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Compassionate Management in the Workplace

By

Alison Dunlop

A Major Research Paper
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Odette School of Business
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Business Administration
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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Compassionate Management in the Workplace

by

Alison Dunlop

APPROVED BY:

F. Schlosser
Odette School of Business

K. Walker, Advisor
Odette School of Business

December 12, 2019

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ABSTRACT

This major paper examines compassion and its importance in the workplace. Scholars have noted that in the past managers did not promote compassionate workplaces because it was viewed as “weak” and “soft”. It was believed that compassion had no place when it came to business competitiveness and further career advancement. However, recent literature indicates the importance of compassion and ways in which it can help a business reach sustainable growth and success. Much of the research shares benefits of a compassionate workplace at both the organizational and personal level, indicating that a compassionate workplace is advantageous. This major paper also addresses the importance of compassionate leaders in an organization and highlights some of the tools that can be used to introduce a more compassionate work environment. To contrast this research, factors that complicate compassion in the workplace are also identified. This is included to ensure that leaders understand what behaviours should not be exhibited in the workplace if the goal is to create a compassionate environment. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research directions, some of which include: measuring levels of compassion in the workplace and how it affects employees, managers and the bottom line of a business, as well as further data collection for the development of compassion training programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
<i>Problem Identification</i>	1
<i>Purpose of the Paper</i>	3
<i>Structure of the Paper</i>	4
CHAPTER 2	5
<i>Definition of Compassion</i>	5
<i>Why Compassion in the Workplace is Important</i>	8
<i>Why Compassionate Leaders Are Important</i>	12
<i>Compassionate Management and Increased Productivity of Employees</i>	14
<i>Factors That Should Motivate Managers</i>	16
<i>Unions in The Workplace</i>	18
CHAPTER 3	20
<i>Factors that Complicate Compassion in the Workplace</i>	20
<i>Gender Differences in the Workplace</i>	22
<i>How to Incorporate Compassion in the Workplace</i>	24
<i>Future Research and Directions</i>	32
CONCLUSION	36
REFERENCES	37
VITA AUCTORIS	43

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<i>Table 1: Results of a Compassionless Workplace.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Table 2: Benefits of Compassion.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Table 3: Factors that Complicate Compassion in the Workplace.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Figure 1: Layers Within Compassion.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Figure 2: Five Elements of Compassion.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Figure 3: Roffey Park's Compassion in the Workplace Index.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Figure 4: Six Tools to Creating a Compassionate Workplace.....</i>	<i>27</i>

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION, PURPOSE, & STRUCTURE

Problem Identification

The leadership crisis the world is currently facing affects governments, education, and businesses. Top leaders in companies are mainly concerned with finding ways to inflate their salaries rather than creating a culture of compassion. This paper will define compassion and compassionate management and will help outline the importance of integrating a culture of compassion in the workplace to help businesses find more success. Several articles will be analyzed to outline the benefits of compassionate management in the workplace. Furthermore, recommendations will be provided to encourage the integration of a compassionate culture in the workplace.

According to the survey conducted by Deloitte (2016) which included over 13,000 millennial respondents born between January 1983 and December 1994, many millennials believe that most businesses should value putting employees first while building a solid foundation of trust, integrity, and customer care.

The study indicated that millennials are just as ambitious as previous generations, but what they prioritize has evolved from previous generations. These millennials still want to be successful and earn high salaries (over 50% of respondents), but aspirations have shifted from the traditional ones such as having children and buying a home (39% and 49%, respectively) to an overwhelming 57% indicating that travel is more important to them (Deloitte, 2016). However, one key finding from the study is the motivations of leaders and how employees viewed their manager's motives. Twenty six percent of

respondents did not think highly of the leaders' trustworthiness or their commitment to making a difference in the world. This supports the findings from a study conducted by the World Economic Forum (2014) that stated that lack of values in leadership was probably related to leaders' concern for their own interests rather than finding motivation in something more worthwhile. The study identified that today's leaders do not lack values, rather they lack the right kind of values.

Human values represent the desirable traits of a person such as patience, accountability, compassion, and impartiality (Sharma, Khandelwal, & Agrawal, 2018). Values are defined more as beliefs that a specific type of conduct is both socially and personally acceptable (Sharma et al., 2018). Sharma et al. (2018) identify the core human values as: love, peace, truth, non-violence, and right conduct. The three human core values that hold importance in this case are love, non-violence, and right conduct. Love is further defined as caring and having concern for others unconditionally, non-violence reflects the rights of others, and right conduct is defined as being compatible with others (Sharma et al., 2018). Finally, workplace values are defined as guiding principles that help employees differentiate between the right and wrong actions in the workplace (Sharma et al., 2018). Since World Economic Forum (2014) indicated that lack of the right values is present in leadership today, an opportunity to provide research that will help leaders instill humanistic values in the workplace today is presented.

Pharoah (2018) also illustrated the importance of compassion in the workplace by indicating that businesses are becoming more aware that great leaders are those that display compassion. The article indicates that while being results driven is important, businesses that want long-term success will find that the real power lies in leaders that

connect with and inspire the employees of an organization with purpose and energy (Pharoah, 2018).

Opposing what many used to believe, putting customers first is not the best practice in business (Burkus, 2016). While market share is one factor in the profitability of a business, customer loyalty is another large contributor (Burkus, 2016). For customers to remain loyal to a company, they likely had a positive experience in the past with an employee of the business. Put simply, profits increase when customer loyalty is higher and customer loyalty is higher when experiences with employees are high-quality (Burkus, 2016). Ultimately, employee satisfaction in the workplace is driven by putting employees first and ensuring that the work environment is positive and comfortable. Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Mobile, also believes that employees should be the top priority to ensure that customers are satisfied (Raymundo, 2014). Branson said that all employees should be proud of the brand or company they work for, and if they are given the proper tools to succeed and treat employees well, they will be successful (Raymundo, 2014).

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is threefold. A literature review on compassionate management will be conducted to better understand what empirical and theoretical research has found, as well as to identify evident gaps. Second, techniques that can be used to incorporate more compassion in the workplace will be identified. Finally, the paper will culminate with recommendations on the future direction of the research and how managers can increase compassion in the workplace.

The target audience will be both researchers and managers seeking to further understand compassion in the workplace. Researchers have been identified as one of the targets for this paper to spark a conversation in this subject area and open the door to more research that could further support the idea that compassion should be evident at all workplaces. Practicing managers have been targeted to encourage them to utilize the tools and techniques outlined in this paper to create a culture of compassion in the workplace.

Structure of the Paper

The structure of this paper will be in the form of a literature review. The first focus will be to examine relevant literature concerning compassionate management in the workplace. This is necessary because while individuals understand compassion and the need for it, it is often missing in most workplaces (Puleo, 2018). Next, a more in-depth look at the current research surrounding compassionate management will be examined. A brief analysis of current management motives will be researched to understand the gaps in management style and the responses from employees and managers. This will help outline tools and techniques that managers can utilize to ensure that a compassionate approach is taken in managing employees. Finally, recommendations focused on how to bring more compassion into the workplace will be identified, as well as future directions for research in this subject.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: COMPASSIONATE MANAGEMENT

Definition of Compassion

In order to evaluate the ways in which compassion can be implemented into the workplace, it is important to provide a definition for compassion. This paper uses Dutton, Workman, & Hardin's (2014) definition of compassion: "an interpersonal process involving noticing, feeling, and acting that alleviate the suffering of another person". It is also important to note the difference between compassion, empathy, and transformational leadership. While they are similar, they have distinguishing differences.

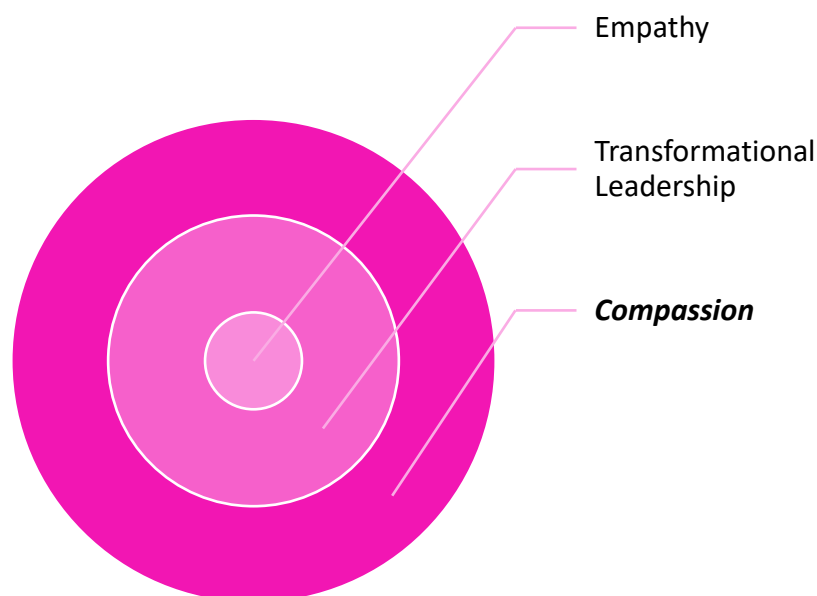
Empathy means that you simply "feel" for someone that is suffering but feel no desire to act on that suffering and help in some way (Jenkins, 2016). Compassion goes a step further by not only feeling the suffering of another but acting upon that feeling and helping in some way (Jenkins, 2016).

Transformational leadership can be described in four ways: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational consideration, and inspirational motivation (Karakitapolu-Aygun & Gumusluoglu, 2013). These leaders instill the values of respect and loyalty and ensure that one-on-one relationships exist with employees (Karakitapolu-Aygun & Gumusluoglu, 2013). They are motivating and encouraging of the ability that employees can achieve goals and encourage them to think about problems in new ways (Karakitapolu-Aygun & Gumusluoglu, 2013). Transformational leaders aim to ensure everyone works together and transforms their mindset to achieve the same goal. While

transformational leadership has some similarities to compassion, they are still quite different from each other.

While empathy and transformational leadership seem very different, they can be described as layers within compassion (See Figure 1 below). Both empathy and transformational leadership have qualities that resemble compassion. For example, empathy is defined as the “feeling” for someone’s suffering or pain. Compassion takes empathy a step further and acts on that individual’s suffering or pain. Transformational leaders identify a need for change and focus on transforming the goals of all involved to ensure that everyone works together toward a common goal. These leaders usually possess distinct behaviours, including providing inspiring motivation, intellectually stimulating those they lead, and providing individualized consideration to each person. These behaviours are similar in nature to compassion and help to identify why transformational leadership is a layer within compassion.

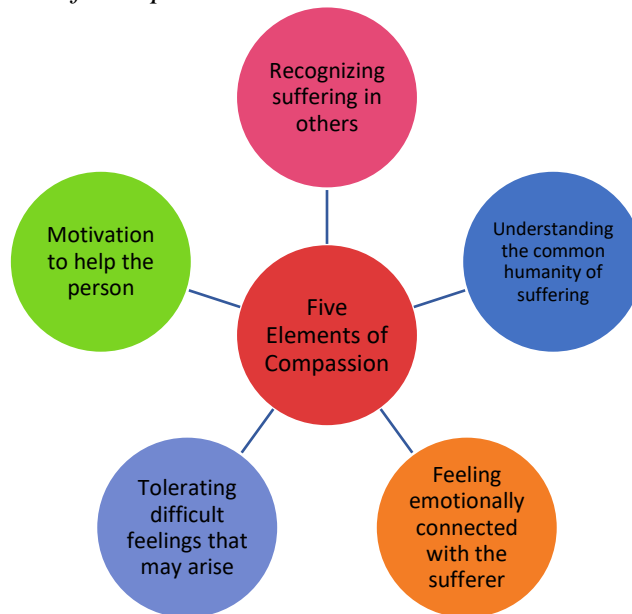
Figure 1: Layers Within Compassion



Friedman, Hershey, & Gerstein (2017), define a five-element definition for compassion. The elements include: “recognizing suffering in others; understanding the common humanity of this suffering; feeling emotionally connected with the person who is suffering; tolerating difficult feelings that may arise; and acting or being motivated to help the person” (p. 164) (See Figure 2 below).

The summary of these five elements is compassion. If one of these elements is missing, compassion may not be present. This is simply due to the three major components that compassion is comprised of—*noticing, feeling, and acting*. If one of the above elements is missing, the definition of compassion will not be fulfilled. For example, if the element “acting or being motivated to help a person” is missing, compassion is not present. The final part of compassion is acting in a way that will help another person, so without this element compassion does not exist.

Figure 2: Five Elements of Compassion



While the study of compassion in ethical theory, philosophy, and religion dates back millennia, its history in management theory is merely a fraction of that (Solomon, 1998). Since the study of compassion and care in the workplace is so new, it can sometimes be difficult for managers to know if their approach will be effective in both the short and long-term.

When incorporating compassion into the workplace, short-term benefits for the business could include: improved connection with employees (Simpson & Berti, 2019), improved employee engagement (Pharoah, 2018; Jenkins, 2016), and increased productivity of employees (Pharoah, 2018, Jenkins, 2016). In the long-term, the business could expect the following: better engagement from employees (DeSteno, 2018), increased commitment to the organization from employees (Simpson & Berti, 2019), and higher profits and growth (Friedman et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2016). A compassionate work environment can also provide employees with several short and long-term benefits. Short-term benefits include: reduced blood pressure (Simpson & Berti, 2019; Castellano, 2014), decreased levels of stress (Castellano, 2014); increased job satisfaction (DeSteno, 2018), and less exhaustion (DeSteno, 2018). Long-term benefits for the employee include: stronger immune systems (Castellano, 2014; Simpson & Berti, 2019), and better-quality long-term relationships with co-workers and managers (Global Focus, 2016; DeSteno, 2018).

Why Compassion in the Workplace is Important

When most people think of leadership in the workplace, compassion and care are not top of mind (Jenkins, 2016; Desteno, 2015). It can be difficult to know where to draw

the line when it comes to managing a business selflessly with compassion versus managing selfishly with the concepts of obligation, duty, and responsibility (Solomon, 1998). Solomon (1998) stated that caring for individuals is the right thing to do but failed to mention exactly what the extent of one’s commitment to caring should be.

Compassion in today’s age can be misleading because while more and more people are encouraged to show compassion, the literature describes it as weak, if not foolish, to give in and act on those sentiments (Solomon, 1998). Pharoah (2018) also indicated in the literature that the culture of the organization can affect whether compassion is present. Compassion in the workplace is generally not displayed if compassion is not encouraged or valued and instead viewed as a sign of weakness.

A work environment that has a high degree of conflict can also contribute to a compassionless atmosphere. When people experience high levels of stress, the level of the “stress” hormone cortisol is higher in the body as well. When this hormone is present at a higher level in employees, one can draw the conclusion that factors such as poorer relationships and more conflict are likely present in the workplace (Meloni, 2014). When employees do not have a healthy channel to release emotions in the workplace, feelings of resentment are more common (Meloni, 2014). So, when compassion and channels for releasing emotions are present in the workplace, employee stress levels will be lower. See Table 1 below for results of a compassionless work environment.

Table 1: Results of a Compassionless Workplace

Result	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee burn-out ▪ Stressful relationships with co-workers 	Jenkins, 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Damaged mental health ▪ Diminished self-value 	Pharoah, 2018

If compassion is to be incorporated in the workplace, it is imperative to alter the mindset that compassion is a liability. The Dalai Lama believes that “compassion does not assume or expect reciprocity or an equal exchange” and that “true compassion is not just an emotional response, but a firm commitment characterized by action.” (Pharoah, 2018). So, if a company is incorporating compassion into the work culture, it is important that managers and employees alike understand the true meaning of compassion and do not show compassion only for selfish reasons.

The Dalai Lama also associates compassion with three components: (1) Cognitive: I understand you; (2) Affective: I feel for you; and (3) Motivational: I want to help you (Pharoah, 2018). What makes compassion powerful is the ability to act on these components of compassion to create stronger and healthier relationships in the workplace. Other spiritual leaders have insight on compassion as well. Tibetan teacher, Patrul Rinpoche, suggests strengthening our own ability to be compassionate through visualizing the suffering of others allows one to recognize that all of humanity is equal, and everyone experiences suffering (The Spiritual Practice of Compassion, n.d.). The new testament of the bible houses the Book of Romans and one verse in particular supports the need for compassion. Romans 12:15 states, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn.” Simply put, this means to take an interest in others and rejoice in good times, but also to enter others’ sorrow while they are suffering. Only when this is recognized compassion becomes real.

A study on the impact of passion and compassion on innovation and growth in Small-Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the food industry in Denmark revealed that both compassion and passion significantly impacted manager ideas in a positive way,

which resulted in a positive influence on growth (Brink, 2015). However, the study also revealed that the impact of compassion was significantly greater than the impact of passion (Brink, 2015). In this article, compassion is identified as having interests in others and interests in the profitability of others, while passion is engaging in self-interest and self-profitability (Brink, 2015). The study concluded that a blend of both passion and compassion is crucial for success; outlining the breakdown as 2/3 compassion and 1/3 passion (Brink, 2015). This supports the importance of leading with compassion and acting upon the needs of employees in the organization, as it will enable innovation and growth (Brink, 2015).

Shifting the mindset from “I” to “We” is imperative if managers want to be successful and authentic, as put by former CEO of Medtronic Bill George (Tan, 2012). Transforming into a leader that is focused on “We” is highly motivational for employees as well. Many employees will follow the lead of their managers, so if managers are focused on their personal success then so too will employees of the organization (Tan, 2012). Focusing on what others are experiencing rather than looking inward to personal experience will allow managers to develop feelings for employees, ultimately acting upon those feelings when employees are in need.

In *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Other's Don't*, Jim Collins indicated that a special type of leader is required to take a company to greatness. Collins referred to these types of leaders as “level five” leaders. A level five leader is highly capable, but also possesses humility and ambition directed at the greater good of the company (Tan, 2012). One way to train leaders to become level five leaders is through compassion training (Tan, 2012).

Providing a culture of compassion for employees will encourage a sense of security and trust with managers and co-workers, whereas the opposite will encourage employees to put up a defense to engage in achievement of their own selfish goals (Solomon, 1998). It is for these reasons that compassion is so important in the workplace if a business wishes to see long-term growth and success (Friedman et al., 2017; Pharoah, 2018).

Why Compassionate Leaders Are Important

When thinking of careers that embody compassionate leaders and employees, most people think of jobs in healthcare and education (Friedman et al., 2017). However, it can be argued that leaders in the business world should display compassion as well. The leadership crisis that the world is facing today affects young employees and Millennials everywhere (Friedman et al., 2017). The apparent lack of values and compassion displayed by leaders in the business world is a cause for concern when it comes to whether a business will thrive or fail. If businesses want to thrive, it is important that they employ managers who embody compassion, as this will help create a culture of compassion that will permeate throughout the entire organization. Without a culture of compassion, a toxic environment could exist, leaving employees feeling undervalued and disengaged from their work (Friedman et al., 2017).

Outlined in Friedman et al.'s (2017) article are four characteristics of successful leaders, these include: trustworthiness, expertise, vision, and compassion. Compassion is arguably the most important of these characteristics, but is sometimes not present in businesses (Desteno, 2015). While it is not evidently clear why businesses have faced this

decline in compassion, research shows that businesses who focus solely on profit-motives will not find long-term success (Friedman et al., 2017).

Aspects other than profit-motives and compassion should be considered as well. While profits and compassion are important for the long-term success of a business, it is also important to focus on the wellbeing of employees in the organization. One way that the wellbeing can be prioritized is through acts of appreciation. Recognizing and celebrating the employees of a business is important, because without the employees, many businesses would not be where they are today (Student transportation of America, 2019). One idea is to dedicate a week to appreciating employees and host different activities each day to further show the employees how much they are appreciated and valued (Student transportation of America, 2019). While compassion in the workplace is important, it is also important to focus on the wellbeing of employees in other ways as well.

Pharoah (2018) also outlined that businesses are becoming increasingly more aware of the importance for compassion in the workplace, so they look for leaders who cultivate and display compassion above all else. The productivity of employees increases significantly when the workplace embodies a culture of compassion (Global Focus, 2016). Increased employee engagement also leads to increased profitability of a business (Fryer, 2013). So, leaders who integrate compassion into the business will experience higher profitability, higher employee engagement, and increased customer satisfaction (Global Focus, 2016; Pharoah, 2018; Jenkins, 2016).

Compassionate Management and Increased Productivity of Employees

Research has found that compassionate responses to employee suffering and struggles has significant organizational benefits (Lilius et al., 2012). Compassion can help a business flourish, and for this reason, interest in this subject has increased since the turn of the century. Positive organization-wide benefits include: improving organizational trust, pride, connection, motivation, and commitment; enhancing organizational creativity; and increasing organizational performance (Simpson & Berti, 2019). Compassionate leaders in workplaces also promote strengthened relationships through increased trust and collaboration, resulting in an increase in productivity and employee retention (Pharoah, 2018).

There are also benefits at the individual employee level. Having a network of compassionate individuals will help reduce blood pressure, lower mortality rates, and improve immunity (Simpson & Berti, 2019). Studies show that when compassion is present in the workplace, employee sick leave reduces by 27% and disability pensions reduce by 46% (Friedman et al., 2017).

Aside from the obvious health benefits that a compassionate culture boasts, integrating compassion into the workplace will not only increase the loyalty and trust employees have with their managers, but the bottom line also benefits (Global Focus, 2016). While there is not enough research to support how much a company's bottom line will increase by, research has shown that when employees are in a supportive environment their productivity will increase, resulting in higher profits for the business (Friedman et al., 2017). Refer to Table 2 for the benefits of a compassionate workplace.

Strauss, Taylor, Gu, Kuyken, Naer, Jones & Cavanagh (2016), found that no scale that measures compassion comprehensively with reliability and validity exists. This limitation creates significant barriers to progress not only in research of this topic, but in the incorporation of compassion in the workplace, simply because no appropriate measures exist to evaluate the effectiveness of compassion in the workplace. Further research and studies must be conducted to learn more about what actions accurately measure the amount of compassion in the workplace.

Table 2: Benefits of Compassion

Level of Analysis	Type of Research	Benefits	References
Organizational Level	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced trust ▪ Better connection with employees ▪ More commitment from employees ▪ More organizational creativity ▪ Better organizational performance 	Simpson & Berti, 2019
Organizational Level	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organization experiences higher profits 	Friedman, Hershey & Gerstein, 2017
Organizational Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened relationships formed from more trust between managers and employees ▪ Greater collaboration ▪ Improved engagement ▪ Improved employee retention ▪ Increased productivity 	Pharoah, 2018
Organizational Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better employee engagement ▪ Employees are more productive ▪ Better results for the business 	Jenkins, 2016
Organizational Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower employee absenteeism ▪ Better employee performance ▪ Better engagement from employees 	DeSteno, 2018
Individual Level	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower blood pressure ▪ Better immunity 	Simpson & Berti, 2019
Individual Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More trust with managers 	Global Focus, 2016
Individual Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower heart rates ▪ Lower blood pressure ▪ Stronger immune systems ▪ Decreased levels of stress 	Castellano, 2014

Individual Level	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better quality relationships with co-workers ▪ Increased job satisfaction ▪ Less exhaustion 	DeSteno, 2018
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Factors That Should Motivate Managers

Literature surrounding the qualities and characteristics of CEOs and managers is extensive. Much of the research indicates that managers are motivated by the financial targets they are required to reach, greed, as well as a lack of fear of being punished (Friedman et al., 2017). However, the literature also supports the notion that compassion should be present, especially in workplaces that have complex tasks because of the organizational benefits experienced from incorporating compassion. When a manager has a stronger relationship with employees who complete complex tasks, they will feel happier and more valued in the workplace. As a result, they are more likely to be productive, resulting in increased profits for the business (Seppälä, 2016; Jenkins, 2016; O’Brien, 2006, DeSteno, 2018).

Some managers may not act in the best interest of the employees or business if they are trying to achieve a certain goal, such as receiving a year-end bonus. Behaviour that allows them to achieve this goal may be beneficial in the short-term if it helps the business earn more profit, but it will likely not lead to long-term success (Pharoah, 2018). Often the behaviours exhibited in this type of work environment are unhealthy and stress-inducing for employees. Additional stress could result in higher costs for the business in terms of health-related expenditures for employees (Seppälä, 2016).

Seppälä (2016) confirmed the belief that added pressure on employees will increase both employee turnover and health care expenditures. Workplaces that place

high pressure on employees see an employee turnover rate of about 52% (Seppälä, 2016). Employees with high-stress jobs have found themselves either searching for a new job or more likely to decline a promotion at their current job (Seppälä, 2016). Research has shown that costs for health care were 46% higher in companies that were high stress environments than those that were not high stress (Seppälä, 2016).

The literature makes it clear that it is important for managers to operate with compassion. One study by John Wood and Tricia Vilkinas (2007) was conducted to identify characteristics that CEOs should possess and demonstrate in the workplace. Among the most important were a humanistic approach, being achievement oriented, and having a positive outlook (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007).

A humanistic approach was defined by Wood & Vilkinas (2007) as believing in the potential and growth of employees and maintaining good communication with employees. In this study, being achievement-oriented means that managers of the business are passionate and energetic about their work, all while achieving results and growing the organization (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007). Finally, positivism encourages managers to think creatively and challenge the thinking of employees in the organization (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007). These characteristics pair well with what research says about creating a culture of compassion in the workplace. If a top-level manager or CEO is not leading with a humanistic approach or does not have a positive mindset, there is little chance that compassion will be present in the workplace.

In the long-term, power is in the hands of leaders who inspire employees with optimism, energy, and purpose (Pharoah, 2018). These are the leaders who are both

compassionate and able to empathize and connect with employees, as they instill the power of love rather than the power of fear in their leadership style (Pharoah, 2018).

Therefore, having managers that promote compassion in the workplace is imperative to a business' long-term success. Sometimes however, targets must be met, and, in these cases, it might seem that working in a compassionate environment will not help reach required targets. However, when managers emulate compassion in the workplace, productivity and engagement of employees increases, which will help ensure that targets and deadlines are met (Jenkins, 2016; DeSteno, 2018). If managers move away from operating with a leadership style that instills fear in employees, more room will be open for compassion and greater productivity will be experienced.

Unions in The Workplace

The dynamic between unions and management plays an important role in determining the culture present in the workplace. When the culture is respectful, it can be more productive and harmonious (Barrette, 2014). Collective agreements present in unionized workplaces are twofold, requiring the involvement of employees and managers. Employees are responsible for looking beyond self-interest and managers must balance employee expectations while motivating employees to positively contribute to the success of the business (Barrette, 2014). However, challenges in unionized work environments exist on both sides. Managers are required to reinforce workplace expectations per the collective agreement while enabling employees to demonstrate responsibility and effective performance with little monitoring (Barrette, 2014). This will ensure the employees feel they are valued and trusted to complete their assigned work. If

managers do not enable their employees in this way self-confidence will fade, resulting in lower productivity and decreased efficiency (Barrette, 2014). Unions face challenges mainly when work environments are not safe or toxic, causing emotional or physical harm to employees (Barrette, 2014). Union representatives are imperative in situations like this but can become bothersome to managers when holding them accountable to adhere to the collective agreement. Depending on the approach that the union representative takes, tensions could increase between the manager and union representative and a hostile work environment could develop (Barrette, 2014).

The dynamic between unionized workplaces and the managers and employees within them can vary. If employees are satisfied with the environment they work in and feel that all components of the collective agreement are being met, issues will likely not exist. However, when a manager is required to help an employee, the manager must be careful not to go outside of the terms in the collective agreement. This might mean acting without a large amount of compassion if it is not outlined in the collective agreement. If managers go above and beyond the terms of the collective agreement, they will not only be required to do so for all employees, but they will also lose bargaining power when it comes to the next contract negotiation. Employees want to work in an environment that is healthy and compassionate, so the union representatives must work to include terms of compassion in the collective agreement otherwise managers may not feel compelled to be compassionate in the workplace.

Through the review of the literature, it was discovered that compassion could in fact be more powerful in helping managers reach a greater level of success.

CHAPTER 3

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPASSIONATE MANAGEMENT

Factors that Complicate Compassion in the Workplace

Compassion in the workplace is so important not only for the employees and managers' wellbeing, but also to help the company grow sustainably and achieve higher profitability. However, there are factors that can make having a compassionate work environment complicated. Some of these include: dominant cultural factors and mental health culture (O'Brien, 2006). Another factor contributing to compassionless workplaces is the managers in power and what leadership style they choose to embrace (Jenkins, 2016).

North American cultural factors play a huge role when it comes to the ability to incorporate compassion in the workplace. For one, North American culture is competitive and encourages individuals to work and compete to "get ahead". In turn, this satisfies instant gratification, but will lead to burnout if this behaviour is displayed long-term (O'Brien, 2006).

The mental health culture has significant effects on the ability to incorporate compassion in the workplace as well. The management style when it comes to this dilemma can become unclear because many corporations in North America are focused on results, regardless of the psychological effects it places on employees (O'Brien, 2006). Businesses want to earn more in profits so consequently, they will reward employees who work longer hours or take on more work to help the business achieve greater profits

(O'Brien, 2006). This means that employees who set limits may become less favoured when promotions come along.

Aside from the cultural and mental health factors that are present and contribute to a compassionless work environment, lack of compassion in the workplace could also stem from added pressure on employees to increase productivity and efficiency (Pharoah, 2018). These stressors can lead to employees feeling overwhelmed and overloaded with work, which in turn does not allow employees and managers to act or respond in a compassionate manner (Pharoah, 2018). If people perceive a lack of compassion in the workplace, it is more likely that toxic emotions and feelings of resentment or anxiety will be present in the workplace. These feelings could contribute to damaged mental health or diminished value to the business (Pharoah, 2018).

When the leadership in place is highly political, narcissistic, and aggressive, it can be hard to introduce compassion into the workplace. Not only will it be difficult to change a work culture like this without making the conscious decision to incorporate compassion, but it can also be challenging for people who are not in leadership roles to influence the culture of the workplace (Jenkins, 2016). While it is true that employees at all levels who wish to be more compassionate together can make small change, big change must come from the managers in higher power leadership roles, as they set the tone for proper behaviour in the workplace.

Many high-level managers have the idea that a compassionate work environment is “soft” and promotes weakness when it comes to competition (Jenkins, 2016). So, instead of incorporating compassion, many workplaces are populated with people suffering from burn-out and stressful relationships with co-workers (Jenkins, 2016). In

environments such as this, employee turnover is likely to be high as well (Jenkins, 2016). These factors outline how detrimental a compassionless work environment can be, which further reiterates the importance of promoting compassion in the workplace. Not only does the organization experience benefits that could further success and growth, employees experience a more positive working environment. A compassionate work culture will allow employees to feel more engaged and take more pride in their work. When employees are made to feel pride in their work, they are 30% more likely to preserve and take on more challenging tasks (DeSteno, 2018). Refer to table 3 below for factors that complicate compassion in the workplace.

Table 3: Factors that Complicate Compassion in the Workplace

Factors that Complicate Compassion in the Workplace	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dominant cultural factors ▪ Mental health culture 	O'Brien, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manager's leadership style 	Jenkins, 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competitive culture (specifically in North America) ▪ Some employers are more focused on results than employee's mental health 	O'Brien, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added stressors to increase productivity and efficiency can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and overloaded 	Pharoah, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of compassion can equate to toxic emotions in the work environment, leading to damaged mental health and diminished value contributed to the workplace 	Pharoah, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly political, narcissistic, and aggressive leadership styles can complicate the incorporation of compassion 	Jenkins, 2016

Gender Differences in the Workplace

Gender differences are prevalent in the workplace and do have an impact on the type of leadership that is displayed in the workplace. Male leaders operate more competitively and have the objective of winning, whereas female leaders are more

cooperative in their operating style and are focused on team structures that provide quality output (Peterson, 2012). There are many factors that limit women interested in attaining top-level leadership roles today. Essentially, a lot of what limits women in these roles is the perception that women do not have the innate ability to be an effective leader (Peterson, 2012). A lot of this boils down to the differences between the leadership styles of men and women. Communication is a large factor in this, and men and women have different styles of communicating. Women communicate to create a bond with someone and often avoid using language that is powerful and may seem assertive (Mindell, 2001), whereas men communicate primarily to exchange information and make a point (Peterson, 2012).

Leadership qualities in both men and women are distinct from one another, which places a burden of which style is better on society. In the past, women in power in the workplace have been defined as “tough” or “overbearing” (Peterson, 2012). It can be challenging for women to hold positions of power when this negative image is present. However, women are in fact powerful figures who often hold a lot of the power in the home when it comes to raising children and fostering healthy growth (Peterson, 2012). The stereotypes that exist do not accurately represent women’s abilities or potential for success in top-level leadership positions (Percupchick, 2011). Instead, power is characterized as the ability to influence another’s behaviour with or without little resistance. Women should be able to influence others with their ability to lead in a cooperative and compassionate leadership style (Peterson, 2012). However, both male and female leadership styles are effective in their own ways and it is important to

understand the importance of choosing a leader that aligns with the vision of the company and the leadership qualities they possess rather than their gender.

While progress has been made and more leadership roles have opened to women, pay equality is still an issue that persists (Percupchick, 2011). In addition to pay inequality, gender norms reflect different behavioural expectations when it comes to men and women in leadership roles. Existing literature suggests that male leaders are likely to be perceived more effective than female leaders because leadership roles are normally held by males and resemble male gender roles (Ko, Kotrba & Roebuck, 2015). However, Zaal (2017) acknowledged that future studies are needed to discover any of the differences and influences of gender in leadership roles.

The continued presence of biases between women and men in leadership roles suggests that little progress has been made to change the perceptions of women in leadership roles (Percupchick, 2011). As more women break down these barriers and attain leadership roles in businesses, it is likely that more compassion will be present, since women display more compassionate mannerisms.

How to Incorporate Compassion in the Workplace

Research over the years supports the rise for compassion in the workplace today (Jenkins, 2016; Pharoah, 2018). However, there is still room to incorporate more compassion into workplaces. To do this, managers need to commit to making compassion a core value of the business. This will help reinforce the importance of having compassion in the workplace.

O'Brien (2006) outlines two guiding principles that should be at the forefront of every business to ensure that a compassionate work environment is present. The first is to make a conscious effort to discuss the mission and vision of the business and ensure that it aligns with employees' personal beliefs and intentions (O'Brien, 2006). This will lead to a workplace that works cohesively with intention. To obtain this alignment, it is important to consider the beliefs and values of potential hires. Hiring individuals who share the company's values is important (How do you hire, 2014). This helps to determine how the candidate will fit into the business' work culture and will ensure that they can make valuable contributions to the team (How do you hire, 2014). When hiring an individual into a company that operates with a compassionate work environment, it is important to ensure that those hired embrace the same values of obligation, duty, and responsibility of the business to ensure that tasks are completed effectively (Solomon, 1998). Individuals who possess these qualities will be concerned with doing their job well, which ultimately helps improve profits (Friedman et al., 2017).

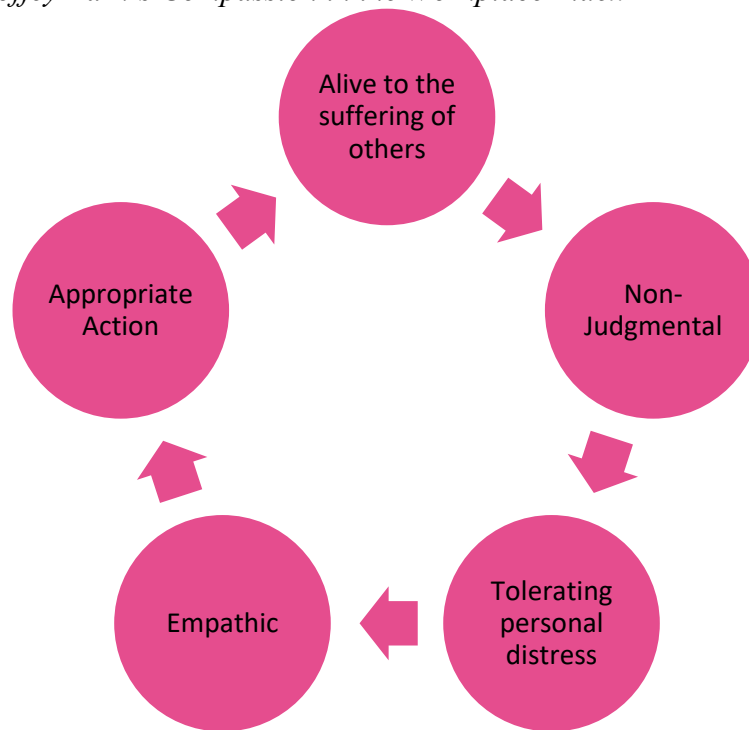
The second principle to include in a compassionate workplace surrounds the idea of acknowledging contributions made by employees more frequently and in a formal manner (O'Brien, 2006). Providing this type of attention to employee's contributions will ensure that all employees will feel valued and that their work is meaningful.

Managers must put themselves in the shoes of their employees to better understand any personal struggles or dilemmas employees are facing. While being compassionate is a virtue, expressing and acting with compassion, even just once, is what counts (Solomon, 1998). Roffey Park acknowledges that there are differences between empathy and compassion in the workplace. While a lot of leaders and managers are

empathetic to their employees, meaning they acknowledge the suffering of an employee, they do not help to alleviate that suffering in any way. Instead, it is up to the employee to find a way to alleviate their own struggle or suffering (Jenkins, 2016).

Roffey Park’s “Compassion in the Workplace Index” (See Figure 3 below) looks at compassion in a different way. This model shows that making compassion a top priority in the workplace will ensure that employees are happier and feel respected and valued (Jenkins, 2016). This further supports the findings that happier employees are more productive, leading to better business profitability (Jenkins, 2016).

Figure 3: Roffey Park’s Compassion in the Workplace Index

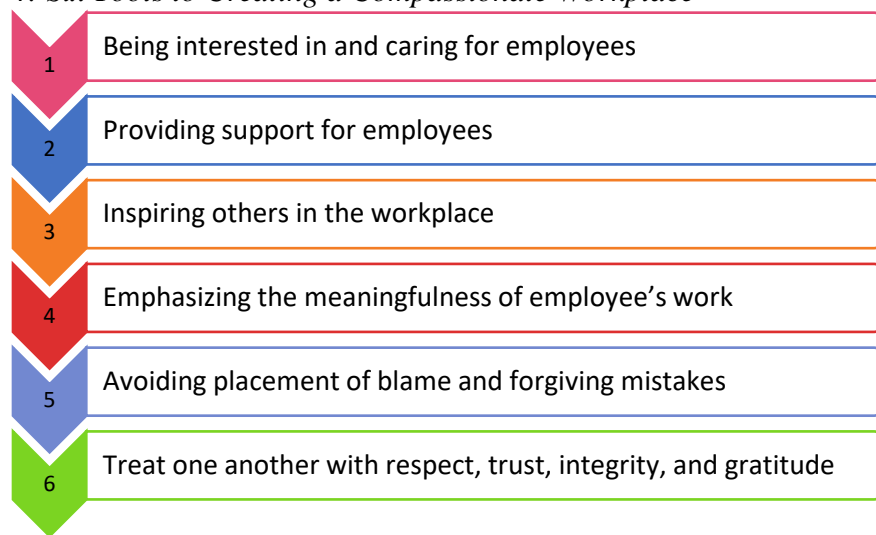


Source: Jenkins, 2016

Some ways in which managers can incorporate more compassion in to the workplace include: (1) being interested in and caring for all employees; (2) providing

support for employees, especially when others are struggling; (3) inspiring others in the workplace; (4) emphasizing the meaningfulness of the work employees are doing; (5) avoid putting blame on employees and instead forgive mistakes that are made; and (6) treat one another with respect, trust, integrity, and gratitude (Global Focus, 2016) (See Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Six Tools to Creating a Compassionate Workplace



While the above suggestions can help to incorporate more compassion in the workplace, it is important to recognize that disciplinary action is sometimes needed. If employees are continually making the same mistakes, forgiveness cannot always be granted. Instead, providing the employee with tools to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated is another way to show compassion to employees. While it may not seem like a typical act of compassion, providing employees with the tools they need to succeed helps to emphasize the meaningfulness of one's work. If errors still occur once the proper tools to avoid them have been given, further disciplinary action might be required. While

compassion in the workplace is important, it is also important not to lose sight of what the organization needs to accomplish in order to succeed.

There are also steps that the corporation can take to ensure that compassion is integrated into the culture. Regular staff meetings can be held to not only update employees on the current state of the business, but also to engage in self-reflection and examination. When employees and managers come together to reflect, it will ensure that the mission and vision of the business are not lost in day-to-day business activities (O'Brien, 2006). Staff meetings can also be utilized to provide support to employees who may be experiencing difficulties in both their personal and professional lives. When employees feel supported, their productivity and contributions to the business' success will reflect that (O'Brien, 2006).

Compassionate leaders are those who understand all aspects of a person's situation, including the problems and decisions they are faced with, they show care for themselves and unconditional care for others, they develop deep connections with their employees to understand the continually evolving needs of each employee, they treat everyone with fairness, respect, and patience, they embrace differences that employees may have, and they respect that other employees may have beliefs and opinions that are different than their own (Pharoah, 2018).

Based on this, another tool that can be implemented into businesses to ensure a compassionate culture is created is mentoring. Mentoring, whether in a peer-support group setting or an individual setting can provide positive outcomes for all involved (O'Brien, 2006). It allows managers and employees to talk openly about feelings toward

the organization and individual tasks, and it can initiate collaboration, which contributes to the development of a compassionate work environment (O'Brien, 2006).

For compassion to exist in the workplace, it requires that managers and employees at all levels commit to the mandate of the business and ensure they are maintaining accountability to the business (O'Brien, 2006). All this must be done while ensuring that collaboration and leadership are present. When leaders are truly compassionate, they are characterized as using compassion to contribute to the wellbeing of everyone (Pharoah, 2018). The leadership every individual exudes will influence the amount of compassion that is present in the workplace.

Compassion and empathy are closely related, and while many managers in workplaces show empathy toward employees, the literature has shown that having compassion in the workplace is the real key to long-term success and achievement in the workplace (Pharoah, 2018). While empathy is good, it means that you simply “feel” for an employee that is going through a struggle but feel no real need to act on that struggle and help in some way, whereas the difference with compassion is that you feel more compelled and willing to act and help in some way (Jenkins, 2016).

Cultivating the emotions of gratitude and compassion in the workplace will contribute to an environment that benefits all (DeSteno, 2018). These emotions help to build positive relationships in the workplace, which increases the ability for employees to succeed (DeSteno, 2018). Research shows that those who feel gratitude and compassion are more likely to help others solve problems by devoting their time and efforts, even if it comes at a cost to themselves (DeSteno, 2018). Acting in this way is viewed as positive, and employees are more likely to approach a manager who expresses gratitude and

compassion. When compassion and gratitude are present in employees and managers in the workplace, it is more likely that the feeling of loneliness or isolation are diminished. This greatly benefits organizations because it limits the toll that isolation takes on one's physical and mental health (DeSteno, 2018). When employees feel their best, they will be more engaged and provide better outcomes for the business (DeSteno, 2018).

Compassion helps to build dedication in an organization, not only from employees but from the managers as well. When gratitude and compassion are present in the workplace, employees feel more valued, resulting in higher engagement and increased satisfaction. This helps to decrease employee absenteeism and lessen the chances that burnout will occur in employees (DeSteno, 2018).

When one or all of these are integrated into the workplace, not only will employees feel a greater sense of belonging through the social relationships they have with co-workers, but managers will experience higher levels of productivity from employees (Friedman et al., 2017). Resulting from this is greater organizational efficiency, which leads to increased productivity, better customer service, and improved financial performance (Global Focus, 2016; Friedman et al., 2017).

Another question that some might ask when it comes to a compassionate work environment is whether managers who are not currently compassionate can truly become compassionate. A study conducted by researchers at the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at the Waisman Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that adults can become more compassionate by engaging in meditation (Ladwig, 2013). Findings from this study support the possibility that compassion can be viewed as a skill that can be trained in managers and employees in organizations (Weng, Fox, Shackman, Stodola,

Caldwell, Olson, . . . Davidson, 2013). While not all managers may show compassion in the workplace, it is true that everyone is capable of learning compassion and bringing it into the workplace through any of the above-mentioned methods.

Another “compassion training” program from The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research at Stanford University was developed to help participants practice compassion in day-to-day life. This eight-week course involves daily meditation, visualization, breathing exercises, lectures and discussions, and “real-world” homework that allows participants to practice thinking and acting compassionately (Castellano, 2014). The visualization portion of compassion training programs teach students to imagine people they care about finding themselves in a negative situation or a situation that causes suffering. The student practices compassion by wishing the suffering away from the individual (Weng et al., 2013). In doing this, Weng et al. (2013) found that this systematic approach was like weight training in that it allowed individuals to build up their compassion and desire to help others (Weng et al., 2013). This method of teaching compassion aligns with what nineteenth-century Tibetan teacher, Patrul Rinpoche, suggested that to strengthen your compassion you must imagine others in torment (The Spiritual Practice of Compassion, n.d.).

These compassion teaching courses can be beneficial for bringing more compassion into the workplace. Again, research shows that when compassion is present in the workplace, the health and well-being of employees will be improved (Castellano, 2014; Global Focus, 2016; Friedman et al., 2017). The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley also supports this notion. Their research has shown that a culture of compassion makes employees and managers healthier, happier, and more

productive (Castellano, 2014; Friedman et al., 2017). They also report that a compassionate work environment and the positive social relationships that result from this help to lower blood pressure, which ultimately decreases stress and improves immunity to illness (Castellano, 2014).

Future Research and Directions

The current findings have implications for future research directions and practical use. While there is ample research to support what motivates managers and employees in the workplace, there is still room for further exploration in this subject. One gap identified is the lack of information surrounding the factors that complicate the incorporation of compassion in the workplace. Further research could be conducted in this area to obtain a greater understanding of all factors that contribute to work environments that do not display or encourage compassion. When compassion is displayed in the workplace, research has supported the many benefits a business can experience. Therefore, managers should consider leading in a compassionate manner.

A second gap identified through a review of the literature is the lack of information concerning the downsides of incorporating compassion in the workplace. More research in this area is required to have a well-rounded understanding of both the positive and negative implications of compassion in the workplace. It is likely that too little or too much compassion will negatively affect individual or organizational outcomes in some way. Identifying both sides through research will ensure that the information is not biased and both sides of the inverse “U” shaped relationship will have been addressed.

Another gap identified through review of the literature is the lack of information surrounding how much a business should expect their profits to increase when they incorporate a more compassionate management approach. While a lot of the research indicated that businesses who take this approach will experience financial benefits, there was no concrete information concerning the amount or percentage they should expect to increase profits by. This can be difficult to quantify as every business is different and it can be challenging to say exactly when compassion was introduced. If businesses are interested in identifying this increase, having some type of measure that indicates the growth they have experienced since the introduction of compassion could help quantify this. This would need to be on a case-by-case basis and would only be effective if each business took the time to measure this for their own purposes. However, measures like this could help a business see the benefits of operating with a compassionate work environment. If data can be collected for individual businesses to determine their own increase in success, it may motivate a business to continue encouraging leadership that is compassionate. Businesses could also use different measures to determine employee satisfaction and job engagement. All these factors can be analyzed to further support the idea of incorporating compassion in the workplace for continued success.

Another direction the research could take is the further study, development, and analysis of compassion training programs. Through a review of the literature, it was discovered that compassion can be taught. The research also identified a couple of compassion training programs that currently exist. However, since these programs are relatively new, there is room for further data collection and development of additional compassion training programs. Further research could provide new insights to the

curriculum that should be included in these training programs. This would ensure that compassion training programs are well-rounded to support all leadership roles and leadership styles in an organization.

It was also discovered through a review of the literature that no scale that measures compassion exists. This limitation creates a significant barrier when it comes to further research and development of this construct. Future research could identify interventions at both the individual level and organizational level that could enhance the amount of compassion present in the workplace and examine whether changes in level of compassion could affect the outcomes of the interventions. Future research must also include empirical testing of the five-element definition of compassion and the development of a measure for compassion in the workplace.

Since the study of compassion in the workplace is relatively new, the lack of quantitative studies on this topic is a major gap in the literature. Further research must be conducted to learn more about the actual results of incorporating compassion into the workplace, rather than what results are expected based on qualitative research. This information can be collected through more quantitative and case-based studies. This will help to provide research that is grounded in numbers and actual experience of incorporating compassion into the workplace. This will help to provide a well-rounded research base of both qualitative and quantitative information that will further help to advance the study of this topic.

Further research on the implications of unions in the workplace could also help determine whether it is feasible to include compassion in the collective agreements of unionized work environments. Currently, not a lot of research on the implications of

unions in the workplace exist. Further research in this area could help determine to what extent compassion should be included in collective agreements of unionized environments.

On a practical note, the findings from this paper have implications for real-world application. If implemented into the workplace, managers could benefit in ways that would help sustain long-term success. Compassion training programs are a good start for organizations that are looking to introduce compassion into the workplace. Current programs teach leaders how to become more compassionate by engaging in meditation, breathing exercises, and visualization of a more compassionate workplace. Compassion can also be taught by active listening, and managers should take this approach when both teaching and leading with compassion. The research supporting the benefits of a compassionate workplace should be encouraging to managers of businesses as there is great value in learning compassion, as such they should be eager to incorporate compassion to ensure sustained success.

CONCLUSION

Through a review of the literature surrounding compassion in the workplace, it was discovered that there is a larger importance placed on the incorporation of compassion in the workplace now than in the past. Before, compassion in the workplace was viewed as “weak” or “soft” (Jenkins, 2016), but now the benefits discovered through research confirm the importance of providing a compassionate work environment. Benefits for the employee include: reduced blood pressure, lower mortality rates, stronger immune systems, and increased loyalty and trust in their managers. Benefits for the organization include: improved employee engagement, increased productivity of employees, lower employee absenteeism, and better results (in terms of profitability) for the business. However, the literature also identified some of the factors that complicate compassion in the workplace, some of which include cultural factors and mental health culture. When businesses are more focused on doing what it takes to earn more in profit, the mental health of employees is at a higher risk. To ensure that employees do not experience burnout or mental health issues, compassion training programs are a great tool for businesses to utilize. They teach managers how to be more compassionate through meditation and “real-world” homework that encourages thinking and acting compassionately. Overall, the literature supports the idea that some degree of compassion should be present in all workplaces if the business wishes to experience sustained growth and long-term financial success.

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VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Alison Dunlop

PLACE OF BIRTH: Windsor, ON

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1995

EDUCATION: Riverside Secondary School, Windsor, ON, 2013
University of Windsor, B.Comm, Windsor, ON, 2018
University of Windsor, MBA, Windsor, ON, 2020