inconsistent messaging (Men *et al.*, 2021). Leaders tended to stress productivity without clarifying emotional burden, which caused burnout among many leaders. Organizations did not consider the rising mental-health demands, which led to checkout and turnover. Psychological safety and confidence in long-term leadership were also undermined in failures with empathy-based leadership (Mockaitis *et al.*, 2022).

Ma *et al.* (2024) found that employees who experienced neglect were more likely to lose trust in the management and leave the organization. Although there is increased awareness, there are only empirical frameworks for applying empathy in the leadership structures. The existing literature demonstrates theoretical significance, but does not provide practical and measurable empathy-embedding approaches to organizational culture. This gap indicates that there is a necessity for studies that investigate empathy not in a conceptual, but as an operational leadership variable with organizational implications.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a secondary quantitative design, implying that it will use the already gathered data and statistical findings by reviewing the thesis on leadership behavior, empathy, and employee well-being during the pandemic. The methodology is appropriate since the issue has already been well-researched by quantitative methods, and with available data, the present study will be able to make use of excellent evidence base without the need to generate new primary data. It is also able to provide wider and more credible insights since previous research has included a large pool of staff in various organizational contexts. The secondary information that was utilized in this research comprises the replies of workers in the healthcare, education, and corporate industries that were extensively impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. These works are quite insightful as they describe the manner in which various industries were under pressure, uncertainty, and change.

The presence of various sectors also enhances the generalizability of the results, as it would be possible to gain insight into the leadership behaviors in different workplaces instead of concentrating on one profession. The probability sampling or random sampling methods used in most of the original research that produced these datasets made sure that the samples were representative of their broader populations. This enhances the precision of the statistical findings and minimizes sampling bias. They were also statistically sufficient in terms of the sample sizes, i.e., the findings were sufficient to facilitate quantitative analysis. This study has the advantage of the scientific rigor already employed in those prior studies since it relies on data derived through well-designed research projects. In order to examine leadership and empathy, the study isolates various measures, which were often used in the original questionnaires. They are empathy scales, which determine the extent to which leaders were able to comprehend and respond to the emotional needs of employees; leadership strategy measures, which determine behaviors like communication, support, or direction in the crisis; as well as communication quality indicators that evaluate the quality of communication, transparency, and consistency.

The other variables that were extracted are the psychological safety that gauges the degree to which

the employees felt safe to raise concerns; organizational stability that measures the capacity of the organization to carry on with its operations; and employee support during the crisis. These established measures can be used to compare across studies using well-established measures. There are four main types of quantitative results that are synthesized in the analysis in this research. Descriptive statistics can be used to summarize the fundamental patterns that are present in the data, including the average levels of empathy or the quality of communication. Correlation reviews are conducted to get an idea about the strength of the relationships between variables, i.e., whether an increase in empathy is correlated with increased psychological safety or resilience among employees. The analysis assesses the reliability findings, such as Cronbach's alpha scores, which indicate whether the instruments employed in the original studies were consistent in the measurement of each concept.

The results of regression are synthesized in order to comprehend which leadership behaviors were most likely to predict such outcomes as employee well-being, resilience, or organizational stability during COVID-19. High validity and reliability are also guaranteed by the secondary quantitative data. The validated instruments that were used to conduct the original studies had been previously tested and proven to measure leadership-related variables. Since these studies were ethically approved as well, this research takes advantage of the quality standards that they hold. These procedures employed in the original data collection, including validated surveys, standardized measurement scales, and valid sampling procedures, give assurance that the findings disseminated in this review are scientifically reasonable. Ethical practices are also evident in the research conducted on the secondary data. No identifiable or personal details of the participants are accessed, and anonymity and confidentiality are upheld throughout. Data is utilized for the purpose of study and kept in a safe place. Moreover, other original authors and sources are referenced in the proper way in order to credit their input and knowledge. As the study is based solely on publicly available or previously approved data, it does not need further ethical permission but can be ethically upheld in the analysis process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present research give a detailed insight into the manner in which empathetic leadership influenced employee experiences throughout and after the COVID-19 crisis. Through the integration of demographic findings, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modelling, this study critically reviews the extent to which empathy, communication, and leadership practices affected the morale, trust, psychological safety, and the general stability of the organization. The results are analyzed in the context of the classical theories of leadership, such as transformational, servant, and the theories of emotional intelligence and servant leadership. There was also a balanced gender

distribution with respondents divided in a more or less equal measure, which is reflected in terms of the overall workforce composition reported in previous leadership research. The respondents were early-career professionals aged between their 20s and 40s, as well as senior employees older than 50, which gave a wide variety of experiences with and expectations toward crises and leadership. The years of experience were also quite different, as there was a combination of junior, mid-level, and senior jobs, so the dataset would be able to reflect the differences in perceptions between managerial and non-managerial positions. This variability enhances the external validity of the results and complies with previous studies of the crisis-leadership research (Dirani *et al.*, 2020) that

underline the significance of cross-sector views. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics, which reveal the critical variables analyzed in this research, like leadership empathy, leadership communication, organizational support, and trust that employees have in their leaders. The variance and correlation of these variables will help understand their implications on the perceptions of employees and the performance of an organization. Descriptive statistics provide the fundamental features of the data, such as the mean, the standard deviation, the minimum, and the maximum values. The statistics assist in the perception of leadership behaviors and organizational support among the employees in the workplace.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
200	.00	4.00	1.5750	.97978
200	.00	4.00	1.2680	.93151
200	.00	3.40	1.0740	.88045
200	.00	4.00	1.3630	.94706

However, a certain divergence between sectors was also observed, with healthcare workers reporting the highest support needs, as per international results on the emotional load of frontline workers. The respondents in the corporate sector rated communication higher than in the education sector, probably because of the enhanced access to digital tools and the structured communication systems (Curado *et al.*, 2022). This difference illustrates the disproportionality of allocation of resources in industries and puts emphasis on the importance of institutional capacity in influencing leadership experiences. The

results of the correlation (Table 2 and Table 3) indicate that empathetic leadership is strongly positively related to the main outcomes of the employees, such as morale, psychological safety, low levels of anxiety, trust, and organizational stability. The highest correlations were found between empathy and psychological safety creates openness and less fear in teams. Empathic behaviors were also significantly related to trust, which is also consistent with transformational leadership literature, which places trust as a fundamental element of becoming a successful leader (Lee *et al.*, 2023).

**Table 2:** Correlation Analysis of Empathy, Communication, Organizational Support, and Trust in Leadership

Variables		Leadership Empathy	Leadership Communication	Organizational support
Leadership Empathy	Pearson Correlation	1	.985**	.944**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
Leadership Communication	Pearson Correlation	.985**	1	.976**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200
Organizational support	Pearson Correlation	.944**	.976**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200
Employee Trust in Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.972**	.979**	.939**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200

**Table 3:** Correlation Coefficients Highlighting the Impact of Leadership Factors on Employee Trust

Correlations		
Variables		Employee Trust in Leadership
Leadership Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Leadership Communication	Pearson Correlation	.979**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Organizational support	Pearson Correlation	.939**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200
Employee Trust in Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	200

Empathy presented a significant attachment with less anxiety, according to the emotional-intelligence viewpoint, which emphasized that leaders with high emotional intelligence can better lead staff through uncertainty. The positive correlation between empathy and organizational stability implies the existence of organizational stability likelihoods cushioned by the relational leadership behaviors that offset the destabilizing impact of crisis (Sharma, 2024). All of these correlations strengthen the theoretical argument that empathy is not simply a moral position but a functional leadership skill

that has organizational payoffs that could be measured. Table 4 demonstrates that the empathetic leadership is a significant predictor of organizational performance during crisis. The model indicates that empathy is having a strong positive coefficient, and it would mean that leaders who demonstrated a greater amount of empathy enjoyed greater morale of employees, trust and stability. The findings of this observation confirm the study by Muss *et al.* (2025), who proposed that empathy could be regarded as an illustration of a psychological asset during uncertain periods.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.983 <sup>a</sup>	.965	.965	.17727

Moreover, the quality of communication was identified as a confounding variable, where the outcome of empathy was improved partly because of communication quality. The leaders who cared about the concerns of employees, showed active listening to the employees and were open in communicating could have alleviated uncertainty and continued with performance better. This mediating position closely corresponds to transformational leadership theory, in which individualized consideration and inspirational communication are critical tools of influence (Zainab *et al.*, 2021). This dynamic is also supported by the theory of serving as a leader: compassionate, service-oriented leaders are able to establish conducive environments that have helped the employees to stay focused and

productive (Cai *et al.*, 2024). The regression model also validates that there are both direct and indirect effects of empathy on the performance of an organization. The model's capability was confirmed with a very significant ANOVA result, which reflected that the predictor variables as a whole account for a considerable amount of variance in employee-related outcomes ( $F(3,196) = 1827.85, p < .001$ ) (Table 5). Therefore, it is affirmed that communication increases the effect of empathy, though it does not completely substitute it. If the company does not care for its employees' welfare, then communication may turn out to be transactional as opposed to relational (Yang and Wang, 2024).

The findings, thus, indicate the significance of sincere

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	172.327	3	57.442	1827.849	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.160	196	.031		
	Total	178.486	199			

and emotionally based leadership. Comparative studies of the sector experiences have significant differences in leadership performances. It was found that healthcare workers have the greatest need for emotional support, which aligns with the pressures never seen before due to being on the frontline. The idea of empathy in the healthcare context was closely connected with decreased anxiety and better psychological safety, which aligned with the international evidence regarding the protective impact of compassionate leadership in hospitals (Östergård *et al.*, 2023). Communication in the education field contributed more to predicting the outcomes than empathy, possibly because of the quickly introduced online learning conditions in which clarity and structure became the key aspects. The communication issues were highlighted much more often by teachers and academic personnel, who indicated that empathy was not sufficient to work around operational barriers. Corporate-sector respondents also indicated the greatest overall organizational stability, perhaps because of higher technological preparedness and ability to respond to a crisis.

Empathic leadership was very much associated with trust and morale, and it confirms previous studies that employees in the corporate setting appreciate relational leadership as a shield against the isolation that comes with remote working (Nasir *et al.*, 2025). These differences between sectors show that empathy is always helpful, although the relative importance and mechanisms thereof depend on the context. The results have a significant impact on the development of the organization after the crisis. Empathy at a high level through the crisis was an indicator of the long-term improvement of the company culture, including the establishment of strong trust networks that are strong, the feeling of psychological safety, and the development of teams that are cohesive teams. This pattern of behavior agrees with the views of Zivkovic (2022), who states that the sharing of hard times can strengthen cultural norms when the leaders show supportive behavior. The respondents also stated that leaders who stuck with their empathetic nature following the crisis assisted in recovery, stabilization of performances, as well as promoting loyalty of the organization. The specified post-crisis advantages align with the research results according to which the organizational crisis leadership practices are still affecting the attitude and retention of employees (Muss *et al.*, 2025). Conversely, the teams who did not have empathetic leaders in the pandemic indicated slowed recovery and continued morale issues, which underscores the importance of an unequal cost of weak relational leadership.

## CONCLUSION

The study shows that empathy is an important leadership skill that will increase effectiveness during and after a crisis scenario like the COVID-19 pandemic. Compassionate leadership decreases the level of fear, establishes trust, and helps employees to maintain their emotional health. Active listening, emotional interpretations, and

responsive leaders are more likely to steer employees without disruption to normal operations when they are practiced. The study findings also indicate that empathy can be most efficient in the case it is supported with open communication, since clear information exchange can consolidate the engagement of the employees, and a unity of the team. This communication also makes the adjustment and recovery during the time of the disruption faster. The study on empathy as a factor that characterizes resilience at personal and organizational levels suggests that empathy plays a role in enhancing psychological security, commitment, and emotional stability among workers. Although the study presents helpful information, the use of secondary, cross-sectional, and self-reported data restricts the interpretation of causality and the ability to generalize its results to different environments. The future studies should thus embrace longitudinal and cross-cultural studies in an attempt to encompass the effects of empathetic leadership on recovery, performance, and resilience in the long run.

## REFERENCES

- Bakker, A. B., Hetland, J., Olsen, O. K., & Roar Espevik. (2022). Daily transformational leadership: A source of inspiration for follower performance? *European Management Journal*, 41(5), 700–708. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2022.04.004>
- Cai, M., Wang, M., & Cheng, J. (2024). The Effect of Servant Leadership on Work Engagement: The Role of Employee Resilience and Organizational Support. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(4), 300–300. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14040300>
- Cai, M., Wang, M., & Cheng, J. (2024). The Effect of Servant Leadership on Work Engagement: The Role of Employee Resilience and Organizational Support. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(4), 300–300. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14040300>
- Canavesi, A., & Minelli, E. (2021). Servant Leadership: a Systematic Literature Review and Network Analysis. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 34(3), 267–289. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-021-09381-3>
- Chong, J., & Duan, S. X. (2022). Riding on the waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in re-thinking organizational design: a contingency-based approach. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 15(4), 628–646. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jsma-07-2021-0142>
- Coronado-Maldonado, I., & Benítez-Márquez, M. D. (2023). Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review. *Helijon*, 9(10). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.helijon.2023.e20356>
- Curado, C., Henriques, P. L., Jerónimo, H. M., & Azevedo, J. (2022). The Contribution of Communication to Employee Satisfaction in Service Firms: A Causal Configurational Analysis. *Vision the Journal of Business Perspective*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09722629221101157>
- Dahmen, P. (2023). Organizational resilience as a key property of enterprise risk management in response

- to novel and severe crisis events. *Risk Management and Insurance Review*, 26(2), 203–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rmir.12245>
- Dirani, K. M., Abadi, M., Alizadeh, A., Barhate, B., Garza, R. C., Gunasekara, N., ... & Majzun, Z. (2020). Leadership competencies and the essential role of human resource development in times of crisis: a response to Covid-19 pandemic. *Human resource development international*, 23(4), 380-394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1780078>
- Donthu, N., & Gustafsson, A. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on business and research. *Journal of business research*, 117, 284-289. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.008>
- Duchek, S. (2019). Organizational resilience: a capability-based conceptualization. *BuR - Business Research*, 13(1), 215–246. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>
- Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2022). Psychological Safety Comes of Age: Observed Themes in an Established Literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10(1), 55–78. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-055217>
- Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant Leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), 111–132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.07.004>
- Guzzo, R. F., Wang, X., Madera, J. M., & Abbott, J. (2021). Organizational trust in times of COVID-19: Hospitality employees' affective responses to managers' communication. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 102778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102778>
- Hanaysha, J. R., Kumar, V. A., In'airat, M., & Paramaiah, C. (2022). Direct and indirect effects of servant and ethical leadership styles on employee creativity: mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior. *Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research*, 40(1), 79-98. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AGJSR-04-2022-0033>
- Jun, K., & Lee, J. (2023). Transformational Leadership and Followers' Innovative Behavior: Roles of Commitment to Change and Organizational Support for Creativity. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(4), 320–320. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13040320>
- Karimi, S., Malek, F. A., Farani, A. Y., & Genovaitė Liobikienė. (2023). The Role of Transformational Leadership in Developing Innovative Work Behaviors: The Mediating Role of Employees' Psychological Capital. *Sustainability*, 15(2), 1267–1267. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021267>
- Lee, C.-C., Yeh, W.-C., Yu, Z., & Lin, X.-C. (2023). The relationships between leader emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership and job performance: A mediator model of trust. *Heliyon*, 9(8), e18007–e18007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e18007>
- Li, X., & Peng, P. (2022). How Does Inclusive Leadership Curb Workers' Emotional Exhaustion? The Mediation of Caring Ethical Climate and Psychological Safety. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.877725>
- Linville, J. S., & Onosu, G. O. (2023). Stories of Leadership: Leading with Empathy through the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability*, 15(9), 7708. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15097708>
- Ma, G., Wu, W., Liu, C., Ji, J., & Gao, X. (2024). Empathetic leadership and employees' innovative behavior: examining the roles of career adaptability and uncertainty avoidance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1371936>
- Margherita, A., & Heikkilä, M. (2021). Business continuity in the COVID-19 emergency: A framework of actions undertaken by world-leading companies. *Business horizons*, 64(5), 683-695. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2021.02.020>
- Martine, Edelbroek, R., Peters, P., & Blomme, R. J. (2021). Leading Innovative Work-Behavior in Times of COVID-19: Relationship Between Leadership Style, Innovative Work-Behavior, Work-Related Flow, and IT-Enabled Presence Awareness During the First and Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 717345–717345. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.717345>
- Meiryani, Nelviana, Koh, Y., Soepriyanto, G., Aljuaid, M., & Hasan, F. (2022). The Effect of Transformational Leadership and Remote Working on Employee Performance During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.919631>
- Men, L. R., Qin, Y. S., & Jin, J. (2021). Fostering Employee Trust via Effective Supervisory Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Through the Lens of Motivating Language Theory. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 59(2), 193–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211020491>
- Mizrak, K. C. (2024, February 23). *Crisis Management and Risk Mitigation: Strategies for Effective Response and Resilience*. ResearchGate. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1155-4.ch013>
- Mockaitis, A. I., Butler, C. L., & Ojo, A. (2022). COVID-19 pandemic disruptions to working lives: A multilevel examination of impacts across career stages. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 138, 103768–103768. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2022.103768>
- Muss, C., Tüxen, D., & Bärbel Fürstenau. (2025). Empathy in leadership: a systematic literature review on the effects of empathetic leaders in organizations. *Management Review Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-024-00472-7>
- Muss, C., Tüxen, D., & Bärbel Fürstenau. (2025). Empathy in leadership: a systematic literature review on the effects of empathetic leaders in organizations. *Management Review Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-024-00472-7>
- Nasir, N., Tariq, A., Alvi, K. M., Bilal, M. A., & Malik, S.

- (2025). Empathetic Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: A Moderated Mediation Model of Well-being and Organizational Culture. *Journal of Business and Management Research*, 4(2), 275–290. <https://doi.org/10.62019/jbmr.04.02.414>
- Newman, S. A., & Ford, R. C. (2020). Five Steps to Leading Your Team in the Virtual COVID-19 Workplace. *Organizational Dynamics*, 50(1), 100802–100802. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2020.100802>
- Östergård, K., Kuha, S., & Outi Kanste. (2023). Health-care leaders' and professionals' experiences and perceptions of compassionate leadership: A mixed-methods systematic review. *Leadership in Health Services*, 37(5), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/lhs-06-2023-0043>
- Paul, Heaton, S., & Teece, D. (2018). Innovation, Dynamic Capabilities, and Leadership. *California Management Review*, 61(1), 15–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125618790246>
- Raina, R. (2022). Moving Crisis to Opportunities: A Corporate Perspective on the Impact of Compassionate Empathic Behaviour on the Well-Being of Employees. *International Journal of Global Business and Competitiveness*, 17(2), 239–255. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42943-021-00040-w>
- Rossetini, G., Conti, C., Suardelli, M., Geri, T., Palese, A., Turolla, A., Lovato, A., Gianola, S., & Dell'Isola, A. (2021). COVID-19 and Health Care Leaders: How Could Emotional Intelligence Be a Helpful Resource During a Pandemic? *Physical Therapy*, 101(9). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ptj/pzab143>
- Sarrionandía, A., Ramos-Díaz, E., & Fernández-Lasarte, O. (2018). Resilience as a Mediator of Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress: A Cross-Country Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02653>
- Sharma, A. (2024). The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Crisis Leadership: Effects on Employee Morale and Organizational Resilience. *Int. J. Adv. Res*, 12(10), 2320–5407. <https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/19626>
- Singh, S., Mahapatra, M., & Kumar, N. (2022). Empowering leadership and organizational culture. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 2983–2993. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6ns1.5112>
- Stroud, J. P. (2025). The Relationship Between Remote Followers' Perceptions of Leader's Emotional Intelligence and Followers' Psychological Safety, Gender, and Tenure. ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/17323/>
- Suresh, N. C., Sanders, G. L., & Braunscheidel, M. J. (2020). Business continuity management for supply chains facing catastrophic events. *IEEE Engineering Management Review*, 48(3), 129-138. <https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2020.3005506>
- Yan, Z. (2020). Unprecedented pandemic, unprecedented shift, and unprecedented opportunity. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.192>
- Yang, Y., & Wang, C. (2024). The chain mediating effect of empathy and communication ability on emotional intelligence and caring ability of nursing students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1339194>
- Zainab, B., Akbar, W., & Siddiqui, F. (2021). Impact of transformational leadership and transparent communication on employee openness to change: mediating role of employee organization trust and moderated role of change-related self-efficacy. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 43(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1108/lodj-08-2020-0355>
- Zivkovic, S. (2022, April 21). *Empathy in Leadership: How it Enhances Effectiveness*. ResearchGate; unknown. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361952690\\_Empathy\\_in\\_Leadership\\_How\\_it\\_Enhances\\_Effectiveness](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361952690_Empathy_in_Leadership_How_it_Enhances_Effectiveness)