

# Workplace Compassion: An Accelerator for Employee Performance

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## Abstract

Workplace compassion is a psychological state of an individual in response to pains and sufferings. It is a shown concern for sufferings and being non-judgmental to failures of colleagues. Workplace compassion is one of the basic therapies to employees' woe. When there is workplace compassion, it can lead to enhanced employee performance. Performance is the final output of an employee's action at the workplace. This study was conducted among 150 teachers working in educational institutions in Kerala. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed among teachers for the purpose. This study attempts to empirically attest that there exists a positive relationship between employee work passion and employee performance. Results of this study exposed a positive relationship between workplace compassion and job performance. Hence we can endorse that compassionate practices within the workplace can combat some of the disagreeable symptoms, and there by lead to a healthy environment which can foster human connections and performance.

## Keywords

Workplace compassion, job performance, task performance, contextual performance

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## I. Introduction

Compassion is an individual-level emotion and feeling against sufferings either of own or of others. As it is one's emotional reaction created in response to the distress, it may exist in settings with interpersonal interactions. An organization is a place where people work together, interact with each other, and have interpersonal communication. Therefore, compassion can be easily observed at the workplace (Kanov, et al., 2004).

Few of the researches titled individual compassion as "Organizational Compassion" when supported by organizations in terms of their culture, norms, policies, support from top-management (Delbecq, et al., 2010), organizational structure, monitoring mechanism to identify personal pains and routine matters (Madden, et al., 2012). Besides the organizational support, compassion at the workplace is a personal feeling which arises in response to peers' sufferings and has no direct link with organizational responsibilities and duties (Madden, et al., 2012). In such a situation it is more of a personal preference of an employee to demonstrate compassion towards his/her colleagues. But this personal preference can be encouraged by organizations through rewarding compassionate behaviors and providing informal platforms to employees to facilitate compassionate behaviors. Therefore, an individual preference becomes an organizational value and this organizational support towards this personal feeling may induce intrinsic motivation among employees.

The word "Compassion" means bearing the suffering (Figley, 2002). This suffering can be of one's self (Neff, 2003); (Neff, et al., 2007) as well as of others (Gilbert, 2005). It is a psychological state of an individual in response to pains and sufferings. A shown concern for sufferings rather than ignoring it and being non-judgmental to failures also represents one's degree of compassion (Neff, 2003). Furthermore, (Neff, 2003) described compassion as an act of kindness towards others' bad experiences which are perceived as general human experiences. An individual's response to not to be critical to sufferings, being isolated due to distress, and

over-emphasizing the pains is also considered as compassion (Neff, et al., 2007) indicating the existence of positivity among individuals regarding one's self (Josee, 2017) as well as for others.

This study attempts to study the impact of workplace compassion on the performance of employees. A survey was conducted among teachers in the central part of Kerala. The study attempts to empirically attest that there exists a positive relationship between workplace compassion and employee performance among teachers in Kerala.

## **II. Workplace Compassion**

Compassion at work is referred to a collective approach of organizational people towards the pains of others (Cameron & Caza, 2003); (Kanov, et al., 2004); (Lilius, et al., n.d.); (Lilius, et al., 2008). Compassion at work comprises three phases; noticing the pain, emotionally connecting with others' suffering, and steps taken to minimize the pain (Lilius, et al., 2011). (Cameron & Caza, 2003) presented the view that organizational attributes like legitimation, propagation and coordination strengthen compassion at the workplace. (Simpson, et al., 2014) considered compassion as a "mode of positive power" within an organization. Therefore, it is evident from the literature that organizations acknowledge the existence of a compassionate workplace and encourage it through different interventions. In this manner, an emotion that was once the individual's attribute has now spread throughout the organization and became an organizational characteristic supporting kindness, empathy, encouragement among their employees. Organizations acknowledge the existence of compassion for their benefits like initiating positive organizational scholarship (Cameron & Caza, 2003) encouraging employees to accomplish the task even after experiencing failures (Neff, et al., 2005) promoting a sense of collectiveness (Neff, 2003) among employees which assist in teamwork, making employees happy by lessening their depressions, anxieties and enhancing their satisfaction (Neff, 2003); (Neff, et al., 2007) facilitating crisis management (Rynes, et al., 2012); (Simpson, et al., 2013) controlling disruptive employees' emotions, facilitating organizational development (Pahlavani & Azizmalayeri, 2016) and legitimizing actions in response to sufferings (Lilius, et al., 2011)

Previous studies support the argument that compassion at the workplace positively affects the organization but this positivity is more of an intrinsic nature. The organization's reaction to an employee's pain may be any of the actions among providing emotional support and resource to minimize the pain or offer time flexibility to cope with distress (Kanov, et al., 2004) (Lilius, et al., 2011); (Lilius, et al., 2008). (Lilius, et al., 2011) suggested that the organization can institutionalize these informal aspects through its legitimized programs and routinized detection of sufferings.

## **III. Performance**

It is a set of acts that are directed towards goal attainment. Concerning organization, performance is either considered as overall organizational performance or employee performance. The organizational performance depicts financial gains, growth, overall sales (Dess & Robinson, 1984), while employee-performance describes individual actions including appropriate attitude at workplace (Mowday, et al., 1974), timely completion of tasks (Tice & Baumeister, 1997), better coordination (Gittel, et al., 2010), improved skill (Bhattacharya, et al., 2005), etc. All these individual attributes assist in attaining organizational goals, therefore are taken as performance indicators. As here compassion is taken as individual preference facilitated by the organization, individual performance is more appropriate to see the relationship between performance and compassion

## **IV. Workplace Compassion And Employee Performance**

Compassion is an individual-level emotion and feeling against sufferings either of own or of others. As it is one's emotional reaction created in response to the distress, it may exist in settings with interpersonal interactions. An organization is a place where people work together, interact with each other, and have interpersonal communication. Therefore, compassion can be easily observed at the workplace (Kanov, et al., 2004). Few of the researches titled individual compassion as "Organizational Compassion" when supported by organizations in terms of their culture, norms, policies, support from top-management (Delbecq, et al., 2010), organizational structure, monitoring mechanism to identify personal pains and routine matters (Madden, et al., 2012). Besides the organizational support, compassion at the workplace is a personal feeling which arises in response to peers' sufferings and has no direct link with organizational responsibilities and duties (Madden, et al., 2012). Studies support that when there is workplace compassion it can result in increasing employee performance. (Atkins & Parker, 2011). There exists a positive relationship between workplace compassion and employee performance

**V. Theoretical Framework**



**Objectives Of The Study**

1. To study the relationship between workplace compassion and employee performance among teachers in educational institutions in Kerala.

**HYPOTHESIS**

H1: There is a positive relationship between workplace compassion and employee performance.

**Research Measures**

The researcher relied on previous published valid and reliable scales developed by scholars. Workplace compassion was measured by a three-item scale developed by (Lilius, et al., 2008). Compassion was viewed from three perspectives: Compassion on the job, Compassion from superiors, and Compassion from co-workers. Task performance and Contextual performance were assessed using the scale developed by (Godman & Svyantek, 1999).

**POPULATION**

Teachers working in different schools in Kerala were taken as the population of the study.

**SAMPLING**

Sample design is used for selecting the sample units. The sample size is about 150 respondents. The sampling method can be referred to as the rules and procedures which help for selecting sample members from a population. Sampling techniques that have been used in this study are convenience sampling because it is convenient and by using this sampling scheme we can easily cover our target population and collect information from the potential respondents.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The tools used in this study are the Reliability test and Regression analysis. The reliability test can be done with the help of SPSS software.

Regression analysis is a tool for estimating relationships among variables. Regression analysis is also used to explore the relationship among the dependent and independent variables.

**RELIABILITY ANALYSIS**

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Workplace Compassion	0.95
Employee Performance	0.91

**CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

**CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

**Correlations Table 1**

Workplace Compassion		Employee Performance	
Workplace Compassion	Pearson Correlation	1	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	154	154
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that there exists a positive correlation between workplace compassion and employee performance. The correlation coefficient is 0.507 and this shows that there is a positive correlation between the two variables.

**REGRESSIONANALYSIS**

**Table 2 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.553 <sup>a</sup>	.306	.501	4.38297

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Compassion

**Table 5.4.2 ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1287.139	1	1287.139	67.002	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2919.984	152	19.210		
	Total	4207.123	153			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), WorkplaceCompassion

The above tables display the regression analysis between the independent variable workplace compassion and the dependant variable employee performance. The R square value is 0.306 which shows that 30.6% of employee performance is predicted by workplace compassion.

**VI. Findings**

The study shows that there is a positive relationship between the independent variable workplace compassion and the dependant variable employee performance. When teachers perceive that there is workplace compassion it can lead to enhanced employee performance( Ahmad, S. & Shahzad, K., 2015)

The current study supports the findings of previous studies. It can be concluded that when there is high workplace compassion it can motivate teachers to give their best performance.

**VII. Conclusion**

Teachers are a group of people whose communication skills, knowledge, and experience should have the right blend to deliver excellent performance. When workplace compassion is there, it can enhance teachers' performance. Managers of educational institutions should emphasize practicing workplace compassion among teachers to receive enhanced performance from them.

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