Empathetic Leadership and Follower Workplace Engagement: Mediating Role of Climate for Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Although inclusive climate is an emerging approach in empathetic leadership to enhance workplace outcomes, limited research has shown how empathetic leaders create climate for inclusion. The basic aim of current study was to investigate the role of empathetic leaders to promote a climate for inclusion and to examine the effect on workplace outcomes. Survey method was used to collect data of female teachers from various universities. Data revealed that Empathetic leadership plays a vital role to create an inclusive climate for female teachers to engage at their workplace. Findings supported the research hypothesis and research model and established a connection between empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement.

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1. Introduction

People require support and encouragement in all aspects of life. The needed support is usually provided by friends and family outside the workplace. Whereas, at workplace a person gets the support and understanding of feelings (empathy) from coworkers as well as colleagues. Leaders can also provide their support and show empathy towards followers (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Moreover, leaders’ empathy can create an environment that leads towards the improvement of followers’ performance at their workplace (Bell & Hall, 1954; Holt & Marques, 2012; Kock et al., 2018). Empathy is the “ability to understand other person’s feelings and experience while supporting emotionally” which eventually increases their job satisfaction and work engagement by involving innovative ways (Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2010). Some level of empathy in the form of need and expressed behavior is present in every person. Research has shown that empathetic behavior helps leader to create an environment where the followers’ feelings can be understood (Kock et al., 2018).
Past researches indicate workplace climate for inclusion as an important approach to increase followers performance, but few have discussed the role of empathetic leadership to create this and its outcomes (Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2011). Engaged followers at workplace can achieve higher performance and empathetic leadership behavior (understanding their feelings) helps them to perform their tasks in an effective manner (Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011).

Many researchers investigated the relationship between empathetic leaders’ behavior and follower workplace engagement but the underlying mechanism i.e. climate for inclusion in this relation has not been fully explored by them (Rodriguez, 2018). Thus, the objective of this study was to inspect the interaction between empathetic leadership and climate for inclusion and their effect on follower workplace engagement. In this study, we focus on novel link among empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement by developing a conceptual model. The emphasis of empathetic leadership is on emotional link between follower and leader that how well a leader understand the working conditions of his followers and provide them with required emotional support to better engage them in their work activities (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020). The need of such leadership model increases as leaders try to create a climate for inclusion to engage their followers through empathetic leadership behavior.

We have developed our research model in following sections: empathetic leadership, follower’s workplace engagement and climate for inclusion, research methodology, conclusion and future discussions.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Empathetic Leadership and Climate for Inclusion

Empathy refers to place oneself in other’s position to understand what another person is feeling and experiencing (Ekman, 1999). Recently, various definitions of empathy are developed by researches comprising cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions however, there is lack of agreement on its outcomes (Clark, Robertson, & Young, 2019). Although, a consensus based definition of empathy is lacking in literature but scholars recognized empathy as a “multidimensional construct” which is operating at both state and trait levels (Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2016).

Some research scholars have discussed affective and cognitive dimensions of empathy but only few scholars provided evidence about the behavioral dimension of empathy (Graaff et al., 2016). When people react with open heart and display sympathetic feelings toward others hardships, researches use different terms like sympathy, compassion, empathy and emotional concern to describe this phenomenon (Klimecki, Leiberg, Lamm, & Singer, 2013). Being a new dimension of empathy, behavioral empathy require further research to identify the consequences of this phenomenon (Clark et al., 2019). Empathy has been recognized as a significant predictor for organizational behavior including leader-follower exchange (Croppanzano, Dasborough, & Weiss, 2017), forgiveness (Fehr & Gelfand, 2012), and crisis management (König et al., 2020). But, the role which is played by empathetic leadership behavior at work to create a climate for inclusion is yet to be elaborated (Clark et al., 2019). The model of empathetic leadership has emerged from existing research on workplace emotions and leader support for these emotions at workplace (Cornelis et al., 2013; Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2006).

The importance of the role of emotional support provided by leaders, identified by the researchers (since Hawthorn studies) showed that emotional support from leader results in
positive workplace outcomes (Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2003). Most of the studies used a general approach to understand the leader’s emotions but there is a need to understand the emotional aspects of leaders in their behaviors at individual level (Kock et al., 2019). Empathetic leadership research proposes that a leader can manage followers more effectively by understanding their feelings and express this through helping them to perform their work in a better way (Kock et al., 2019). With increase of diversity in organizations, leaders need to be acquainted with the need to create inclusive workplace climate. Organizations can gain maximum benefits to promote the culture of inclusion at their workplace. Johnson and Lambert (2020) identified eight key leaders behavior some of them are, demonstrating public support for diversity and inclusion as well as showing empathy and having a desire to learn from follower. The creation of climate for inclusion through which employees can grow remains an important goal for organizations that need to progress practically (Hameduddin & Lee, 2022).

A climate for inclusion denotes to the perception of employee about the organization that how organization help the employee to feel important and valuable like other members (Kim, Brimhall, & Barak, 2018; Barak et al., 2016). Despite of evidence that climate for inclusion can be achieved by channeling workforce diversity into positive organizational outcomes like job satisfaction, innovation and workplace engagement, little is known what leaders should do to create an inclusive climate in diverse organizations based on gender and ethnicity (Kim, Brimhall, & Barak, 2018; Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014). Research has shown negative effects on individuals’ psychological and physical health who feel excluded in an organization. Individuals from diverse group based on ethnicity and gender feel isolated and excluded from decision making process/career opportunities in organization, and are less involve in workplace engagement (Barak, 2015). The word exclusion commonly used for socially marginalized groups based upon gender and ethnicity that have the feelings of left out. Exclusion has been linked with various harmful effects on employee’s performance like decrease in well-being, anxiety and less workplace engagement (Hitlan & Noel, 2009; Scott, Restubog, & Zagencyk, 2013).

Moreover, there is little empirical evidence about employee’s perception of inclusion, workplace engagement and job satisfaction (Hwang & Hopkins, 2012; Barak, 2015). Leader characteristics not only influence the organization’s outcomes like intention to leave and job satisfaction but also affect other organizational factors as a part of work context like leader-member exchange and climate for diversity. Some evidence suggests that leadership behavior is less effective if employees perceive their leader is different and vice versa. So, followers feel discomfort to work with those leaders who they feel different in case of minority group (female) (Kalev, 2009; Barak, 2015). Therefore, it is important to consider how leader’s behavior affect the perception of follower to create climate for inclusion in work context and how this ultimately affects workplace engagement and job satisfaction (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; Barak, 2015). In climate for inclusion, fewer gender bias often results in reduced conflict level (Nishii, 2013). In this study gender base (female) climate for inclusion has been discussed to understand its outcomes on followers’ workplace engagement.

2.2 Supporting Theory

Traits can define the personality in different ways but two factors are important to define traits (1) elaboration of people in terms of their thoughts and behaviors; and (2) explanation of why people feel, act and do in a certain way (Jayawickreme, Zachry, & Fleeson, 2019). Trait activation theory states that personality traits can be expressed as valuable work behavior in relation with trait related situational cues subject to the limitations and other factors operating at
all levels of organization. Research is needed to embrace personality related work analysis at individual level as well as group level (Tett, Toich, & Ozkum, 2021).

According to this theory, when leader shows empathy, it creates compassion satisfaction in himself/herself and in followers by creating an inclusive culture that further leads towards decrease in burnout and increase in workplace engagement (Tett et al., 2021). In trait activation theory, the relationship between trait and organizational performance depends upon the situation that activates the trait. Personality can be explained based on valued work behavior and we can expect that employees feel better when they exposed to empathy relevant behaviors (Tett et al., 2021; Tett & Burnett, 2003). The theoretical contribution of this study in Trait activation Theory (TAT) is the introduction of an intermediating variable of climate for inclusion (for follower) that has the capacity to explicate the relationship between empathetic leadership behavior of leader and work engagement of follower. Based upon the literature, following hypothesis is developed:

**H1:** The Empathetic Leadership is positively associated with climate for inclusion.

### 2.3 Climate for Inclusion and Follower Workplace Engagement

Organizations are continually facing the challenge to manage workforce diversity. Researchers are increasingly focusing to create climate for inclusion to manage diverse workforce and to engage them in their work activities (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). Inclusion is an emerging concept in research and initially introduced by Roberson (2006), who investigated the concepts of diversity and inclusion separately and also provided the theoretical background of both concepts. Roberson (2006) so discussed the discriminations on the basis of demographic characteristics. Different studies related to leadership and diversity management acknowledged the effect of discrimination on organizational outcomes (Sabharwal, 2014). Moreover, researchers are more focusing on climate for inclusion, its antecedents and consequences to manage a diverse workforce at workplace (Davis, 2021). Inclusion involves providing equal opportunities to socially marginalized groups in organizations to contribute and participate in decision making process and make them fully engaged at various organizational levels by feeling part of it (Shore et al., 2011).

Although, diversity management practices are involved to bring socially marginalized groups into the workplace, inclusion practices provide opportunities to these groups to involve in organizational decision making as well (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). In a challenging world where the organizations are competing with each other, their reliance on talented and committed employees has increased. Organizations who want to remain competitive, need engaged employees having high level of energy, absorption and commitment towards their job (Bakker & Leiter, 2017). Past and recent research has shown that low workplace engagement is linked with poor worker performance including burnout and job dissatisfaction while high work engagement leads better work performance like creativity, job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism (Bakker & Leiter, 2017). Workplace engagement is a state of mind in which a person cognitively, emotionally and physically involved in work activities to show good performance (Bakker & Leiter, 2017; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Kahn, 1992; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

Kahn (1990) organized the first study on workplace engagement and disengagement. In his study, he explained the psychological conditions that led towards workplace engagement and disengagement. Kahn (1990) theory proved that workplace interaction among leader and follower is connected with psychological meaningfulness and safety. Researches in past two decades have confirmed Kahn’s idea that work engagement is the function of ups and downs in work as different studies revealed that workplace engagement vary on daily basis as well as reach at highest level
when employees counter with positive events like interesting and challenging tasks and support from colleagues and leaders in organization (Bakker & Leiter, 2017).

Employees are more inclined to engage at their workplace if they have a feeling of inclusion in organizational matters as a part of organization (Downey et al., 2015). Although, the positive effects of inclusion are found to increase workplace engagement (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020), more empirical testing is required to prove this relationship. Based on understanding of antecedents and consequences of engagement it is possible that numerous factors are yet to be discovered (Davis, 2021). Therefore, this study also focused on climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement to explore what has yet to be explored. Based upon the literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

**H2:** Climate for inclusion is positively associated with follower workplace engagement.

### 2.4 Empathetic leadership and Follower Workplace Engagement

Accordingly, it was anticipated that empathetic leadership behavior may influence workplace engagement of follower through climate for inclusion. One factor that is very important to create climate for inclusion is leadership quality. Specifically, quality leadership not only influences the functioning of followers but also their perception about work environment (Aarons & Sommerfeld, 2012). When leaders behave empathetically and involve their followers in decision making process, the followers feel valued and this may increase their feeling of inclusion and engage them strongly in their work related activities (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020). Several organizational variables like perceived organizational support (Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006), rewards and compensation (Koyuncu, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2006), and coworkers relations (Bakker, Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006) have been considered the determinants of workplace engagement but climate for inclusion is not examined as predictor of workplace engagement (Jeung, 2011). Therefore, it is useful to examine mediated leader and follower interaction (Kock et al., 2019).

Social support from leader has been found an important antecedent of follower’s workplace engagement. Leaders’ active empathetic listing towards their followers’ views results in high level of workplace engagement. So, organizations need to train their leaders for active empathetic leadership to engage their followers at workplace (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). Work engagement is related to leadership in such a way that effective leaders help followers to view their work in a meaningful and valuable way (Bono & McNamara, 2011; Grant, 2012). The leaders also influence their followers feel personally engaged in their work based upon leader’s ability to create the feelings of security and trustworthiness (Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

A growing body of research highlights that climate for inclusion can improve organizational outcomes as stated by Mor Barak et al. (2016), but limited research is available to understand that how leader can create an inclusive environment(Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020). Leader-member exchange theory presented by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) discussed the effects of leadership on followers outcomes like job satisfaction and intention to leave and but indirect relationship between empathetic leadership climate for inclusion, and follower workplace engagement is missing in literature (Kim et al., 2017; Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020; Nishii, 2013). The basic difference between leader-member exchange and empathetic leadership is that an empathetic leader genuinely care about the followers regardless of any workplace outcome (Kock et al., 2018). This suggests that empathetic leader can plays an important role in influencing followers to feel good or bad about their work environment in terms of inclusion. Different researchers discussed
climate for inclusion as moderator variable with transformational leadership and inclusive leadership (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020; Rodriguez, 2018). Nishii (2013) also discussed climate for inclusion as moderator between gender diversity and relationship conflict among leader and follower but its role as mediator is yet to be examined. Based on review of existing literature, it has revealed that climate for inclusion focuses more on engagement of whole selves (Nishii, 2013).

Organizational leaders can develop a new leadership model to test the relationship between empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020; Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2011). Therefore, when empathetic leaders create climate for inclusion, followers’ workplace engagement should increase. By combining the arguments presented in hypothesis 1 & 2, we predicted the mediating role of climate for inclusion between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement. Examining the relationship of climate for inclusion with empathetic leadership and workplace engagement will add more depth to the existing research. Based upon literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

**H3:** Climate for inclusion mediates the relationship between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement.

### 3. Research Model

![Diagram showing the relationship between empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion, and follower workplace engagement.]

#### 3.1 Sample and Procedure

Data was collected through questionnaires. Initially, 500 forms were administrated through online as well as in hard form to female teachers who participated voluntarily and who worked at different teaching positions (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Lecturer) in different universities. Total 444 responses were collected that shows 88% response rate after extensive follow up. The participants were asked the questions related to their immediate boss/supervisor behavior, climate for inclusion and workplace engagement. The inclusion criteria required female teachers of different universities in Punjab province of Pakistan. Male teachers were excluded. The purpose to include female participants in our study was to examine that how empathetic leaders can create more inclusive climate by considering minority group (females) that are usually ignored in organization.

The study was conducted online through electronic means (Google forms) and hard copy methods with time lag of 02 weeks to avoid the common method bias problem among the relationship of variables (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). In first phase (T1), demographic information including age, gender, and experience was collected. Questions were also
asked about empathetic leadership behavior from followers. In second phase (T2), questions were asked about climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement. Respondents, who feel comfortable to complete online survey, received a link hosted by Google online survey while other received questionnaires in hard form through mail. Before data collection, a consent form was sent to the participants, informing the aim, method, procedure of study, assurance of confidentiality of their responses and their right to quit the study at any time. The participation was voluntary and the participants did not receive any compensation for their participation.

We tested our hypothesis on the basis of total 444 responses of female participants and zero male participants due to the requirement of our study to investigate the creation of climate for inclusion to engage them at their workplace through empathetic leadership. Age of participants was measured in different slabs like 20-30 years, 31-40 years and above 40 years. The mean age of participants was 1.68 and (S.D = 0.69) reflecting majority of participants fall between 31 to 40 years. The job experience of participants was also measured in different slabs like 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years and above 20 years. The mean job experience was 1.83 and (S.D = 0.92) reflecting majority of participants having job experience between 6-10 years.

3.2 Measures
The scales used to measure independent, dependent and mediator variables were preexisted, tested and validated. If the value of Cronbach’s alpha is equal or greater than 0.70, the measurement model is considered to have acceptable level of reliability but if the value exceeds 0.80, the model reliability would be better (Considine, Botti, & Thomas, 2005; Cortina, 1993; Kock et al., 2018; Taber, 2018). All variables were measured on 7-point Likert scale.

3.3 Empathetic Leadership
The present study investigated empathetic leadership through motivating language scale (empathetic part) developed by Mayfield and Mayfield (2016) and validated by Kock et al., (2019). The focus of this scale is to measure how empathetic leaders show their emotional support and understanding of feelings to their followers. Questions were answered on 7 point likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 to measure empathy in leader from low to high level. Some scale items include (1) “My immediate boss praises his/her subordinates for their good work,” (2) “My immediate boss shows encouragement to his/her subordinates for his/her work efforts,” and (3) “My immediate boss expresses his/her trust in his/her subordinates.” The coefficient α value of empathetic leadership 0.913 indicated high level of reliability.

3.4 Climate for Inclusion
15 items scale was used to measure climate for inclusion developed by Nishii (2013) for measuring the three dimensions of climate for inclusion “(1) equal employment practices (2) integration of differences and (3) involvement in decision”. Sample scale items include (1) “This department has a fair promotion process,” (2) “This department values work-life balance,” and (3) “In this department, employee input is actively sought”. Responses were rated on 7- point likert type scale ranging from 1 to 7 to measure the perception of low to high level of climate for inclusion at workplace. Higher scores represented higher feelings for inclusion and vice versa. The coefficient α value of climate for inclusion 0.927 indicated high level of reliability.

3.5 Follower Workplace Engagement
9 items short version of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used to measure followers’ workplace engagement as developed and validated by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, (2006); and
Shimazu et al. (2008). This includes three sub scales to measure vigor, absorption and dedication comprising three items for each. Sample scale items include “At my work, I feel bursting with energy,” “I am enthusiastic about my job,” and “I am immersed (involved) in my work”. This scale had seven responses from 1 to 7 to measure low and high workplace engagement. The scale was found to be acceptable in internal consistency, validity and reliability (Shimazu et al., 2008). The coefficient α value of follower workplace engagement 0.788 indicated acceptable level of reliability.

4. Results

The estimated correlations among three latent constructs were shown in Table 1. Empathetic leadership was positively correlated with climate for inclusion ($r = .582, p < .01$) and follower workplace engagement ($r = .399, p < .01$). While, climate for inclusion was also positively correlated with follower workplace engagement ($r = .546, p < .01$).

Table 1: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>.732**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic leadership</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate for Inclusion</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>.582**</td>
<td>(0.92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Engagement</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.135**</td>
<td>.399**</td>
<td>.546**</td>
<td>(0.79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: N = 444, ** p < .01

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

The data analysis was carried out in PROCESS by Hayes (2013). The empirical results of this study provided support of our hypotheses as shown in Table 2. In hypothesis 1, we predicted that empathetic leadership is positively related with climate for inclusion ($b = 0.57, p < .001$). So, we can say that empathetic leadership is having direct and significant relationship with climate for inclusion. These results also endorsed the past studies (Kim, Brimhall, & Barak, 2018; Kock et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013). In hypothesis 2, we predicted that climate for inclusion is positively associated with follower workplace engagement. The results supported our hypothesis ($b = .38, p < .001$). Based upon these results, we can say that climate for inclusion significantly influences follower workplace engagement. These results also endorsed past studies that claimed that climate for inclusion creates workplace engagement (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020; Davis, 2021; Downey et al., 2015).

Table 2: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Climate for Inclusion</th>
<th>Follower Workplace Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.605***</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic Leadership</td>
<td>0.57***</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate for Inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: N = 444, ** p < .001
In hypothesis 3, we predicted that climate for inclusion mediates the relationship between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement. The results in Table 3 supported our hypothesis \( b = .219, \ p < .001 \). Based upon these results, we can say that climate for inclusion mediates the relationship between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement. These results also endorsed the past studies that proposed a mediated relationship between empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement (Kim et al., 2017; Barak, 2015; Shore et al., 2011).

**Table 3: Mediation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate for Inclusion</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LL</td>
<td>UL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: N = 444, ** p < .001*

5. **Discussion**

The model in this research presented the extension in trait activation theory by including climate for inclusion through empathetic leadership behavior. By examining how empathetic behavior of leader increases follower workplace engagement through a casual mechanism of climate for inclusion, the model analysis supported all proposed hypothesis in different relationships. The proposed relationships also provide model validity linkages for known variables relationships i.e., empathetic leadership and followers, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement (Jeung, 2011; Kock et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013). The indirect link between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement also matches with the findings of past studies (Kim, Brimhall, & Palinkas, 2020; Barak et al., 2016). The results of the current study enhance the understanding of researchers and practitioners about empathetic leadership behavior process. The theoretical model of this study is important for two reasons.

First, it stresses the significance of leader support to satisfy psychological and safety needs of leader by including them in organizational process through climate for inclusion (this understanding helps leaders to appreciate the emotional needs of their followers at workplace). Second, it offers an enhanced understanding regarding the role of empathetic leadership in the creation of climate for inclusion, an activity having growing significance with follower workplace engagement that remains unexplored.

Future investigations should expand the empathetic leadership model by including a wide range of workplace outcomes. Our preliminary investigation revealed significant association between empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement through climate for inclusion. However, there are other variables like compassion satisfaction, hindrance and challenges, diversity management practices as well as employees burn out, absenteeism and organizational citizenship behavior that needs to be examined with empathetic leadership behavior and follower workplace engagement.

Also, empathetic leadership and follower workplace engagement need to be examined in different settings including respondents who are differently able and having limited inclusion in organizational decision-making process due to diverse work demand and leadership behavior. Future work needs to explore the influence of empathetic leadership behavior on other different...
organizational outcomes, how this behavior develops with passage of time and what leads to greater or lesser expression of empathy in different settings.

6. Conclusion

We have used quantitative technique to examine the relationship between empathetic leadership, climate for inclusion and follower workplace engagement but future research can use qualitative techniques to examine this relationship to enhance its generalizability. These findings also have practical implications. The results have shown that empathetic leadership increase follower workplace engagement by creating a climate for inclusion. Thus, the increased inclusion of followers in organizational process would enhance their engagement at workplace, which ultimately leads the organization to achieve its goals effectively.

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