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Name: PATRICIA APARECICA DE SOUZA

Notes:

Topic: Improve relationships with empathy and good communication in the workplace

Abstract

The research is developed in order to determine the level of empathy and its positive impact on the performance of the workforce in an organisation. The aim of this research study is to examine the way of improving relationships with empathy and good communication in the workplace. In this concern, the qualitative data is collected with the help of conducting interviews and a desktop research method in which the primary and secondary types of data are included in the research study. The findings of the research study suggested that the development of an environment of commitment, engagement, and promotion of communication contributes to increasing the level of empathy and reducing the chances of conflicts in an organisation.

Acknowledgment

I want to give a sincere thanks to all the people included in the research study. I would like to thank my supervisor and professors, that guided me in the whole task of performing the research study. I am also thankful to the ethical committee and the university administration for providing me with a chance to perform a research study on the topic. Moreover, I also want to thank all the participants that helped me in collecting data. Finally, I want to thank all my friends for improving my confidence level by constantly motivating me to perform the tasks.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

As per the study conducted by Baylor University, in the contemporary organisations the role of the managers and leaders is very important and it is the most crucial requirement for the managers to become empathetic and giving proper and open feedback to the employees for having problem solution on immediate basis (Baylor University, 2021). Such essentiality is experienced in order to maintain proper workplace communication during the time of pandemic where maintain good workplace relationship was very much essential for the employees. The crisis of Covid-19 pandemic has even highlighted the need for improved job communication with the employees so that a proper emotional support can be rendered to them and a good relationship can be developed with the employees. In the past years, due to the practices of work from home and remote working, the workplace communication practices have taken a back seat because the employees are struggling with the barriers related to technology and the issues of adjustment with the physical and social distancing. All these problems in the workplace in the recent years have demanded for improved communication of the leaders and managers with the employees and with co-workers.

The social capital benefits that the employees have in the workplace with the interaction and communication with each other makes them able to develop a good relationship with others. The employees while communicating with each get solutions to their problems and regular interaction with mentors and leaders and managers makes the bond stronger among them and this makes the workplace environment happy and lively for everyone (Baym, Larson and Martin, 2021).

Microsoft has conducted a survey in 31 countries with more than 30000 people and from the survey and research they found some conclusions (Baym, Larson and Martin, 2021). In the study made by Microsoft the most worrisome issue found was that due to remote working

and work from home the organisational connections have disrupted and the managers and leaders are not able to maintain good relationship at workplaces. Good workplace relationship is the fundamental base for the social capital. At the workplace people are not having connections with each other and their collaboration is also not proper and hence the networks of the employees have also shrunk to a great extent (Baym, Larson and Martin, 2021). This kind of situation has demanded for improvement in the workplace relationship and for the same there is a direct need for having two important practices on the part of the leaders and managers to have good level of empathy and good communication skills (Gill et al., 2018).

1.2 Problem definition

In the workplaces practices some crucial attributes and traits are vital on the part of the leaders. The demonstration of the empathy and good communication are the most important traits for the leaders in order to improve workplace relationships (Kock et al., 2019). Empathy demonstration at the workplace is mainly related to showing emotional intelligence which is a crucial element of leadership effectiveness. The role of empathy in the workplaces improves the level of understanding between the leader and the subordinates and hence improves the level of human interaction. With such a process more effective communication can be fostered in the workplaces and hence positive outcomes are attained in the work settings (Ljajić and Pirsl, 2021). The factor of communication is often ignored by the people, and due to this reason, the lack of communication contributes to generating misunderstanding between the people and reduce the level of empathy and the understanding between employees and the management.

In the workplace settings, it is vital for the leaders and other peers to have a good understanding about the emotions of others. The follow up of empathy and good communication practices in the organisations are supportive to have resolving the conflicting situations and hence the team spirit is generates and it is directive to build more product teams (Sarkar and Garg, 2020). With such kind of practices the relationship between the leaders and

co-workers improves to a good level. The communication gap and lack of empathy is a critical problem and it generates and environment of dispute and misunderstanding that gives rise to conflicting situations and disruption of the workplace relationships. Hence, this is the core research problem that has been undertaken in this research study to examine the importance of empathy and good communication in the workplace for improving the workplace relationship.

1.3 Research Question, aim and objectives

Research Questions

The core research questions for this research study are presented as under:

RQ 1: How important are the practices of empathy and good communication important for leaders and co-workers in the contemporary workplace settings?

RQ2: In what ways empathy and good communication contributes to improving the workplace relationships?

Aim

The key aim of this research study is to examine the way of improving relationship with empathy and good communication in workplace. In the light of this aim, the research study is seeking to examine the need and importance of empathy and good communication as the key traits for the leaders to improve workplace relationships. The research study is also seeking to determine the ways in which empathy and good communication contributes for improving relationship of the leaders with the subordinates and with co-workers.

Objectives

The key objectives of the research developed in alignment of the research questions and research aim which are aforementioned, are listed as below:

- To examine the issues related to workplace relationship and disputes in the contemporary workplaces

- To examine role of empathy and good communication in improving the relationship at workplace

- To determine the ways in which workplace relationships can be improved through empathy and good communication

1.4 Dissertation Roadmap

As per the dissertation roadmap the final dissertation work will be organised under some particular sections. These sections are presented below where other than introduction and conclusion, remaining sections are managed in the form of 5 sequential chapters.

Introduction

This introductory chapter has included the background information of the research study, aim and objectives of the research study and rationale and contribution of the research. Problem definition is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Review the Literature

This chapter has outlined the current theories and arguments related to the selected research topic and the findings are presented in the form of debates. The relevant literatures are also explored in terms of their relevance with the research topic.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter will present the research methodology that will be used in this research with the detailed discussion of the research methods and their strengths and weaknesses and sample size and sample with justification for each.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter the data gathered will be analysed and from the analysis of this data some crucial research findings will be generated in detailed manner.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The core findings of the research study generated in the previous chapter will be discussed in this chapter in detail with the support of the literature data findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This last section of the dissertation will include the account of the main conclusion points that will be developed in this research study on the basis of the final research discussion points. Recommendations will also be included in this chapter.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Research

This research has a good scope in the practical field because it is based on a realistic business issue that is evident in the contemporary workplace settings. In the research field also, it will work as a good information source for the future researchers.

One key limitation of the research study is that it is very generic in terms of the research problem undertaken. The research is not focused on any particular research setting and hence its results will not be very specific but will be generic in nature. The other limitation is that the data collection in this research study will be done with the help of primary data collection method of interview that will facilitate only data collection from smaller sample and hence it will restrict the research to have collection of the data from larger sample that can be helpful to explore several hidden aspects.

1.6 Contribution of the Research Study

This research study will have significant contribution in the multiple fields. The first contribution of the research will be in the organisational context where the research outcomes will be beneficial to understand the need of improving workplace relationship. Other than this, the research will also pave directions for the leaders and co-workers to understand the role and importance of empathy and good communication for improving the workplace relationship. The research study will also contribute in the academic field. The future researchers through getting insight into the study will get new ideas about further research work and side by side

their knowledge base will also be improved. Hence, this research will prove a very significant and contributing piece of information in multiple fields in terms of its implication areas.

Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction

In the following literature review, the aim is to determine the importance of connection in communication in a workplace, as in today's world in order to make the communication worthy one has to form a connection that results in positive as well as efficient communication with a better understanding between two people. Secondly, the literature review also aims at highlighting how connection helps in improving relationships through good communication and empathy, empathic bonds are mutual. Enabling oneself to fully experience another's sentiment, and also permitting oneself to be vulnerable to others, helps deepen and strengthen such ties. Lastly, the literature review also aims at highlighting the effect of empathy on the development of the relationship and better communication, managers that practise empathic management with their co-workers are viewed as higher-performing professionals by their bosses. Empathy in the workplace simply refers to employees' ability to form true, empathetic bonds with one another, which improves both relationships and productivity.

2.2 The importance of connection in communication

According to Karanges*et al*., (2015) more than anything, good words are required for effective communication. Nonverbal communication, the ability to master both own as well as others' feelings, attentive but focused listening, as well as the ability to communicate confidently when appropriate are all part of this skill set. An effective way to communicate, as contrasted to other styles such as passive, confrontational, as well as passive-aggressive, is among the most courteous and productive ways of organizational communication. Assertive communicators are comfortable in expressing views and suggestions while remaining polite and courteous. They are ready to take on new responsibilities, but also know when and how to say no. Skilled communicators have such an uncanny capacity to put people at ease.

In the same line, according to Leblebici(2012) talking isn't the only way to communicate. It's all about making connections. Employee engagement is among the most potent effects of improved workplace communication. When a team and workplace have a culture of communicating effectively, employees are much more interested in their job and therefore can seamlessly integrate with organizational goals and targets. Employee participation is an important feature of a firm's profitability. Communication skills, in addition to increasing employee engagement, can assist build a more productive as well as skilled staff in a variety of ways. Managers gain a better understanding of their workforce's strengths and skills when the corporate culture is centred on engaging with others. Mastering the art of identifying communication patterns allows a leader to gain a deeper understanding of their team's capabilities and abilities.

Furthermore, Hodge and Lear (2011), examined that merely communicating is not enough at the workplace, an employee should also contain effective listening skills. Listening is also a part of communicating and the employees are supposed to address and listen the senior leaders about the task provided to them so that they can have a better understanding. Effective listening skills help in building a good rapport with the colleagues and seniors which ultimately leads to better working relationships. Attentive listening skills facilitate in developing a goodwill and image at the workplace and makes the employee completely focused thereby leading to improved process of communication at the workplace. In contrast, Wang, Liu and Parker (2020), explored that several employees portray extremely poor listening skills and they are always distracted which contributes in creating a negative image and affects their quality of work. This is because the employee and leader often notice the behaviour of every employee at the workplace and poor listening skills and less attentiveness changes their mind set about capabilities of an employee. Poor listening skills and low focus during communication hinders the relationships and connections at the workplace and impacts the personality of the employee.

Ignoring someone while they are speaking and not effectively listening is also considered as disrespect and creates differences employees at workplace.

Similarly, according to Osborne and Hammoud (2017) whereas many people are aware of the need of communicating effectively in leadership, several have been trained on the value of developing relationship quality. It's all about concentrating on others when it comes to connecting. It extends beyond thoughts as well as necessitates effort. Finally, the connection is a learned talent rather than an inherent one. A connected leader is one who is concerned regarding the well-being of others. They remain emotionally healthy and also have a positive sense of identity.Connected leaders are personable, constantly communicate with their team, appear human, promote and motivate their team, as well as value open and honest communication. A leader has to be real and demonstrate behavioural capabilities in order for connections to be successful. In addition to this, Kshirsagar and Ramgade (2021), highlighted that an effective and well-organised leader is a person who is always concentrated when the subordinates or colleagues are speaking. This is sign of respect and focus level that is portrayed by the leader. An effective leader always has great amount of respect for juniors as well as seniors and the leader clearly conveys important details to avoid gaps in performance of organisation. An effective leader always has great skills of maintaining work relationships by developing positive attitude among all the employees which ultimately leads to a positive work environment and everyone works with utmost efficiency.

In a similar context, according to Wajcman and Rose (2011), effective leadership necessitates communication and connection. That becomes simpler to cooperate, give instructions, resolve issues, impact meaningful change, achieve objectives, achieve certain goals, and also get jobs performed through people whenever a leader builds authentic relationships with those around. People become much more productive in the workplace when they feel linked to their leaders, which ultimately leads to greater performance. It's critical to

cultivate good communication and connection, as well as any leader that wants to make a difference must practise these abilities on a regular basis, they need that to succeed in an effective yet flawless manner. Every interaction with an individual should really be clear and precise in its thoughts, and this should be communicated effectively in order to leave a lasting impression.

In the same line,Bucata and Rizescu (2017), determined that effective leadership requires sound communication skills because they are responsible for maintaining harmony in the organisation by minimising conflicts among various employees.Leaders also try to clearly communicate the employees about the efforts that are required from the employees in order to achieve the desired goal. With the help of effective and clear communication, the leader can create goodwill and develop a sense of trust among the employees by aligning and merging the efforts of all potential employees towards accomplishing a common goal that leads to organisational success. Thus, leaders require good communication skills to communicate the goals and objectives in a detailed manner. Furthermore,Marcinkus Murphy (2012), determined that leaders focus on building sound relationships by solving queries of subordinates and seniors at the workplace. Along with effective formal relations, leaders also communicate in an informal manner with the subordinates in order to make them comfortable. This is done so that the employees get comfortable with the leaders and share their queries and personal conflicts so that leaders can suggest meaningful solutions. The leaders develop a strong connect with the employees by effectively communicating and motivating the employees by solving their queries and providing useful solutions. Leaders clearly identify the problems and analyses all possible solutions that can help the employees thereby improving relationships and connections.

Henceforth, the communication theory according to Bylund, Peterson and Cameron (2012) also state that a sender, a message, as well as a receiver are all mentioned

communication theories. This could take a form of a single individual being as well surroundings as a result of signals conveyed via signs, symbolism, as well as cognition. It can also be characterised as delivering a phrase chosen at yet another moment at one point, whether precisely or substantially. Communication models are intended to demonstrate fundamental theories through conceptual representations in order to describe the actual communication process. These can be used to illustrate as well as improve workplace behaviour. Human communication has mostly been conceived, hypothesized, as well as researched as a method of conversation and sharing among two or even more human beings—that is, person to person—using speech as well as technology as a medium.

In the same line according to Altaf and Awan (2011) communication is the foundation for forming lasting relationships both inside and even beyond the office. The very first step in establishing a connection as well as belonging is to recognise the power of communication and also how words can build or break down. Communicating from a deliberately strength-based approach has already been proved countless times over to be an extremely effective method to foster good growth and change. When individuals are not accustomed to thinking in those terms, strength-based communications can be jarring. The link can take many different shapes and patterns. A smile or a nice word can be all it takes to make a connection through effective communication which in return does not hurt or demotivate anyone.

Furthermore, Muller *et al.* (2013), examined that merely communication is not enough to maintain cordial work relationships. A good and positive body language is also required to lead a good communication. Physical gestures and good body language also fosters in developing a positive connection as every employee at workplace keenly observes body language of the people while communicating. Body language facilitates in removing the barriers in communication and increase familiarity which fosters in forming an enhanced connection with the other person or employee. It also helps in developing sound working

relationships because it minimises the hurdles and makes the whole communication process extremely easy to interpret. In contrast, Bohannon*et al.* (2013), examined that many employees portray poor body language and negative postures during communication which acts as a barrier. This is because the bad postures and poor body language hinders the smoothness in communication and the other person might interpret something wrong. Several employees also fail to maintain eye contact during communicating which leads a negative image and other person might feel uninterested. Poor eye contact also leads to disruptions in communication and other person feel neglected or ignored. Maintaining eye contact is basic way of nicely communicating and addressing the other person in an effective way so that cordial relations can be maintained at the workplace and conflicts can be avoided.

Similarly, according to Colbert, Yee and George (2016) connecting is the most effective approach to meeting other people, forming new relationships, as well as expanding the business. This is critical in today's world when communication is the key to substantial business growth. The fundamental to this is communicating. Improved communication contributes to positive interaction and ultimately leads to stronger bonds being formed. This also aids in the development of one's personality. Both offline, as well as digital communication, must be appropriate in order to create a permanent impression on the end-user. Not just in the professional career, but also in daily experience, how well one communicates their ideas and opinions is critical. It aids in the maintenance of better relationships in the personal realm, and it aids in the maintenance of better customers in the professional realm.

According to Chandrasekar (2011), a more effective communication environment creates a "safe" environment for people to consider independently as well as communicate their opinions. It encourages employees to take responsibility for issues and projects, which usually leads to more innovative conceptualizing with problem-solving activities. Even if someone believes they are communicating effectively, there may be a miscommunication if the other to

whom they are communicating seems to have a differing communication style. Relevant knowledge can be disseminated in a way that makes it easy as well as straightforward to comprehend, and also the listener can communicate effectively their comprehension, using communication tools including analysing communication patterns and creating small communication improvements. In addition to this,Mishra, Mishra and Ostrovska (2012),explored that communication plays a crucial role at workplace because it helps in transfer of useful information and acts as a barter system for sharing ideas. It leads to positive arguments among the employees where they come together to find a useful solutions by critically analysing the whole situation. Due to this, the concept of informal communication has also increased at workplaces because it provides ease of sharing ideas and employees can communicate as per their comfort levels. This also facilitates in teamwork and all the employees communicate with each other to develop sound strategies for giving shape to organisational goals and work with utmost efficiency for delivering positive outcomes.

According to Levis (2018), connection plays a very vital role in communication as building connections can help in enhancing communication skills, and if an individual is already connected with the other individual, then their communication will be better as compared to two different persons. Communication is a way to win hearts, as, by effective communication, a person can influence others, and that can be helpful for the betterment of their future in every way. Communication plays a very crucial role in every field as when a person is working in a corporate field and handling a team, then presenting the idea with effective communication can be helpful in attaining clients and will also be beneficial for the organisation in every aspect. The leaders of organisations also use good communication so that they can influence the clients and their team members and increase their working efficiency. Speaking first also has a good impact on the other person as when an individual starts communication first, then a feeling in the other person's mind instils that this person is

confident and gentle. Communication plays a very significant role in building relationships as well as trust when communicating effectively and openly. In the same relation, Pulvermüller (2018) stated thatbeing a good listener is a part of an effective communication strategy. For instance, if a leader of a team listens to the concerns and requirements of its team, then the team is more motivated toward work as well as more engaged in achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation.

In the viewpoint ofGritten (2017), most people can learn how they can communicate more effectively and make the connection better with the other person. As a part of an effective communication strategy, a person must always share positive thoughts about the other person they are interacting with. It can increase their interest, and being more interested in communicating can also increase the trust in the relationship. People always consider keeping distance from individuals who share negative or toxic thoughts. If in case a conversation is going to the wrong side and is not going well, the best thing to do is leave rather than wait to make the situation worse. When trying to build a good relation, the person has to consider some things such as being a good listener first and should, have only positive thoughts as well as must communicate on interesting topics. Thus, it can be stated that connections plays a very significant role in increasing the efficacy of communication and relationships can be improved with effective communication.

As noted by Dolamore *et al.* (2021), the factor of communication plays a prominent role in the developing understanding between the employees and the management in an organisation and contributes to increasing its effectiveness in the competitive business environment. The development of instrumental understanding is a critical element in crisis management and the prevention of conflicts in an organisation. The development of understanding contributes to resolving the issues of trust, power, and legitimacy along with eliminating the technical constraints in the process of communication. On the other hand, Soler-

Gonzalez *et al.* (2017) have stated that communication can also be considered an important element for the development of interpersonal relationships at the workplace in an organisation. In stressful or tense conditions, the strategy of showing the emotions and discuss regarding a problem helps in getting support from peers and coworkers. The tendency to show empathy while communicating contributes to help in increasing the level of support and assistance that can prevent management from getting stuck in stressful conditions.

2.3 The ways in which connection helps in improving relationships through good communication and empathy

According toJin (2010), empathy is the ability to see the world through the eyes of another person. Empathy refers to the ability to comprehend what a person is experiencing at any given time, as well as why those certain people's actions make sense to them. Empathy aids people in communicating creative ideas in a way that others can comprehend, as well as assisting them in understanding someone else when they interact with each other. It's one of the most important aspects of outstanding social connection, as well as it's certainly quite strong.Unfortunately, just very few people are just born with a high level of innate empathy. Human empathetic wiring is a continuous process. Some people have exceptional natural empathy and can sense how another person is feeling simply by glancing at them.

SimilarlyHalland Schwartz (2019) stated that, emotional empathy is considered as the capacity to comprehend another individual on a deeper level through sharing their experiences. Because it impacts or transforms individuals frequently referred to as "affective empathy." It is not only necessary to understand how someone thinks, but also to establish true connection with them. This level of empathy might be overpowering for some of us. People with high empathetic inclinations might get consumed by other people's issues or pain, which can be detrimental to their own psychological well-being. This is especially true if they really do not believe they can address the matter. Take breaks, evaluate personal boundaries, and increase

the capacity to deal in such a demanding position to prevent emotional generosity fatigue.Anyone in charge of a team would be benefited from gaining some emotional empathy. It promotes trust amongst managers and staff, as well as honesty and transparency. However, empathy is most useful when accompanied with activity.

In addition to this Jonesand Huggins (2014) stated that, the ability to grasp what another individual is thinking or experiencing is referred to as cognitive empathy. The observer's emotional involvement is not required. Supervisors may consider cognitive empathy valuable in knowing how their members of the team are thinking and, as a result, what leadership style might get the most out of them now. Conversely, sales executives may use it to measure a customer's mood, assisting them in selecting the most successful attitude for a dialogue. Cognitive empathy is primarily a logical, cognitive, and psychologically neutral skill. This implies that some individuals take advantage of it. Someone with a Machiavellian personality characteristic, for instance, may utilise cognitive empathy to exploit emotionally weak others. In addition to this Mercer (2016) stated that, one of most active type of empathy is compassionate empathy. It entails not just caring for someone else and experiencing their emotional distress, but also taking real actions to alleviate it. Assume one of the team members is furious and outraged because he or she presented a critical presentation poorly. Recognizing their pain is important, and confirming their reaction by displaying symptoms of their own pain is much more essential. But the greatest thing one can do is set out some space for them and give practical help or direction on how to get over the issue and prepare for the next occasion.

In a similar context, according to Barker and Gower (2010) understanding the emotions of others is an important talent in the business. It has the potential to help us resolve the situation, form a more effective team, as well as strengthen the relationship with colleagues, clients, and especially customers. However, although everybody is comfortable in their ability to learn new technical abilities, many may be unprepared to improve their interpersonal skills.

And also, many people feel uncomfortable discussing their own sentiments, let alone those of others! To properly apply empathy, one must set aside their viewpoint but instead observe things from some other people's point of view. Then they'll be able to spot conduct that looks to be emotionally unstable, stubborn, as well as irrational at first glance as merely a reaction to a person's previous knowledge and experience.

In the same line He *et al.* (2019), examined that respecting the opinion of others and understanding their viewpoints acts as a great way of relationship building. The employees at workplace try to actively listen the opinion of others. By using empathy in behaviour, employees try to rationally analyse the viewpoints of the employees and understand their opinion without judgement and biasness so that a meaningful conclusion can be drawn. Several employees also try to offer help and assistance to the other employees for solving the issues by effective communication. Besides this, the employees try to appreciate each other for the work done by using communication so that the other employees feel recognised and acknowledged. This leads to creation of positive work environment and connections.

Similarly, according to Preckel, Kanske and Singer (2018) empathy theory also state that two goals have been pursued throughout the theoretical investigation of empathy. First, it already has been investigated the fundamental purpose and objectives of empathetic responsiveness, or perhaps the issue of why individuals empathise in the first place. Second, it has focused on the perceived, physiological, as well as behavioural mediation of empathetic responsiveness, yielding numerous explanations as to how humans empathise. Theories that rely on the reflexive transmission of sentiments to explain human empathy could be seen as direct expansions of bio-evolutionary theories. According to some of the beliefs, when individuals watch other people's emotions, our intrinsic reaction inclinations trigger parallel feelings that thwart inhibitory efforts. Because certain environmental factors cause distinct emotional responses from both the understandingof the context as well as the observation at

the same time, the witnessed person's presentation of empathy becomes linked to the spectator's own emotion.

In the same line, according to Ragins (2016), it's not easy to communicate effectively. People engage in conversation about one thing, whereas the other person understands something very differently. It might be aggravating as well as ineffective. Effective communication seems to be a skill that can be learnt. This would entail money and effort; it would be well worthwhile. Therefore, the more work one invests into this one, the stronger effective interpersonal communication becomes. It will be easier for one to reach out to people if one learns to enhance overall communication abilities. It improves teamwork, problem-solving, as well as decision-making abilities. It can even help communicate bad or tough information to others. Speaking and listening are both important components of effective communication. One may strengthen their relationship with people by practising both effective communication skills and active listening.

According to Kock*et al.,* (2019) empathy is a strong force that promotes social harmony and collaboration. It's the system that enables people to comprehend and relate to one another. Empathy is a prerequisite for closeness, confidence, as well as a sense of belonging. This is also the emotion that makes it extremely difficult to ignore other people's pain. Empathy places one in the shoes of another person after they recognise their experience. Empathy isn't about feeling how one would in that circumstance; it's about putting oneself in their shoes for several moments as well as adopting their feelings. Empathic ties are reciprocal. Allowing oneself to fully absorb another person's sentiment can strengthen their bonds, as well as allowing oneself to be susceptible to others can increase such bonds. In addition to this,Clark, Robertson and Young (2019), empathy has a significant role in promoting effective human interactions by removing barriers in communication and development of sound working relations. Leaders use empathy by involving the employees and subordinates in the process of effective decision

making so that employees clearly communicates and contributes in developing useful solutions. Many a times, leaders show empathy by conducting training of employees in an effective way so that the employees can develop good skills for future career development. Leaders try to show involvement and engage with the employees for helping them to achieve their personal goals and interests. Thus, empathy plays a great role in communication and relationship building.

Similarly, according to Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang(2014), while feeling someone else's grief can build a feeling of connection as well as understanding if it is expressed, it does not maximise the possibility to improve one's well-being. Understanding what someone else is experiencing in their life gives individuals an advantage in determining what they require. Since empathy entails inheriting the feeling but not the difficult situation that caused it, one is usually in a better position to assist. Empathy allows people to not only comprehend others but can also provide one with the determination to make a significant difference.Make a conscious effort to strike up discussions with folks one encounters and sees on a daily basis. Pay close attention to how the other person is feeling while one is conversing.

In a similar context, according to Derksen, Bensing and Lagro-Janssen (201) empathy is one of the most important talents to use in the job since it allows individuals to improve related to both colleagues and customers. Understanding how to empathise with each other can help them enhance communication as well as build strong relationships, resulting in a more positive work environment. Empathy is the capacity to comprehend as well as empathise with the experiences and emotions of another. Being empathic can help one appreciate someone else's point of view, improve their capacity to interact with others, and gain a larger outlook on the topic. This also allows individuals to understand how their actions affect others, which could also lead to much more fruitful dialogues, particularly whenever communicating with people from various backgrounds and perspectives.

According to Mayfield and Mayfield (2017) when people apply empathy at work, they may be able to come up with more innovative solutions. The organisation may urge employees to think about their audience's point of view or the most significant requirements of their potential customers as a group. Empathy may assist management as well as the team in putting themselves in the shoes of the client but also coming up with ideas that would attract clients in that situation. Evaluating a service or product from the perspective of the customer can help people spot challenges and opportunities the company hadn't considered previously, and they will be more likely to try out new ideas. Empathy in the workplace could help understand the company's present and prospective stakeholders' motivations, such as clients, consumers, and investors.

According to toGritten (2017), there are numerous ways in which connection assists in improvising relationships with others by effectively communicating and empathising.Empathy is a strong force that promotes social harmony and collaboration. It is the system that allows individuals to comprehend and relate to one another. Empathy is a prerequisite for closeness, trust, and a sense of belonging. This is also the sensation that makes it tough to ignore other people's pain. Empathy puts anyone in the shoes of another person after they recognise their feeling, and it means standing beside oneself and assuming their emotions for a few seconds, rather than experiencing what anyone would feel in that scenario. In the viewpoint of Pulvermüller (2018), mirror neurons are what get the heart beating whenever people see athletes dashing through a stadium at their favourite sporting event or make them cringe in agony when they see horrible gaffes in a hilarious viral video. When individuals become involved in another person's grief, unhappiness, or aggravation, empathy not only allows them to sit with them and support them with fuller insight but also communicates the statement that they really are prepared to take on an unpleasant feeling so others should not have to. If a person is going through some bad situation, empathy plays a crucial role in this case as the

other person empathises with that person, understands the situation that the other person is going through and gives the support to that person he/she is seeking as it can be very helpful in improvising the relationships. However, in the same relation Gritten (2017) stated that the person must be a good listener as this is the only way by which the person can know what the other person is feeling or going through. Effective communication and empathy are the necessities to improve relationships with others.

In the same relation, as stated by Levis (2018), empathy in a relationship may strengthen the closeness with the spouse. That is why picturing yourself in their shoes is one of the most effective strategies to become more compassionate. People who lack empathy have a hard time comprehending how people feel in different situations. As a result, reminding individuals to assess how they feel as they go through life's varied bag of wonderful, terrible, and impartial events is an excellent place to start. When a close friend calls to talk about how hectic work has been or how difficult things have been since a sudden departure, the intensity in their voice generally catches the attention right away. When talks take place in the middle of interruptions and with much less visible emotional impact, it becomes more difficult. Empathetically people are happier for a variety of reasons as empathy has been found to boost cooperation as well as understanding, deepen connections, lessen hostility and judgement, as well as even enhance health and wellbeing when applied to compassion and understanding generosity. Setting the intent to hear for emotions is the first step toward empathy. According to Ogwu*et al.* (2020), whenever it comes to detecting what the others are experiencing, our own emotions might be a huge obstacle. Whenever conversing with others, generally, people remember their own incidence or sentiments as well as start thinking about how to express them and do not pay attention to what is going on from the other side. Making an attempt to hear and understand might help people have a better understanding of the relationships and compassion.Seeing the importance of empathy when it is returned to one helps strengthen the

commitment to empathise with others. A person can also feel more at ease negotiating difficult emotions in social situations. It is not really easy to have a discussion about difficult feelings, but an individual may teach oneself to do so by creating opportunities when anyone is feeling down.

Moreover, according to Zahaviand Rochat (2015), Consider financial counsellors who must cope with their customers' illogical emotions amid a stock market meltdown. This is a difficult circumstance that puts these most knowledgeable financial advisor under strain. Major financial institutions indicate that individuals who demonstrate empathy and proximity to the client achieve the best outcomes. During these important times, financial advisers should be more aggressive with their clients, comforting them without exaggerating or misrepresenting the impact of the event on their savings, and providing continual assistance to help them overcoming their anxiety and impulsiveness. The purpose is to assist their clients in making educated decisions with complete clarity. In addition to this Bry*et al.* (2016), Conversational marketing is the use of digital channels to communicate with consumers in order to sell things. Obviously, distant communication – such as chat, mail, video chat, or phone that can quickly lead to misunderstandings. This is a mediated interaction in which the operator's physical presence, which conveys the most powerful communication signals, is absent. In this context, expressing empathetic skills entails utilising proper language and the appropriate tone of voice to better comprehend the customer's goals and requirements. Choosing the proper phrases and even emoticons is also important for achieving intimacy with the consumer during textual communication. Empathy is thus a critical tool for developing a stronger relationship with clients in various types of distant communication.

From the perspective of Chan *et al.* (2017), happy couples typically exhibit their empathy by openly indicating that they are going to take the time to envision what their partners are going through. Communicating with the partner and simply understanding what they're

going through can demonstrate to them that you're sensitive about their feelings rather than ignoring them. According to Gupta, Jain and Vaszkun (2015), when a person is more in tune with their partner's emotions, they are able to detect when they're upset even before they say anything. When their partner starts asking them about their emotional condition, it demonstrates that the partner cares about their happiness and the relationship. They may ask their partner questions ahead of time about how things are going. Developing and improving together is what a real relationship includes, along with assisting one another when they are in trouble, without passing judgement or making another person feel insignificant. On the contrary, according to Levis (2018), they may refrain from passing judgement on the partner's decisions and believe that they were made after thorough deliberation, irrespective of whether they were successful. Understanding that their partners are thoughtful and intelligent persons sets the tone for everything good to come.

In the same relation as stated by Corbellini*et al.* (2014), in long-term partnerships, just absorbing some of their partner's tasks as well as everyday obligations is a terrific approach to being more compassionate. It can help them comprehend what they go through on a regular basis and prevent them from passing judgement. In the opinion of Ogwu*et al.* (2020), understanding the importance of displaying empathy for one's spouse might motivate individuals to emphasise their relationship quality. Even if one's spouse is going through a difficult moment that may cloud his or her perspective, both must strive to become entirely aware of other mates' sentiments in light of the purpose, especially when one partner's difficulties typically have a substantial impact on the other. From the perspective of Chan *et al.* (2017), it is rarely pleasant to see the partner suffering, and it might lead to conflict in the relationship, so it is also critical to be around them even when things are bad. Rather than advising them to let it go, imagine yourself in their shoes before passing the judgement.

2.4 The effect of empathy on the development of the relationship and better communication

According to Barlińska, Szuster and Winiewski(2013) managers could find cognitive empathy helpful in figuring out how their employees are thinking and, as a result, what kind of leadership style will work best for them right now. Similarly, salespeople can use this to determine a customer's mood, which can help them adopt the most successful tone for dialogue. Cognitive empathy is primarily an intellectual, logical, and psychologically indifferent capacity. This means that some people exploit it in a negative manner. Someone with a Machiavellian character trait, for instance, may utilise compassion to exploit emotionally weak people.

Moreover, according to Samuels*et al.* (2021), Understanding the emotions of others is an important talent to have in the business. It has the potential to help us settle problems, establish more effective workers, and strengthen our connections with co-workers, clients, and customers. However, while everyone is confident in their ability to master new technical abilities, we may feel unprepared to grow their communication skills. Furthermore, many individuals are entirely about expressing their personal emotions. Empathy and sympathy are sometimes mistaken, although they are not always the same thing. Sympathy is a worry for someone and the feeling that they may be happy. Sympathy, unlike empathy, does not entail a shared point of view or feelings. Anyone might feel pity for someone in the street who is crying without understanding anything at all about their condition. Sympathy can, but does not always grow into empathy.

Similarly, according to Carrier*et al.,* (2015), a workspace is a place where people come together to work as a team. When it comes to tasks that demand a team effort, it's critical to spend time getting to know the co-workers. It is still crucial to be kind to co-workers even if they are not working on the same project. It's much simpler to get into fights and conflicts if

onedoesn't have it. Empathy is also quite crucial for management. People who work for managers who lack empathy are much more likely to be vulnerable to unjust techniques. Managers who lack empathy may force employees to work longer hours than is healthy or appropriate, or they may be excessively harsh when a worker makes a mistake.

In the same line according toD'souza*et al.,* (2020), empathy places one inside the shoes of another person after one recognises their emotion. Empathy isn't about feeling how you would in that circumstance; it's about putting yourself in their shoes for a few moments and inheriting their feelings. Empathic ties are reciprocal. Enabling yourself to fully absorb another person's emotions can strengthen the bonds and enabling oneself to be sensitive to others can increase such bonds. In 2 directions, being vulnerable enhances empathy. First, seeing the importance of empathy once it is returned to the individual helps strengthen the willingness to empathise with others. People also feel more at ease handling difficult emotions in social situations.

Similarly, according toDavis (2017), if empathy is based on sharing bad emotions, happiness may decrease as a result. People grow closer to placing themselves in other person's situations when they experience genuine compassion for victims of natural disasters. However, simply feeling another's grief, while it may increase a feeling of belonging and understanding if shared, does not maximise the possibility to improve one's well-being. Understanding what another individual is going through gives an edge in determining what they require. Because empathy entails inheriting that feeling but not the difficult situation that caused it, you are generally in a better position to assist.

Moreover,Omdahl (2014) identified that, Empathy is a significant motivator that aids in the maintenance of social order and collaboration. It is the process through which humans comprehend and connect toward others. Empathy is a prerequisite for closeness, trust, and connection. This is also the emotion that makes it impossible to ignore the pain of others.

Empathic persons get a variety of happiness advantages. Empathy frequently promotes altruistic conduct, and empathy-based compassion has been demonstrated to boost collaboration and forgiveness, deepen relationships, reduce hostility and judgement, and even enhance health and wellbeing. Furthermore, Valente (2016) stated that, when an individual detects emotions in another individual, empathy puts people in their shoes. Empathy is not thinking how an individual would experience in that scenario; it is moving aside and inheriting their feelings for a few seconds. According to some study, humans succeed at this task because of nerve cells, or brain connections that activate whether we are receiving the stimulus or watching somebody else experiencing it. Neural circuits are responsible to make the heart race as people watch athletes dash through an arena at their favourite sports game or having people flinch in agony as you see disastrous mishaps in a humorous video that went viral.

In a similar context, according to Derksen, Bensing and Lagro-Janssen (2013) empathy is the ability to see the world through the eyes of another person. Empathy refers to the ability to understand whatever a person is feeling at any given time, as well as why other people's actions make sense to them. Empathy aids one in communicating their ideas that others can comprehend, as well as assisting them in understanding someone else when they interact with someone. It's one of the most important aspects of outstanding social connection, and it's obviously quite strong.

According to Picard *et al.,* (2016) if one has a habit of talking a lot, try and listen 70% of the time for each discussion. Bring crucial questions rather than statements to the conversation. While listening for knowledge and hearing to solve issues are both preferable to not listening whatsoever, they do not inevitably lead to the development of trusting relationships. Listening actively and empathically is a strong and articulately wise strategy. Once one has a firm point of view, this is very difficult. When it's someone else's turn, though,

one would be more successful in articulating their point of view in an empathic manner if they have done their research to listen and put themselves in another person's shoes first.

Moreover, Dolamore*et al.* (2021) identified that, Empathic ties are reciprocal. Enabling oneself to completely absorb another person's emotion may improve interpersonal relationships, as can allowing oneself to be sensitive toward others. Being vulnerable improves human empathy in two different ways. First, seeing the importance of empathy once it is returned to individual helps strengthen the resolve to being compassionate for others. People also acquire confidence in managing difficult emotions in talks with others. It's difficult to maintain a discussion about painful feelings, but if people intentionally cultivate this skill in oneself by taking full advantage of occasions when individuals have a feeling to convey, you'll be more prepared from the receiver end. In addition to this Levett-Jonesand Cant (2020), stated that, if empathy is limited to sharing negative emotions, happiness may decrease. People go closer to placing oneself in the position of victims of natural disasters when they feel genuine grief for individuals. However, just feeling somebody else's grief, while it may increase a feeling of belonging and understanding if shared, does not maximise the ability to improve well-being. Understanding what another individual is going through allows an individual to better understand what some other people require. Because empathy implies that individuals are inheriting the feeling but not the difficult situation that caused it, people are typically in a much more empowered position to assist.

In the same context, according to Taleghani, Ashouri and Saburi (2017), it's a lot easier for people to identify with folks who are part of the "in-group." To put it another way, people find it much simpler to trust and comprehend those who they believe are similar to them in many ways. This could also be accomplished through expanding one's circle of friends and making friends with people with whom one would not normally spend time. They could be shocked to discover that they also have more in mind than previously thought, but it's even

more probable that they'll improve their empathy skills.In the viewpoint of Main*et al.* (2017), Empathy not only helps a person to comprehend others, but it may also provide an individual with the urge to make a significant difference. Whether it's comforting a buddy, purchasing a modest present for someone in need, or giving to groups that support natural disaster survivors, empathy turns powerful when it's used to motivate you to take action. When an individual observes another person in distress, he or she should listen and respect, but also explicitly specify what that someone can do to assist. Empathy implementation entails promoting good transformation for others. The wonderful thing about compassion is whenever others develop, it enriches their personal life.

Similarly, according to Madera, Neal and Dawson (2011) empathy can also help one recognise as well as address the issues that their co-workers are facing, along with a work overload or maybe even a personal issue. Empathy can be practised through offering to assist in any manner they can. This gesture might demonstrate to fellow members of the team that are committed to the company's performance and therefore would aid them in achieving team objectives. Empathy has always been about attempting to understand someone else's point of view, and it's not always as simple as imagining what they're going through. Inquiring about their co-worker's or client's requirements, sentiments, as well as viewpoints might aid in understanding how and where to assist them.

In the same line, according to Myers and Sadaghiani(2010), empathetic leadership entails being able to recognise and understand others' needs, as well as their emotions and opinions. Unfortunately, it's traditionally been recognized as a personal skill rather than a systematic process. Managers that exercise empathic management towards fellow employees are regarded as higher-performing employees by their superiors. Empathy in the workplace simply means that the employees are capable of building genuine, empathetic bonds with each other, which improves relationships as well as efficiency. Working to comprehend each team

participant's individual needs and aspirations, as well as how to best match work schedules to benefit towards both effectiveness and employee satisfaction, is a component of managing with empathy.

The research study conducted by Oh (2021), with the help of secondary data, identified that, in making a relationship better, empathy plays a significant role. Empathy helps people not only to comprehend people but may also provide them with the drive to make a significant difference. Empathy develops when people utilise it to motivate anyone to do something about the situation, whether it's comforting a buddy, purchasing a modest present for anyone who requires it, or giving to charities that support natural calamities' sufferers. A person's communication can be enhanced by empathy, and individuals may notice that their capacity to comprehend and connect to another's feelings improves with time. From the perspective of Haley *et al.* (2017), the most critical attributes for leaders to demonstrate are empathy and strong communication in order to strengthen work relationships. Empathy in the workplace is mostly associated with demonstrating emotional maturity, which is a critical component of leadership performance. Empathy's involvement in the workplace raises the degree of understanding between the leader and his or her subordinates and therefore promotes human interaction. With such a procedure, more effective communication may be developed in the workplace, resulting in improved workplace results. It is critical for anybody, even peers, to have a strong grasp of others' emotions. In the opinion of van den Bedem*et al.* (2019), empathy and effective communication skills in the workplace are helpful in resolving clashing circumstances, and as a result, team spirit is generated, and it is imperative to create more product teams. The interaction between leaders and coworkers increases significantly as a result of such measures. A significant concern is a lack of communication and empathy, which creates an environment of conflict and misunderstanding, resulting in contradictory circumstances and professional relationships.

From the perspective of Haley *et al.* (2017), the ability to grasp what the other person is experiencing or thinking is known as cognitive empathy. The listener does not have to be emotionally involved. Managers could find cognitive empathy helpful in figuring out how the employees are experiencing and, as a result, what kind of style of leadership will work best for them in the current situation. Salespeople may use it to judge a client's emotions, and it can also assist managers in adopting a much more successful approach for a meeting. Cognitive empathy is a logical, rational, and psychologically agnostic skill.

In the viewpoint of Rakel*et al.* (2011), recognisingother person's pain is important, but confirming their response by displaying symptoms of the same emotions personally is much more essential. The greatest thing that can be done is to set out some space for them as well as provide practical advice on how to get through the problem and prepare for another moment. According to Krasner *et al.* (2009), to properly employ empathy, everyone must set aside their personal perspective as well as perceive things from the perspective of the other individual. Then they are able to see behaviours which look to be overly emotional, obstinate, or irrational at first glance as a response to a person's past stories and insight.

As noted by Stallard (2020), communication and empathy at the workplace contribute to developing a connection between employees that develop team spirit in them and increase the level of engagement and coordination between the employees. The strategy of conducting a better level of communication with empathy can help the employees in performing the tasks with a higher level of efficiency, innovative spirit, and enthusiasm. Communication can also help in improving the level of decisions made by the employees by providing them with proper information about the condition. However, Marlow *et al.* (2012) have stated that the negative communication that has elements of violent behaviour can contribute to increasing the level of conflicts in an organisation and create issues. In this concern, the element of empathy should be included in the communication in order to make it appropriate and eliminate violent

behaviour in the process of communication in order to increase its effectiveness. The presence of empathy in the communication also helps in increasing the ability to resolve conflicts by developing understanding between the employees.

From the perspective of Haley *et al.* (2017), people with a manipulative personality, for instance, may employ cognitive empathy to influence emotionally fragile individuals. Emotional empathy is the capacity to experience another person's emotions and hence have a better understanding of that individual. Since it impacts or transforms people, it's frequently referred to as empathic concern. This is not just about understanding how anyone thinks; it's also about establishing a true connection among individuals. This level of empathy might be overpowering for many of us. Empathic persons might become engrossed in other people's issues or pain, which can be harmful to their own mental well-being. This is especially true if people do not even believe they can address the problem. In the viewpoint of Rakel*et al.* (2011), compassionate empathy is a much more proactive type of empathy. It entails not simply caring about another individual but also understanding their emotional distress and making concrete actions to alleviate it.

2.5 Conclusion

Concluding as per the above findings of various authors, it can be manifested that employees are significantly more interested in their jobs and can thus easily integrate with company goals and targets when a team and workplace have a culture of good communication. Employee engagement is an important factor in a company's productivity. Communication skills may help produce a more productive and skilled workforce in a variety of ways, in addition to enhancing employee engagement. Empathy is a powerful force that encourages social cooperation and harmony. In a relationship, empathy can help people get closer to their partners. Empathy starts by reminding people to evaluate how they feel as they travel through life's diverse bag of great, dreadful, and neutral occurrences. When a person is more tuned in

to their spouse's feelings, they may perceive when their partner is angry before they even say anything. Empathy plays an important part in the development of a relationship. Apart from that, empathy's presence in the workplace improves communication between the boss and his or her employees. The ability to feel other people's emotions is known as emotional empathy, and empathic worry is a term used to describe how it affects or transforms individuals. Compassionate empathy requires not just caring for another person but also comprehending their emotional state. It is the mechanism that allows individuals to communicate and understand one other. Closeness, confidence, and a sense of belonging are all dependent on empathy. This is also the emotion that makes ignoring other people's suffering so difficult.Empathy is one of the most crucial skills to have in the workplace because it allows people to strengthen their relationships with both co-workers and customers. Understanding how to empathise with one another can help them improve communication and form strong bonds, resulting in a more favourable workplace. Empathy is the ability to understand and empathise with another's feelings and experiences. Being empathic can help you appreciate another person's point of view, increase your ability to engage with others, and broaden your perspective on a subject.Managers may find cognitive empathy useful in determining how their employees think and, as a result, what type of leadership style will work best for them at this time. Similarly, salespeople can utilise this to identify a customer's mood, which can help them choose the best tone for the conversation.Empathetic leadership requires the ability to recognise and understand the needs of others, along with their sentiments and viewpoints. Unfortunately, it's been regarded as a human skill rather than a methodical procedure in the past. Managers that practise empathic management with their co-workers are viewed as higher-performing employees by their bosses.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology chapter in a research work plays a role of a roadmap for the entire research process, which reflects different methodologies and methods that can be considered suitable and justified in the presented research context. This chapter demonstrates different crucial methods along with their rationale for this specific research work. In the prime quest of the presented research work is to to examine the way of improving relationship with empathy and good communication in workplace. For the purpose of exploring this research aim, there is a need of some crucial in depth data regarding general working practices undertaken by different business organizations regarding combinations and workplace relationship development. The reflection of differentiated research theories and methods in the specific reference to the presented research work can provide under different headings.

3.2 Research Design

The designing of the research work can be considered as one basic requirement for a social science related research work. The effective research design provides a focus and well justified objectives for the entre research process on the basis of which research methods and mode of analysis can be finalised. In this respect, there are different types of research designs such as exploratory, descriptive and experimental research design. For the presented research work, descriptive research would be the most suitable research design as this research design aims to describe the current relationship between known variable in an in depth manner with the help of existing theories (Saunders, 2003). In the presented research work also, there is a need of presenting the impact of empathy and communication in the specific reference to the workplace. The role of good communication in making organisational practices smooth and effective is a known fact. The aim of this research is to describe this fact further in the specific reference to empathy and workplace management. In this regard, descriptive research design

can be considered quite effective and efficient approach as it would help to select different theoretical models and approaches to collect data and reflect the context in descriptive but an informative manner. In addition to this usage of descriptive research design also reflects that nature of the research has been qualitative and subjective and detailed data regarding the context has been collected to describe the research objective further (Freytag, and Young, 2017).

3.3 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is an important methodological perspective associated with the research process, which directs to reflect the nature of the research methods and data collected from such methods. In this regard, generally two important types of paradigms namely interpretivism and positivism paradigms are taken into account in social science research work. In the reference to the presented research work, interpertivism research approach has been considered quite suitable as per its nature (Alharahsheh, and Pius, 2020). The quest of the research work is to reflect the impact of empathy and workplace behaviour. In this quest, empathy and workplace behaviour both are the qualitative phenomena on which, the collection of quantitative data is not possible. For the purpose of exploring these aspects, qualitative data can be considered suitable. In this regard, interpretivism approach taken in this research work aims to provide a platform to collect and interpret the collected data in the most effective manner. Moreover the adoption of interpretivism also helps in the comprehend and include different theoretical perspectives collected from different data sources in the final results in order to describe the phenomena in the most critical and detailed manner (Yilmaz, 2013).

3.4 Research Approach

The approach of the research is a reflection of the flow of the entire research process, which also determines the type of the data collected and type of the output of the data. In the social science related research works, generally two types of approaches namely inductive and

deductive research approaches are taken into account. In this regard, the presented research work is directed to align with inductive research approach as inductive research approach is directed to collect specific research inputs and drives to provide a generalised research results (Bernard, and Bernard, 2013). In the same manner, in the presented research work also, the quest is to collect specific input regarding empathy and communication skills in the organisational context and with the help of detailed review of this specific input, the aim is to analyse the impact of this empathy and communication on the workplace context. In this way, the flow of the research work is from specific to general which is a postulation of the inductive research design. This research approaches is adopted in the research work in which there is ample secondary data available and due to this reason, it is essential to have a specific research focus. In this regard, the research question has already been set in this research before collecting original data (Bell, Bryman, and Harley, 2018). The usage of inductive research approach is also in the alignment of the descriptive research design and interpretvism research approach (Saunders, 2016).

3.5 Data Collection Method

For a successful research work, it is essential to collect adequate and effective raw data which is relevant to the research question. In this regard, the selection of the suitable research methods becomes quite vital. In context to this, in the presented research work, mono research methods have been taken into account. In this type of research method category, only type of the data is collected. As per the selected research design and approach, only qualitative and subjective data can be considered suitable for this research work (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2013). The qualitative data collected in the research work aims to develop an effective and conceptual framework which works as a base to explore the research context in the most elaborative manner. In addition to this, on this research topic, already there are different secondary data sources available. There is a need of comprehend and critical analyse

these sources and infer the most suitable conclusion out of them (Liamputtong, and Ezzy, 2005). The collection of this subjective and qualitative research data can be done with the help of two different types of data collection methods, which can be detailed as below:

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection Method

Primary data collection methods are the methods, which are directed to explore and collect only first hand and practical data which is generated with the help of practical experiences and point of views of the related research entity. In this regard, in the presented research work, interview method has been selected as the suitable method to collect qualitative data in the form of the views and perspectives of different related participants. For this research work, an interview activity is conducted with the selected sample participants to collect their views on the impact of empathy and communication on the workplace behaviour and management. In this method, some open ended questions have been asked to participant, which can be answered in the subjective and expressive manner (Lune, and Berg 2016). This method has been selected as this method allows the researcher to collect detailed views of the people who have practically experienced this issue. In addition to this, in this data collection method, participants are having complete liberty to reflect their experience in the detail manner which can be proved quite helpful to explore the research issue in an in depth manner. Moreover, in this research work, online interviews through skype call has been taken in place of face to face interview which is less time consuming and convenient method of conducting interviews. Before conducting this interview, the participant has been contacted on his official email ids and brief about the research and procedure have been provided to him. Further, a consent form and participant information sheet has been sent to the participant to have his informed consent. Further a suitable time has been fixed for the skype meeting. In meeting a short interview of 10-15 minutes has been conducted and the answers given by the participant have been recorded.

3.5.2 Secondary Data Collection Method

Along with the primary data collection method, secondary data has also been collected in this research work. The secondary data is the data which has already been collected, processed and used by different authors and scholars in their respective research articles and literature. This method has allowed collecting different views of different scholars on the research topic and theoretical aspects of the research context, which has helped in infer the final results. In this regard, for this research work, library research method can be considered as the most suitable method. In this method, different data collection sources available in the university library such as books, journal articles, and research reports have been collected and reviewed in an in depth manner to collect the views of different other researchers on the topic (Robson, 2002). This method has been selected in the research work as this methods helps to collect a large pool of secondary data in a short time period. Moreover, the findings collected from this method are already processed which can be considered authentic and validated. Along with this, this research method also helps to collect theoretical assertions on the given research problem in order to provide academic support to the findings collected from the primary data so that refined and well discussed research results can be collected.

3.6 Sampling

For the purpose of undertaking the interviews in the most effective manner, there is a need of selecting sample. For this research work, convenience sampling method has been adopted in which the selection of the sample has been done on the basis of the approachability and suitability to the research. For this research work, the interview has been conducted with

Associate Solicitor in Commercial Litigation department in Matheson Solicitors in Dublin, Mr. David Heatley. For this research, the interview of Mr. David has been conducted to explore the practices for maintaining effective communication in his organisation. The selected participant is responsible for the policy making and evaluation in his respective organisation so he can

elaborate the specific communication policy in his organisation and its impact over the entire workplace culture. This participant was selected from the personal contacts and his official id has been obtained from his LinkedIn profile.

3.7 Data Analysis

After the collection of the data, it is essential to have in depth analysis of the data so that effective results can be produced. In this research work, 2 different methods, namely interview and library research method has been taken into account. However, both the methods have been selected to collect qualitative data only. In this regard, for the purpose of analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis has been taken into account in the research work. In this method, different themes related to research objectives have been devised and the validity of these themes have been analysed with the help of interview transcripts and findings from the secondary data. Further the selected themes and their findings have been discussed in the light of literature sources so that the final results can be obtained with high degree of reliability and authenticity. This method has been selected in the research work as it allows having an analytical framework to compile, sort, analyse and infer the qualitative data in the most explicit manner.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

No research can be considered effective without being aligned with the ethical guidelines. This research work involves the both primary and secondary data collection method. In this regard, some crucial ethical considerations have been followed in the presented research work. First of all before starting the interviews, first of all informed consent have been availed so that the participant has all the information for taking part in the trail. In addition to this, confidentiality and anonymity can also be considered as one of the major ethical issues in primary data based research works. For the purpose of dealing with such issues, the data of the participant has been kept confidential and anonymous in the research work. In this regard,

instead of using the original names of the participant, some codes have been used to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the data (Lo, and O'Connell, 2005). In addition to this, the collected data has been kept in password secured file so that any kind of unauthorised access to the file can be avoided. Along with this, the participant has been provided with the right to withdrawal at anytime if found uncomfortable. Moreover, the secondary data collected in the research has been kept properly references and cited so that the due credit can be provided the authors and scholars whose research work has been taken into account (Gunbayi, 2020). Along with this, any kind of manipulation in the collected data has also been avoided in the research work in order to keep the research result authentic and reliable.

3.9 Summary

The presented chapter has demonstrated different methods and methodologies adopted in the research work to collect data and analyse the collected data. The chapter has reflected that for the presented research qualitative data can be considered as the best suitable data. For the purpose of collecting data, interview method along with secondary data analysis through library research method has been selected as the best suitable method. In the research, an interview with David Heatley, Associate Solicitor in Commercial Litigation department in Matheson Solicitors in Dublinhas been taken while secondary data has been collected from different secondary data sources such as books, journal articles and research reports which are available in the library. For analysing the collected data, thematic analysis method has been taken into account in the research work in which different themes related to the research objectives have been devised.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

Data analysis is recognised as the most pivotal part of any research project that summarises gathered data and it entails the synthesis of data gathered via the usage of some logical and analytical reasoning for finding relevant patterns and trends concerning the main topic. In other words, the analysis and findings section of the research covers a critical assessment of the collected data that leads to informative conclusion in relation to the established research aim and objectives (Bell, Harley and Bryman, 2022). The presented research work centred on examining the relevance of good communication and empathy for strengthening workplace relationships is structured as per qualitative methodology. Thus, the thematic analysis technique is incorporated in this study to evaluate interview results and pertinent secondary data. The themes have been designed by combining research objectives and interview responses to make sure valid outcomes are drawn on the basis of a critical evaluation of assembled data. In order to uphold the ethical quality of the research while analysing and interpreting primary data, the name and other personal details of the participant are not disclosed and for this purpose, an alphabetical code is used to refer to the opinion shared by the participant.

4.2 Thematic Analysis and Findings

Theme 1: Role and Significance of Proper Communication in Organisational Efficiency

In order to know the importance of effective communication in terms of strengthening organisational efficiency, a separate question was included in the interview questionnaire in this context. In its response, Respondent A stated that "*Ultimately communicating to junior colleagues exactly what role each person has with preciseness at the very beginning of a task will often lead to better results and fewer errors being made and time having to be spent rectifying mistakes.*" It is interpreted that leaders constantly communicate with juniors or

subordinates and are able to rationally regulate their initiatives and efforts at the workplace in accordance with the allocated tasks and organisational objectives thus reducing the chances of errors which might reduce organisational efficiency. On the basis of related secondary data, it is also analysed that effective communication is essential for leaders in contemporary organisations for performing fundamental management functions; which are planning, organising, managing and controlling. Good communication helps managers to adequately accomplish their core responsibilities and jobs by systematically allocating work to subordinates and directing their efforts wherever required (Hargie, 2016).

All the important information needs to be conveyed to the leaders who in turn are required to communicate the basic plan for implementing them. Organising also needs effective communication with people regarding their job tasks and likewise leaders as managers need to communicate efficiently with subordinates for attaining the team goals and controlling s not an easy task without robust verbal and non-verbal communication between leaders and managers (Chukwuka, 2015). Therefore good communication is a key to organisational consistency and efficacy by assuring proper communication and healthy workplace relationships in line with the organisational mission and objectives between leaders and subordinates thereby affirming enhanced organisational efficiency.

In regard to the same theme, on the basis of reviewed secondary data, it is analysed that managers devote a considerable part of their job time to communication to make sure that every subordinate or follower has a complete understanding of his or her role and tasks which eventually lead to enhanced efficiency (De Wet, Koekemoer and Nel, 2016). Adequate communication between leaders and subordinates assures that all people are working for the attainment of a common business motto by working to the best of their capabilities and abiding by the instructions issued by managers. Effective communication is thus identified as the building block of efficient organisations (Stachova, Stacho and Vicen, 2017).

It is further analysed that communication promotes motivation among subordinates by informing and clarifying them about the tasks that need to be performed and ways of improvising performance in case performance are not up to the benchmark. Good communication also plays an important role in altering the attitudes of individuals as a well-informed individual surely depicts a sincere attitude towards job roles and contributes to organisational success in comparison to a less informed person (Ramadanty and Martinus, 2016). The secondary data also specifies that communication helps in socialising at the workplace which nurtures and refines workplace relationships and assures enhanced efficiency where satisfied people work sincerely.

Theme 2: Main issues concerning Workplace Relationships and Disputes in Contemporary Workplace Settings

For the purpose of knowing the viewpoint of the participant on the basis of real-time experience concerning major issues in workplace relationships and organisational disputes in the workplace settings today. In this context, Participant A said that *"Not having an appropriate forum or opportunity to voice your concerns and/or frustrations, results in unhappiness and often resentment towards superiors festers. Upper management being disconnected and not having an appreciation for the length of time it might take a junior colleague to perform certain tasks and being overly demanding with unrealistic timeframes."* It is inferred that the absence of a proper network through which employees can share their problems with the managers or leaders causes dissatisfaction among employees, and decreases their morale and devotion while raising stress all of which interrupt overall productivity levels. In this relation, it is evaluated that lack of proper communication between people working together undermines workplace satisfaction, raises the possibility of interpersonal disputes and ultimately deteriorates the productivity of employees. It is also found that modern workplaces are often more extensively

diverse than before, particularly for businesses that work in the global marketplace with international clients and a diverse workforce (Katz and Flynn, 2013).

For effective teamwork and efficient cohesion, managers devise novel and engaging solutions for bringing individuals of differing backgrounds together such as launching training sessions on cultural differences to educate employees about ways of being more sensitive to cultural variances within the workplace. The secondary data also reflects that the ego and attitude of individuals commonly inhibit teamwork and other management initiatives at the workplace if not effectively addressed. Moreover, certain entities experience a downfall in productivity because of a lack of motivation due to contrasting personalities causing workplace disputes and hampered relationships at the workplace (Robbins *et al.,* 2013).

Unrealistic expectations and demands also result are conflicts between leaders and employees and this is common when leaders either ignore the key demands of followers or establish unrealistic expectations for instance compelling workers to work overtime which disturbs work-life balances and leads to dissatisfaction and unhealthy relationships in workplace. When people feel they are being pushed very hard and management expects them to do a lot more than their inherent potential than also dissatisfactions and conflicts become frequent in workplaces (Moon and Christensen, 2020).

Theme 3: Role of Management in Effective Prevention of Workplace Disputes

When the participant was asked to share personal experience and insights in relation to the role of the management in controlling workplace disputes, Respondent A asserted that *"Regular check-ins and catch-ups with employees on a weekly basis or fortnightly for more senior employees. This allows employees to tell their employer if they have the capacity for more work or are currently feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work."* It is evaluated that it is crucial for a management team thriving to attain workplace satisfaction and engagement, to routinely interact with employees for the purpose of knowing their understanding of job

roles, related potentials, feelings and issues. It is also inferred that meetings need to be organised by the management at regular time intervals to know that the employees are given work as per their capacities and competencies instead of being overloaded which might cause dissatisfaction, disputes and even turnover in critical situations. In this context, as per the secondary data, it is analysed that disputes usually occur because of no communication or ineffective communication. Employees require clear directions and when such directions are not provided and conveyed to the conflicts generally occur (Davis, 2013). Employees are keen to know their important responsibilities or what their job role entails and how they are anticipated to perform the assigned task (McKenzie, 2015). Therefore, it is important for the management to make sure that people holding authority like a supervisor or manager and employees is precise, appropriate and clear. This will surely help in reducing stress and the incidence of conflicts in the workplace.

Further, it is important to make sure that the formal procedure of filing a complaint at the workplace is clearly established. There needs to be a clear, inclusive and comprehensive process for employees to follow wherein they are comfortable in filing a complaint. The process needs to be simple so that before getting frustrated and resultant fall in their workplace efficiency, their problems are reasonably solver by the human resource managers. This helps to prevent the building of resentment and prospective complaints from moving out of hand (Shafait, Yuming and Sahibzada,2021). In addition to this, it is examined that developing and managing an atmosphere where employees are inspired and driven to work together advances employee engagement which leads to the development of trust among team members and making sure that every person is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of other colleagues. Engagement thus enables employees to work at more ease with co-workers (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017).

Theme 4: Empathy and Communication; the most important factors to improving workplace relationship

This theme is prepared in line with the main aim and question of the research and to generate findings with respect to the second objective of the study. The interviewee was asked to share his views on the significance and role of empathy and communication in improving workplace relations. In response, it is stated that "*Yes, to a certain extent. Having an appreciation that not everyone in the same organization/workplace operates at the same speed and on the same level of knowledge and experience is very important.*" In addition, it is added by the participant, *"Feeling comfortable and safe to communicate unhappiness in the workplace is something organisations should strive for, even if this is an anonymous process."*

It is explained in the secondary sources based on organisational behaviour and leadership and management at the workplace that empathy is positively associated with job performance at the workplace and managers who exhibit empathetic leadership are viewed as strong performance by their superiors in contemporary organisations. It is highlighted in the literature that demonstrating empathy in organisations which is also a pivotal part of leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence tends to improve human interactions, contribute to sustaining an environment of clear and effective communication and produce positive results (Obakpolo, 2015). On the other side, it is examined that lack of empathy in managers and leaders often leads to employee burnout, high job stress, low work engagement and high employee turnover. In addition, the absence of transparent and open communication at the workplace and lack of empathy and understanding between team members, supervisors and managers adversely affect work culture and develop negativity at the workplace due to increased possibility of confusion and conflicts among employees. Further, it is analysed that empathetic managers and leaders' supportive nature help in boosting employee morale and job

satisfaction which leads to enhancing the sense of association and dedication to the workplace in employees, thereby strengthening employee-employer relations (Worlu *et al.,* 2016).

Moreover, helping co-workers beyond one's job responsibility and description is proven to have a positive effect on organisational accomplishment. The importance of helping behaviour is widely recognised in building strong teams and healthy and positive work culture because when colleagues and managers understand personal issues or the burden of employees and show compassion and extend help then it often manifests in the form of better workplace relations and high organisational commitment (Artha and Etikariena, 2020). However, it is argued that workplace relations are not entirely dependent on factors of communication and empathy rather they are also shaped and affected by leadership practices, work culture, job motivation and satisfaction level and performance and reward management practices adopted at the workplace (Worlu *et al.,* 2016).

It is noted that empathy and communication are interrelated aspects as workers and managers cannot offer emotional support to employees in distress without proper communication. It is asserted that empathetic leadership combined with effective communication paves the way for positively influencing the job behaviour of workers, stimulating innovation and fostering followers' performance (Kock *et al.,* 2019). Overall, it is assessed that empathy and communication are vital aspects of sustaining good workplace relations but other organisations factors such as work culture, leadership, supportive work environment, work-life balance and human resource management practices.

Theme 5: Strategies with which workplace relationships can be improvised

This theme is developed in line with the last objective of the study to explore and investigate useful strategies for improving workplace relations in contemporary organisations in light of interview responses and a review of relevant literature. It is suggested by the interview respondent that, "*Providing consistent feedback and constructive criticism rather*

than allowing bad habits to form. Being conscious and respectful towards other people's time

e.g. don't create regular scenarios where people are consistently waiting for their turn to speak

and have to spend a long time listening to work matters completely irrelevant to them. This is

time they could be better placed actually being productive and completing tasks."

On the other side, it is elucidated in secondary sources that good workplace relations and robust employee-employer relations are the outcome and combination of various factors such as proper work-life balance, positive work environment, constructive feedback and open communication, workplace flexibility and career advancement opportunities to employees. Managers must encourage and lead group tasks and inculcate team spirit among employees so they develop a better understanding of each other and learn to cooperate and resolve differences through communication. Other than this, it is emphasised that organisations must have a conflict management strategy, conduct training workshops, provide cross-cultural training and offer mentoring in order to build better teamwork skills among employees and minimise the probability of misunderstanding and conflicts (Singh, 2014; Artha and Etikariena, 2020).

It is investigated that promotion, equity, recognition and mentoring have a positive impact on employee performance and workplace relations but there is a need for friendly organisational policies and rendering timely support and guidance to employees to shape their work attitude in a constructive and positive manner (Worlu *et al.,* 2016). It is explained that positive interpersonal relations generate beneficial results for organisations and individuals in terms of performance and overall effectiveness so it is important to sustain healthy workplace relations by paying adequate attention to the work environment and employee demographics. Positive relations can be fostered via undertaking dispositional differences and management interventions in the form of social activities at the workplace and outside the workplace to aid in building friendships at work. It is indicated that workplace relations can be improved by taking into account factors relating to communication, employee characteristics and

demographics and compatibility (Patricia, 2015). Moreover, good workplace relations cannot be maintained without the active involvement of management and support of leaders wherein leadership practices and attitudes or supervisors and managers play a crucial role in sustaining supportive work culture and promoting effective interpersonal relations. Employee training programmes, induction programmes, group activities, coaching or mentoring and quick resolution of conflicts along with cross-cultural training workshops can help in shaping positive workplace behaviour or attitude among workers, thereby supporting the long-term growth of organisations (Rahman, 2016; Conrad, 2014).

4.3 Summary

In summary, it is noted from interview analysis and assessment of diverse secondary sources that proper communication inculcates trust, cooperation and transparency among team members which contribute to enhancing organisational efficiency. Further, supportive and empathetic leadership and managerial practices combined with effective HRM practices facilitate developing healthy workplace relations and improving compatibility and cooperation with employers and subordinates. Workplace disputes and conflicts among employees are common in the contemporary organisational environment characterised by a diverse workforce, constant changes and extreme competition. Management can play a central role in resolving workplace disputes and developing a sense of harmony, mutual trust, coordination and open and transparent communication in employees which further lead to improved organisational performance and efficacy. In this regard, data findings and analysis denote that empathy and communication are central to sustaining robust workplace relations and improving work productivity and organisational outcomes as individuals with cultural and ethnic differences work together in a team. It is summarised that constructive feedback, supportive managerial and leadership practices, fair and transparent HRM practices and

friendly organisational policies advocating flexibility and work-life balance are helpful in improving work relations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In the light of the first research question, good communication is integral for managers in contemporary workplaces with respect to performing central functions of management; which are planning, organisation, managing or leading and controlling all of which together assure business success. The data findings reveal that communication with junior colleagues assists in making sure that every person is aware of his or her role precisely from the very point of job allocation and this eventually leads to enhanced organisational results, fewer errors and sufficient time in hand to rectify mistakes. Proper communication at the workplace and the emphatic attitude of leaders toward subordinates escalates motivation by informing employees about the task that needs to be done, the manner of performing it and tactics for stimulating performance (Hargie, 2016). The supportive literature also indicates that empathy and consistent communication at the workplace also aids in shaping attitudes of people in line with the common organisational purpose as well informed persons commonly display better attitude in relation to less-informed ones. Socialising is also a key advantage of effective communication and empathetic behaviour of management as both these aspects nurture a healthy workplace where people are willing to interact and engage with each other and work collaboratively to ensure business efficiency and competency (Stachova, Stacho and Vicen, 2017).

The supporting literature highlights that workplace disputes mainly occur because of inadequate communication or when employees feel that employers and leaders are not sensitive and empathetic towards their issues, needs and demands. Employees require proper direction and a sense of belongingness in the organisation and a lack of communication and requisite empathy commonly results in disputes. Creating team engagement which is pivotal for business success is affirmed by a sound communication network throughout the organisational hierarchy

and consideration of employees' needs and demands with due empathy (Ramadanty and Martinus, 2016).

It is found that commonly; workplace conflicts take place when employees are not clear of the management's expectations of them or overburden them in excess of their inherent skills and capacities. Further, it is apparent from the data findings that when employees do not have an appropriate opportunity or forum to put forward their concerns, they get irritated and eventually become unhappy which hampers their knowledge, efficiency and productivity in workplace settings (Robbins *et al*., 2013). Therefore, it is discussed that emotionally connecting with employees and continuously communicating with them are important aspects that must be met by the management to make sure that employees work as a team in an engaging and healthy work atmosphere.

It is discussed in relation to the second research question that empathy and good communication contribute to fostering better workplace relationships in numerous ways such as by increasing employee job satisfaction and commitment, improving understanding and coordination between team members and eradicating possibilities of conflicts rooted in lack of communication and poor understanding of team members. It is examined and interpreted from interview findings that empathy and communication enable in development of good workplace relations but only to a certain extent as there are several other organisational factors that affect work relations mainly organisational policies and leadership practices. It is implied in the results that the empathetic abilities of leaders and employees allow them to identify and appreciate differences in co-workers and develop the understanding that every individual functions from their level of experience and knowledge. It is highly necessary that employees feel comfortable in putting forward their needs and communicate issues faced by them at the workplace so that management can initiate actions and adopt suitable strategies to create an

environment of mutual trust, coordination and transparent communication (Colbert, Yee and George, 2016).

The findings of the literature also suggested that a good level of communication skills is vital in order to eliminate issues between the employees and the management. Communication helps in developing understanding and providing information regarding decisions along with avoiding confusion that reduces the chances of conflicts between employees. However, the findings of the literature also suggest that positive communication that has elements of empathy helps in eliminating the confusion. On the other hand, the communication that has elements of violence and shows violent behaviour contributes to increasing the level of conflicts in an organisation. In this concern, it is evaluated that the factor of empathy is vital in order to improve the level of understanding and reduce conflicts in an organisation as a single element of communication is insufficient for conducting work procedures efficiently and contributes to improving the working capacity of an organisation to enhance profitability and productivity.

In this regard, it is illustrated in the literature that empathic managers help in preventing employee burnout and improving employee retention as they tend to go beyond their defined duties to understand problems or challenges faced by employees on the personal and professional front. On the contrary, leaders who do not show concern or care for subordinates in times of change, external turbulence and heavy workload or when employees are witnessing challenges in personal lives are regarded as ineffective leaders due to the direct negative impact on employee morale, work commitment and team performance (Rahman, 2016; Conrad, 2014). Empathy not only helps in improving relations at the workplace but also encourage workplace innovation and shape positive work attitude and job behaviour which manifest in the form of improved organisational performance, productivity and efficacy (Good *et al.,* 2016).

It is signified in data analysis that empathy and communication are indeed important factors in building healthy workplace relations but they are not the only factors influencing interpersonal relations and employee-employer relations in contemporary organisations as they are correlated to organisational practices, policies, flexibility, fairness and leadership efficacy. It is described that empathy can be inculcated in employees via coaching and cross-cultural workshops and encouraging team activities and communication can be improved through a positive and flexible work environment where employees do not hesitate to convey their needs and issues faced in performing certain activities (Good *et al.,* 2016). Good communication eliminates any chances of confusion and misunderstanding which enables sustaining good relations with co-workers. Moreover, it is demonstrated that comprehensive organisational practices must be adopted and promoted to sustain effective work relations combining elements of empathy, communication, leadership and HR policies (Dietz and Kleinlogel, 2014).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

It has been concluded in relation to the central aim of the study that the current workplaces encompass a diverse workforce or employees belonging to different backgrounds and contemporary firms are also witnessing challenges due to constant external changes and high competition. Therefore, it is essential that organisational leaders exhibit empathetic behaviour and effective communication skills to reduce employee stress and work burden and establish a positive and healthy environment at the workplace to maintain and enhance organisational performance through improved work relations. It is deduced that effective communication and empathy are the main traits for the leaders that support or aid in improving workplace relationships as employees feel comfortable in conveying their needs and give feedback on the work environment and practices in a transparent and open work culture based on mutual trust, coordination, support and empathy. It is derived from results that empathetic leaders tend to support workers by going beyond their job role and also consider personal issues or challenges faced by subordinates that positively shape the job attitude of employees and enhance job satisfaction and work commitment.

It is inferred concerning the first objective that workplace disputes adversely affect employee morale, degrade work culture and decline overall organisational performance and productivity. In addition, work conflicts reduce organisational efficacy so it is necessary that important information regarding individual responsibility, job role and tasks are clearly conveyed to employees. It is found that junior employees or workers tend to feel disheartened when their concerns are not acknowledged by leaders and managers wherein the absence of a proper forum or platform for grievance handling further aggravates the issue and arise conflicts. Additionally, conflicts occur when the upper management does not show appreciation and acknowledge employees' performance but rather overburdens them with high performance and

productivity expectations. Overall, these issues which are rooted in managerial and leadership practices result in poor work culture, low productivity and high employee turnover.

It is found from data assessment that open, clear and transparent communication channels and strong communication of leaders combined with empathy towards employees play a pivotal role in improving employee well-being and inculcating a sense of belongingness within the organisation which ultimately results in improved workplace relations. Empathetic leadership is regarded to be a key to fostering employee job satisfaction but it is not sufficient in empowering employees and increasing employee retention as there are several organisational factors that affect employee-employer relations. Leaders or managers can give constructive feedback to employees, conduct group activities, ensure regular or weekly check-in with workers and take their feedback regarding organisational practices to find areas of improvement and build robust relations.

It is concluded from results obtained concerning the last objective that workplace relationships can be enhanced through good communication and empathy by providing training, coaching and mentoring to managers and leaders indicating the role of empathetic practices and long-term impacts of developing traits of good communication and empathy. Along with this, the management needs to direct attention toward offering constructive criticism and consistent feedback instead of allowing negative habits or job behaviour to form in staff members. Consideration of employee requirements, ensuring fair and transparent performance management and reward practices, taking employee feedback in regular intervals and providing cross-cultural training for enhancing their understanding of diverse cultures and varied work practices or behaviour of subordinates are useful strategies to sustain good workplace relations. It is important to establish a work culture that promotes coordination and harmony in the workplace where employees openly communicate and share their concerns with superiors and co-workers. It is deduced that a work environment based on empathy, trust,

cooperation and clear communication minimises conflicts or disputes between staff and organisations.

6.2 Research Implications

In this study, the researcher examined the role of two key aspects of organisational behaviour; communication and empathy in building and improving good relations at the workplace so these findings can be used by managers, leaders or organisations to alleviate conflicts and foster good workplace relations. The research highlights the benefits and significance of empathy and communication in the modern business landscape attributed to changing external conditions, technological advancements, fierce competition and diversified team members. Therefore, these elements must be given proper attention in devising a healthy and positive work environment to support employee well-being and boost organisational performance. The study also sheds light on the pressing issue of poor workplace relations, its impacts and disputes in contemporary workplaces and also suggests ways to enhance or strengthen workplace relations through different strategies covering communication and empathy. Therefore, these findings and recommendations can be considered by contemporary firms struggling with workplace disputes and conflicts and they can be implemented for promoting empathetic leadership and behaviour in organisations for long-term growth and sustainability of organisations.

6.3 Limitations of the Research

The main agenda of the presented research work is to articulate the significance of empathy and good communication in the modern workplaces in the present business environment and which strategic practices can be supportive in this regard. For meeting these purposes, in the presented research no particular industry is being focused on due to which the findings drawn are not of specific nature and thus the practical scope of the research is limited. In addition to this, the limited empirical enquiry is organised in this research wherein for

inclusion of primary data interview with David Heatley is organised due to which high representation of data is undermined as the very precise population is studied. Additionally, with sole emphasis on qualitative methods wherein interviews and secondary data are gathered, the accuracy of results cannot be verified (Devi, 2017). This is because the qualitative method provides subjective knowledge regarding the research topic which might challenge the authenticity of findings as subjective knowledge is based on human interpretations and experiences.

6.4 Recommendations for Practice

For the purpose of encouraging positive workplace relationships and elevating engagement, whole-person leadership and the well-being of teams are critical. However, at times blurred lines are related to emotional connections for which courageous interactions must be initiated by leaders and clear expectations must be established. Communicating feedback forward can also help in reinforcing healthy boundaries thereby laying a solid foundation for effective workplace relationships supportive of business success (News Week, 2022).

Upholding authenticity in interactions with colleagues is crucial for leaders as today employees are very much aware and conscious of authenticity and validity instead of being bothered only about their personal gains. Leaders are advised to devote proper time to understanding the personalities and attitudes of their subordinates and try to give more assistance than what they seek wherever possible as this would inculcate a deep feeling of belongingness among employees which in turn would elevate their devotion to assigned work (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017).

Today people are not interested in working under autocratic culture rather they want to be associated with participative workplaces wherein juniors are also part of decision-making processes that not only trigger their work satisfaction, rather also support socialisation at diverse workplaces thereby reducing the possibility of conflicts. Furthermore, participative

work culture will help in making sure that people working together in teams for organisational purposes are aware of each other's personalities, beliefs and cultural values; and hold dignity for everyone at the workplace thereby facilitating enhanced relationships and bringing down chances of workplace disputes (Clark, Robertson and Young, 2019).

6.5 Future Research Work

In future, scholars willing to work on the same topic and related aspects, the scholars can organise empirical investigation using the mixed methodology to study the value of empathy and communication in determining organisational efficiency and strengthening interpersonal relationships at workplaces from an objective, and subjective lens. Consideration of mixed methodology would aid in knowing the experiences of business leaders regarding the need for maintaining good communication at the workplace and requisite empathy while also assessing factual and scientific data in this regard (Flick, 2018). Therefore, it will provide comprehensive knowledge likely to generate a practically useful set of findings that can be embraced by contemporary entities. Furthermore, in the future scholars can study the case of particular industries like retail and banking in any country to dive deeper into the real scenario and develop worthy outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions

1. **Question: What is the role of proper communication in organisational efficiency?**

● Ultimately communicating to juniors colleagues exactly what role each person has with preciseness at the very beginning of a task will often lead to better results and less errors being made and time having to be spent rectifying mistakes.

2. **Question: What are main issues related to workplace relationship and disputes which are often observed in your organisation**

● Not having an appropriate forum or opportunity to voice your concerns and / or frustrations. So unhappiness and often resentment towards superiors festers.

● Upper management being disconnected and not having an appreciation for the length of time it might take a junior colleague to perform certain tasks and being overly demanding with unrealistic timeframes.

3. **Question: What role can management play in effective prevention of workplace disputes?**

● Regular check ins and catch ups with employees on a weekly basis or fortnightly for more senior employees. This allows employees to tell their employer if they have the capacity for more work or are currently feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work.

4. **Question: Do you think empathy and communication are the most important factors to improve workplace relationship**

● Yes to a certain extent. Having an appreciation that not everyone in the same organization / workplace operates at the same speed and on the same level of knowledge and experience is very important.

- Feeling comfortable and safe to communicate unhappiness in the workplace is something organisations should strive for, even if this is an anonymous process.

5. **Question: Please mention some common strategies with the help of which workplace relationships can be improved**

   - Providing consistent feedback and constructive criticism rather than allowing bad habits to form.

   - Being conscious and respectful towards other people's time e.g. don't create regular scenarios where people are consistently waiting for their turn to speak and have to spend a long time listening to work matters completely irrelevant to them. This is time they could be better placed actually being productive and completing tasks.

Appendix 2: Code for Respondents

Respondent	Assigned Code
David Heatley Associate Solicitor in Commercial Litigation department in Matheson Solicitors in Dublin	Respondent A