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EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN THE WORKPLACE

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EXPLORING THE APPLICATION OF COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

BEHAVIORS IN THE WORKPLACE

By

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my father, Robert "Bob" Bicknell, who told me many years ago that I could set my intention to accomplish my life goals if I focused in the right direction. Although sadly he passed away shortly before this work was completed, my dad regularly asked me about my progress and was always excited to discuss what I was learning. Dad, you were a true example of compassionate leadership. I love you always!

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Abstract

This qualitative case study answers the central research question "How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace?" Interviews with five individuals from one work team in an Am Law 100 law firm revealed how the compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019) were applied at work. This research explored four themes: leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. Each theme has four subthemes further describing the data: Leadership courage: managing consistently and fairly, being transparent, communicating honestly, and taking risks; Growth mindset: working intentionally, developing others, learning continuously, and self-reflecting to improve; Empowerment: dispersed decision-making, fostering diversity of thought, seeking employee input, and respecting/caring for the individual; Coaching performance: giving/receiving feedback, upholding accountability, setting/clarifying expectations, and facilitating productive conversations. Robert Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership theory framed the study. Limitations of the study include a singular industry and organizational focus, data sources solely from interviews, and the constrained definitions of compassionate leadership by Shuck et al. (2019). Future research should replicate the study in other groups and organizations and consider quantitative experiments to compare employee and leader perspectives.

*Keyword*s: compassionate leadership, compassion, leadership, integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, dignity, leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, taking risks.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Improving business performance through people elicits the desire for a more in-depth exploration of the subject of compassion from a leadership perspective (Shuck et al., 2019). Compassion is not typically included in the traditional corporate perspective of goal and production attainment; however, the psychology of compassion upholds the view that compassionateness improves employees' work lives and increases business results by creating a more favorable organizational culture. However, compassionate behaviors often remain inconsistent because of varying leadership perspectives (Scheffer et al., 2021). Applying compassion requires intentional, consistent, and skillful application of interpersonal behaviors by leaders before edifying benefits can be achieved (Shuck et al., 2019). Employees who work in compassionate environments are happier and more committed than individuals who work in non-compassionate settings (Ali & Kashif, 2020).

Background of the Study

Scheffer et al. (2021) researched whether individuals are more or less compassionate with people they know. Using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) tool to select respondents, 813 leaders were surveyed regarding compassion, empathy, and objectivity. The results of the study indicated a *p*-value less than .001 showing a statistical significance that individuals who may typically avoid compassion increased compassion choice (i.e., choosing compassion versus avoiding compassion) on average 62% more frequently with individuals they share a close

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relationship and 44% more frequently with individuals who are distant acquaintances (when compared with individuals they do not know at all). The results suggested that leaders who build better relationships with their employees may increase the use of compassionate behaviors in the workplace (Scheffer et al., 2021).

Shuck et al. (2019) studied the correlation between compassion and leadership in designing a new model for compassionate leadership behaviors in business. The study posed three primary research questions:

1. Why do compassionate leadership behaviors matter in the corporate world?

2. Do specific behaviors relating to compassion exist, and can they be documented?

3. Do leadership behaviors relating to compassion make a difference in a human resource development intervention?

The researchers conducted a two-stage, sequential equal status, mixed-method study. Stage 1 was qualitative and included 22 leaders from 22 companies interviewed using a phenomenological approach to define leadership behaviors. The behaviors identified were used to create a new survey instrument called the Compassionate Leadership Behavior Index (CLBI). Stage 2 was a quantitative survey of the CLBI with 1067 individuals within the 22 companies with a response rate of 62%. A structural equation modeling approach was used to analyze the data (Shuck et al., 2019).

Stage 1 found six factors of behavior demonstrated by a leader exhibiting compassionate leadership: integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity. Stage 2 focused on defining the CLBI scale to measure the 6-factor leadership behaviors. The process used to assess validity involved comparing the scores of the CLBI to an individual's self-reported

measures of compassion, engagement, psychological wellbeing, and intention to leave the company. Overall, correlations demonstrated *p*-values of less than .001, which were statistically significant, thereby validating the CLBI instrument (Shuck et al., 2019).

The results of the Shuck et al. (2019) study were significant, first by defining a new leadership construct of six compassionate leadership behaviors of empathy, integrity, presence, dignity, authenticity, and accountability. Second, the development and validation of the CLBI established a new tool to measure the six compassionate leadership behaviors. Although the CLBI is not available for everyday use, the findings for the 6-factor leadership behaviors serve as a foundation for further defining leadership behaviors in a different industry setting.

Ali and Kashif (2020) studied how a compassionate approach changed leadership, friendship, and servant mindset within an organization's culture. The study posed five primary research questions:

1. Do leaders who are mindful and caring influence compassion among employees?

2. Do workplace friendships improve compassion?

3. Does a service mentality among coworkers increase compassion at work?

4. Does a compassionate environment increase organizational commitment?

5. Do a service culture and organizational commitment change because of compassion?

The quantitative study by Ali and Kashif (2020) used self-reported surveys with a Likert scale distributed to 600 front-line workers in a Pakistani healthcare organization. The survey received 442 responses for a response rate of 73.6%. The constructs analyzed were resonant leadership, workplace friendship, serving culture, compassion at work, and normative commitment. The dependent variable was compassion at work. The data collected were analyzed

through a structural equation modeling approach, indicating that workplace friendship, serving culture, and resonant leadership does impact workplace compassion. Compassion also correlated to the organizational environment, which improved when emphasized by leaders (Ali & Kashif, 2020).

Ali and Kashif's (2020) study showed that employees responded positively when a manager encouraged a compassionate environment: employee engagement improved, but service to each other and clients also improved (Ali & Kashif, 2020). The study was essential as it demonstrated the mitigating and practical influence a work environment upheld by compassionate leadership behaviors might achieve.

According to Guinot et al. (2020), organizations that shared compassion as a core practice or value achieved higher levels of learning than organizations that did not. Guinot et al. (2020) conducted a study to explore the relationship between workplace compassion and organizational learning outcomes. Their study posed two primary research questions:

1. Does compassion in the work environment improve organizational performance?

2. Does an organization's ability to learn improve with compassion?

Organizations in Spain provided the focus for the quantitative study. Part 1 of the study included a heterogeneous sample of general businesses in the innovation industry ($N = 243$) while Part 2 of the study used 3–5-star hotels ($N = 160$). A questionnaire was used for both studies, which assessed firm performance variables, experimentation, acceptance of risk, interaction with the environment, dialogue, and making decisions. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze and compare the models from the two parts of the study. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient values, Guinot et al. (2020) found insignificant correlations between

compassion and business performance. However, the correlation between compassion and organizational learning was statistically significant, with a *p*-value of less than .001. Overall, compassion in the workplace has a significant benefit to organizations. Although no correlation between compassion and improved performance existed, a correlation between compassion and organizational learning contributed to improved organizational success (Guinot et al., 2020).

Healthcare is an industry where compassion training regularly occurs; however, challenges to implementing compassion training programs remain (Dev et al., 2019). A quantitative study by Dev et al. (2019) focused on the barriers to compassion training within a healthcare setting. Two primary research questions were explored:

1. Does compassion present differently among doctors, nurses, and medical students?

2. What works against compassion for doctors, nurses, and medical students?

This study used a survey to measure correlations between barriers to compassion by measuring the independent demographic groups of doctors, nurses, and medical students against the dependent variables of obstacles to compassion in the work environment and burnout. The study was conducted in New Zealand with a convenience sample ($N = 1,700$) of doctors (516), nurses (801), and medical students (383). Responses to a self-reported survey indicated that medical students experienced more significant barriers to using compassion than doctors and nurses. However, nurses reported a more substantial number of work environment-related barriers.

Dev et al. (2019) demonstrated that the higher an individual is in an organization, the fewer barriers they feel about using compassion. Mid-level practitioners such as nurses reported

the most significant number of challenges detracting them from using compassionate-based behaviors.

Jit et al. (2017) conducted a study to identify how servant leadership and compassion influence followers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 leaders and their direct reports from the education, corporate, and public industries. The researchers captured experiences, reflections, and views on emotional healing, and statements were analyzed using the model of Plowman. After transcribing the interviews and coding responses, the themes of listening, empathy, responsibility, and support emerged, suggesting a compassionate approach to servant leadership. Employees shared stories of how the leaders they reported to used compassion to improve the work experience. The Jit et al. study provided valuable perspectives on the behaviors needed from leaders to support a compassionate work environment.

Theoretical Foundation

Servant leadership proposes that a leader focuses on service to others before self. A people-centric approach offers the direction needed to ensure leadership upholds followers' trust. According to Greenleaf (1977), a servant leader always searches for and finds a better path to improve individuals' and organizations' lives regardless of hierarchy.

As expressed through his servant leadership essay, Greenleaf's (1977) thoughts were intended to create greater leadership conviction in how management upheld and supported others. Further, the theory suggests that a leader successfully elicits followers' confidence because the leader has proven faithful as a reliable servant. Serving others through leadership is not a right but a privilege that can be revoked.

Leadership is a general construct that guides others to a destination of success even when expressed through coercion and exacerbation of power or position. Alternatively, suppose the

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same journey is undertaken from a servant-leadership perspective. In that case, guidance comes through support and encouragement, creating success and monetary gains through the betterment of the people, the organization, and the community (Greenleaf, 1977).

The analysis of the compassionate leadership behaviors explored in the qualitative study considered the servant leadership theory defined by Greenleaf (1977). The benefit of framing compassionate leadership in the context of servant leadership is that, as defined by Greenleaf servant leadership provides a common and accepted view of leadership which helps create stability and acceptance for the study of compassion.

Problem Statement

Environments of high pressure within the American workplace have often led to stress and burnout for individuals as a regular part of organizational culture (Jit et al., 2017). The advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic confounded the employee experience by adding a new remote work paradigm, often bringing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Leaders skilled at connecting with people face-to-face had to change their thought processes by becoming more intentional with employees (Andel et al., 2021).

Emotional challenges experienced by humans in the workplace are nothing new (Jit et al., 2017). When looking at employee engagement, the most significant predictors of satisfaction are often based on the actions performed by the manager (Ali & Kashif, 2020). When leaders do not have a wealth of emotional capacity or well-being, their treatment of employees may lower engagement and well-being (Dev et al., 2019). Tolerance for poor behavior and lack of understanding by leaders and other coworkers further reduces an employee's ability to cope effectively, creating disengagement (Rhee et al., 2017). Disengaged employees underperform, causing a cascade of poor organizational performance (Guinot et al., 2020).

According to Shuck et al. (2019), compassionate behaviors are essential for improved leadership even though organizations often do not value them. In a study conducted by Guinot et al. (2020), organizations that offer a focused learning effort on compassionate leadership behaviors experienced a mediating effect of compassion on performance. Ali and Kashif (2020) found that compassionate-focused cultures create greater organizational work environments. When leaders exhibit self-care and compassion for others, non-leaders adopt similar behaviors, which correlate to improved employee engagement and wellbeing (Lanaj et al., 2021).

Most work around compassion is focused on health care industry settings, looking at doctors, nurses, and medical students (Dev et al., 2019). Although different industries contain aspects of compassionate work, the behavioral focus is more frequently outward-facing towards clients or customers rather than within the organization's leadership (Del Mar, 2017). Empirical studies on compassion within a corporate business context are limited and minimal research is available to provide data related to defining compassionate leadership behaviors (Shuck, et al, 2019).

Improving employee engagement and well-being is critical to retaining top talent and enhancing workplace performance (Guinot et al., 2020). Organizations are dealing with unprecedented crises of talent brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. If not addressed, attrition from employees resigning to seek emotional support, work-life balance, and connection may result in organizations scrambling for the talent required for successful business operations (Andel et al., 2021). Further studies on compassion may uncover opportunities to support leadership adoption of compassionate leadership behaviors needed for improved employee engagement and wellbeing (Shuck et al., 2019).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors included integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied was an Am Law 100 law firm.

Overview of Methodology

A case study approach was used to investigate how individuals operating in a strategic people advisory capacity within an Am Law 100 law firm experienced the encouragement and/or discouragement of compassionate leadership behaviors as defined by Shuck et al. (2019). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study is the suggested approach for conducting a detailed look at a specific case within a bounded system, which in this case is the Am Law 100 firm selected for the scope of the research. By exploring how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace, data were obtained to support subsequent research and future development of a compassionate leadership competency model and corresponding learning programs.

Research Questions

The central question guiding this research was, "How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace?"

Research Design

The research study was conducted within an Am Law 100 law firm, which also served as the researcher's place of employment. A purposive sampling of individuals from middle management were the study participants. The selected group was an entire work team comprised

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of five individuals with management experience (two with direct reports, three without direct reports) comprised of four females and one male. All the selected individuals provided strategic and practical advice to the firm's senior leadership, office managing partners, practice group chairs, and other firmwide management. The group was purposively selected for the study because of its unique role in serving the entire organization.

Before starting the research process, an interview guide was created, and a research application was submitted to Southeastern University's IRB. Upon approval by the IRB, the interviews were scheduled. Interview meetings took place outside the firm's systems on a Zoom technology platform. Records for the interviews were, are, and will be kept on a separate, secure, cloud-based drive that is password protected. Interviewees were informed of the research procedures and presented with an informed consent form that was solicited, signed, and collected before the interview.

Data Collection

After obtaining IRB approval, selected participants were invited to attend 45-minute interviews. Participants were provided the definitions for the compassionate leadership behaviors along with the email invitation. At the beginning of the interview meeting, the individual was thanked for their involvement in the study. They were reminded that their participation was optional, that their responses would remain strictly confidential, and that they reserved the right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the process at any time.

The meetings began with an overview of the interview process which was followed by the researcher showing each participant the questions from the interview guide and the corresponding compassionate leadership definitions. Interviewees were instructed to contextualize their answers to each question according to the definitions provided. Upon

conclusion of the interview, transcripts were sent to participants for their approval. Once approved, the researcher began the analysis and identified themes by coding data according to the guidelines presented in Creswell and Poth (2018).

Procedures

Upon dissertation committee approval of the proposed study and a successful proposal defense, the researcher submitted for IRB approval and then began reviewing the literature focused on compassion and associated leadership behaviors. Once IRB approval was received, the researcher solicited, arranged, and conducted interviews with the study participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by Zoom technology and the Otter.ai application. After the interviews concluded, the Zoom transcripts were sent to and approved by the participants. Transcripts were compared, data were analyzed, themes were identified, and findings were discussed. The last stage of the study involved outlining limitations and recommendations for future research.

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Limitations

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The study was limited in that it only focused on a small group of individuals within the same organization, concentrated in only one industry. The research was also constrained by the definitions of compassionate leadership behaviors provided by Shuck et al. (2019).

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Definition of Key Terms

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The first six definitions below of compassionate leadership behaviors are paraphrased from and listed in the same order as provided in the research conducted by Shuck et al. (2019).

- **integrity:** A leader demonstrates integrity when they are open, transparent, and consistent in their words and actions. Leadership integrity involves carefully considering relevant criteria before making agreements, decisions, and assurances

affecting the workforce and the business. Leaders with integrity are honest, fair, and sensible in their dealings with others; they follow through on promises made and are not afraid to admit mistakes.

- **accountability**: A leader demonstrates accountability when setting high-performance standards, creating clarity around expectations, and sharing productive feedback consistently. Leadership accountability involves holding others responsible for their work outcomes and having the courage needed to address difficult situations and performance challenges as they arise. Accountable leaders are not afraid to establish and carry out consequences of poor performance and appropriately provide rewards and incentives for good performance.

- **presence:** A leader demonstrates presence when fully attuned to, attentive to, and appreciative of other people and their wants and needs. Leadership presence involves the ability to remain focused on the needs of others while in social settings and during interpersonal interactions. Leaders with presence not only intentionally make themselves available, but they go out of their way to understand and authentically connect with and help others.

- **empathy**: A leader demonstrates empathy when they can reflect an understanding, caring, and awareness of another individual's situation or experience. Leadership empathy involves a leader placing themselves in the follower's shoes to consider alternate viewpoints and then acting accordingly to adjust the work situation as needed to improve results. An empathic leader actively tries to understand the whole person to gain valuable perspectives needed to enrich work quality, quantity, and social connectedness.

- **authenticity:** A leader demonstrates authenticity when they defer personal ego to show vulnerability and sincerity by sharing personal learnings, mistakes, challenges, and opportunities. Leadership authenticity involves self-confidence and courage. Authentic leaders have a strong sense of purpose and are focused on doing the right thing instead of impressing others.

- **dignity**: A leader demonstrates dignity when displaying respect, acceptance, and appreciation for divergent thought and action. Leadership dignity involves encouraging, valuing, and promoting the individual and collective differences needed to create a fully diverse and inclusive environment. Leaders with dignity actively pursue creating a culture where people can bring their whole selves to work and are accepted, appreciated, and valued for who they are as individuals.

- **Am Law 100:** A list published by American Legal Media (ALM) annually ranking the top 100 law firms according to gross revenue. The list is a branded and widely accepted legal industry measure used to compare the size and status of law firms across the United States (American Lawyer, 2023).

Significance

The study helped define compassionate leadership in a professional business setting. Limited research has been conducted on compassionate leadership behaviors needed to build development programs (Shuck et al., 2019). Conducting a qualitative study of the compassionate leadership behaviors defined by Shuck et al. (2019) provided data to support continued efforts to design a compassionate leadership competency model and create corresponding learning programs.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors include integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied was an Am Law 100 law firm.

Overview of Chapter

The focus of this literature review centered on the six compassionate leadership behaviors named as the basis for the current study: integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity. Gathering a more in-depth understanding of how these behaviors are used in organizations provided valuable perspectives on how their characteristics can be applied. The keywords defined in the study conducted by Shuck et al. (2019) were used to search for research on the six compassionate leadership behaviors.

Integrity

Constancy between words and actions summarizes the characterization of integrity. When what is spoken is practiced, alignment results (Jung et al., 2020; Shuck et al., 2019). Even when displaying behaviors or decisions is viewed as unethical or immoral, a person acting according to their belief system can be said to be working with integrity (Cox et al., 2021; Huberts, 2018). Compassionate leadership further expands the application of integrity to an employee-centric

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focus demonstrated through thoughtful, transparent, and truthful actions, decisions, and messages even when personally uncomfortable for the leader to carry out (Shuck et al., 2019).

Enhanced Organizational Citizenship

Jung et al. (2020) sought to determine how leadership integrity influenced employee behaviors. Data were obtained from a survey of 274 food service workers from the top five family restaurants in Seoul, South Korea, and Jung et al. (2020) used confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to analyze results. The researchers found that when an employee rated their leader higher on integrity characteristics, organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., doing what is right) also increased ($\beta = 0.29$; $t = 4.31$; $p < 0.001$), and employee engagement scores improved ($\beta = 0.64$; $t = 9.87$; $p < 0.001$). The findings implied that when organizations focus on incentivizing and developing leaders to incorporate greater integrity into business practices, it can lead to more extraordinary citizenship behaviors in employees and keep them more motivated and engaged. Organizational citizenship behaviors improve employee interpersonal interactions. Business results benefit when employees are motivated, engaged, adhere to work procedures, and work well with others (Jung et al., 2020).

Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Viera-Armas (2019) hypothesized that leadership integrity positively improved how much employees cared for others by demonstrating organizational citizenship behaviors. Would a leader with higher levels of ethics or integrity influence followers to exhibit more outstanding care and concern for their peers? A sample of 300 employees from work units across 100 investment banks in London was surveyed, measuring their agreement levels with statements about ethical leadership behaviors witnessed at work. The group was also asked questions about how often peer-focused organizational citizenship behaviors were observed. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Viera-Armas discovered a statistically significant

positive relationship between ethical leadership and peer-focused organizational citizenship behaviors (95% CI [.1630, .4044]; $p < 0.01$), accepting their hypothesis.

Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Viera-Armas (2019) found that when leaders operated with integrity, they exerted a positive moral influence over their employees, motivating them to help others. Although the research did not specifically study the negative consequences of leadership integrity, the possibility existed that environments without leadership integrity have lower peer-to-peer support for doing what is ethical. Leaders can and should take steps to practice ethical behaviors to improve the work environment. In organizations where ethical decisions and actions are not evident, strategies to improve the climate immediately lower the risk of damage to the organization.

Reduced Turnover

Does the integrity of the leader solicit additional commitment to an organization? Nangoli et al. (2020) worked toward answering that question by distributing a quantitative cross-sectional survey to a sample of 76 doctors or nurses working in a hospital setting. Questions were asked of respondents about their perceptions of leadership integrity compared to their intention to stay with the organization. The sample demographic was evenly split between males and females; however, 86% were below age 45, which the researchers classified as earlier in their careers.

Nangoli et al. (2020) asked respondents about their perceptions of leadership integrity and personal intention to stay with the organization. The Cronbach's alpha test determined the reliability of the two scales, and data were analyzed using correlation and regressing testing. The Pearson correlation indicated that the perception of leadership integrity had a positive influence

on the sample participants' desire to remain with the organization ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), and the correlation was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.39$; $p < 0.01$).

Nangoli et al. (2020) found that when employees saw their leaders act with integrity, they were more likely to stay and not leave the organization. Building programs that focus on helping leaders understand how to operate with honesty may be beneficial for organizations seeking to improve motivation and retention. However, it is not enough for a leader to have integrity; they must also demonstrate integrity, or else an employee may not perceive it to be in place. Outward manifestations must be present to convince the employee that integrity exists for any long-term benefit to be achieved.

Better Performance

Pradhan et al. (2018) studied the relationship between transformational leadership and contextual performance as it is moderated by integrity. Through a simple random sample, 480 Information Technology (IT) professionals from India's IT firms were chosen to complete a survey asking questions about the perceptions of transformational leadership, integrity, and contextual performance. Confirmatory factor analysis identified the results, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.90, meeting the measurement scale's reliability criteria.

Pradhan et al. (2018) discovered that transformational leadership holds a statistically significant favorable influence on contextual performance ($\beta = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$), indicating that when an employee works for a dynamic leader, they work harder. Whereas integrity was shown to have a statistically significant positive association with contextual performance ($\beta = 0.18$; $p < 0.05$), it was negatively associated with transformational leadership ($\beta = -0.07$; $p < 0.05$). Pradhan et al. (2018) indicated that integrity contributed to improved performance even though it is not seen as a characteristic of transformational leadership.

The clarity in the policies and expectations required of each employee provides a construct that prioritizes decision-making helping organizations achieve the correct type of performance, which is especially important when a leader has charisma and embodies the characteristics of persuasive leadership. Without integrity, employees may work harder only to meet their manager's demands instead of working harder because it is the right thing to do. Similarly, when an employee experiences an influential leader, if integrity is not a common practice of an organization, a risk emerges where the employee may not have a choice if the leader focuses on unethical outcomes. However, when policies and procedures are in place that protect integrity, performance can increase despite the actions of the leader (Pradhan et al., 2018).

Accountability

An indicator of organizational and leadership maturity, accountability involves taking ownership of the identification, measurement, and action needed to achieve performance outcomes (Dive, 2008). Through the lens of compassion, accountable leaders focus on clarifying expectations, measuring progress, and providing the feedback needed to help employees meet the demands of their job, develop, and grow in their careers. Employees cannot succeed professionally without accountability for behaviors, words, actions, and results (Shuck et al., 2019).

Improved Productivity

Culture is essential in how individuals hold to high standards and demonstrate work ethic. The Islamic civilization has high moral principles, esteeming accountability as one aspect of the divine calling of God. Individuals in the Islamic culture typically self-manage and do not rely on external forces to compel work. Following through on commitments, working hard, and adhering

to proper values proposed by the Quran and Sunna is an obligation, not an option (Chupradit et al., 2022).

Chupradit et al. (2022) used descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify if a work ethic, such as the Islamic work ethic, has any influence on organizational culture. From a population of 1,500 Muslim staff across 30 service organizations (finance, education, medicine, and hospitality) in Moscow, Russia, 306 individuals were randomly selected to take two surveys comparing work ethic and organizational culture. Both surveys used Cronbach's alpha to measure reliability. The first survey collected responses for 24 questions assessing corporate culture (0.78 reliability) and compared results to the second survey, which asked 17 questions focused on Islamic work ethic (0.81 reliability).

Chupradit et al. (2022) analyzed the data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to confirm the spread of the distribution of organizational culture measures (0.321) and Islamic work ethic measures (0.214). A non-parametric test confirmed the data, and Pearson's correlation coefficient determined the relationship. The findings indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between Islamic work ethic and organizational culture ($\beta = 0.53$, $T = 8.65$).

The Chupradit et al. (2022) research implied that how Islamic Muslims approach their work aids organizational compliance and increases productivity. Similar work ethic applications in other organizations might potentially achieve comparable results. Leaders who create an environment of accountability achieve compliance while simultaneously improving outcomes.

Thriving at Work

In a study examining how leadership styles influence employee behavior, Ahmed Iqbal et al. (2021) investigated the difference between a laid-back leadership style versus one more authoritative and accountability focused. Two hundred workers from the head offices of leading

school systems in Lahore and Islamabad were surveyed on questions identifying assessment of thriving at work and leadership style. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with reliability testing, and regressing analysis was performed to check relationships and study variables.

Ahmed Iqbal et al. (2021) developed five hypotheses; the first two are relevant to the current study. Hypothesis 1 was that leaders who were more authoritative and upheld accountability would create more employees thriving at work. Results were examined using correlation analysis, and authoritative/accountable leadership was statistically associated with thriving at work ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$). The second relevant hypothesis was that a laid-back, less responsible leader would lead to less thriving at work. The analysis showed that a laid-back, less accountable leader had a statistically significant adverse effect on employees thriving ($r = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$).

The study implied that when managers demonstrate strong leadership, it improves the employee's work experience. Employees suffer when leaders do not give the correct type of direction. Organizations may benefit from creating development programs for leaders that teach them to apply authoritative leadership productively. Additionally, frameworks and tools that make it easier for leaders to hold employees accountable help enhance the employee experience (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021).

Sustained Behavior Change

Church and Dawson (2018) explored whether providing regular feedback improves and sustains employee behavior change. Following a formal program through which managers provided feedback to employees, observations on performance improvement were collected from 350 employees, of which 70% responded. The results were analyzed using a simple summation

of ratings and narrative. Findings showed 67% of respondents indicated that they experienced significant performance improvement because of the feedback process, 22% said moderate improvement, and 11% saw no change.

Implications of the study showed that holding individuals accountable by regularly giving performance feedback creates improvement. If a leader wants to help an employee get better, they should explain how. Productive criticism strengthens employee performance to generate higher long-term business results. Organizations should teach leaders how to provide feedback and develop structured programs to expand opportunities to increase the frequency of giving feedback (Church & Dawson, 2018).

Boosted Decision Making

Ackermann et al. (2021) conducted semi-structured, expert interviews with 16 individuals who participated in self-managed teams at Mercedes-Benz locations in Stuttgart, Lisbon, or Berlin over three years. A minimum of two examiners conducted interviews to enhance reliability. Data were coded independently and combined into themes to provide the analysis. Additional observations from meetings, projects, internal documents, and press releases provided secondary data.

The primary themes that emerged included purpose, addressing digitalization, decentralizing authority, accountability, continuous engagement, leadership, and career. The summary results found that when employees were self-managed, decisions were quicker because the bureaucracy was not an issue, and bottlenecks at the leader level were non-existent. However, decisions involving bias or high stakes (e.g., closure of a work location) had better results when made by a leader instead of the team. Employees on self-managed teams reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Ackermann et al., 2021).

Ackermann et al. (2021) implied that work could and should be pushed down to the people performing it whenever possible. Although to be effective, organizations should provide explicit authority to set parameters for how decisions should be made. Decision-making matrixes define what can be decided by the team and what has to be presented to higher corporate authority (such as when someone should be promoted or fired). Clear boundaries and accountability measures lead to better decisions and higher-quality outcomes.

Presence

When individuals interact with the world around them, exuding confidence, conviction, and enthusiasm, a sense of self emerges, epitomizing the essence of presence (Cuddy, 2015). Presence is the practical and external display of thinking and mindfulness (Coonfield & Rose, 2012). The lens of compassionate leadership shifts the focus of presence to shows of centering on the moment, focusing on individual employee needs, and taking ownership of the effect of one's behavior on others (Shuck et al., 2019).

Healthier Performance

According to an experiment conducted by Reb et al. (2019), leadership presence supports improved employee performance. Seeking to determine if a more mindful/present leader improved how employees interacted with their supervisors and how that interaction improved performance, Reb et al. (2019) recruited 88 participant triads. Each triad comprised one undergraduate student worker enrolled in a management course at a university in Singapore, one of the student worker's peers, and the worker's supervisor.

Reb et al. (2019) used three surveys given to all members of the triads to complete. The first survey measured presence using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$); the second survey measured perceived leader and employee interactions

(Cronbach's α = 0.87); and the third survey measured employee performance (Cronbach's α = 0.94).

Regression testing indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between leader mindfulness/presence and improved leader/employee interactions ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). Direct observation of leader mindfulness (when the employee and leader both indicated the observation of mindful/presence behaviors) was positively associated with employee performance ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). Indirect effects of leader mindfulness (when the leader indicated they were mindful/present, but the employee did not observe the behavior) were also positively associated with improved employee performance ($\beta = 0.0.10$, $p < 0.05$, *BCLB* -0.38). Leadership mindfulness, directly and indirectly, affects employee performance (Reb et al., 2019).

Reb et al. (2019) implied that when a leader practices the skill of presence via mindfulness, it positively affects the employee in terms of performance both directly and indirectly. Employees and leaders interact more positively and work better together when a leader demonstrates presence.

Instilled Confidence

Cuddy et al. (2015) sought to determine how physical manifestations of presence affect performance. Sixty-one individuals were randomly selected to participate in an experiment where the person adopted either a low- or high-power pose position in preparation for a mock job interview. Some characteristics of low-power pose positions included constricted and slumped posture, knees relaxed, arms behind back, hands hanging at the side or crossed arms. High-power pose positions involved hands-on hip or bent out front, straight posture, heads held high, and direct eye contact.

The experiment involved individuals holding the assigned low- or high-power pose for 1 minute while preparing for a 5-minute speech addressing why they would be the best person for the job. Independent coders were blind to the experimental conditions and judged based on the individual's candidacy for the mock position. Using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the individual's interview performance and hire ability were based on verbal content and nonverbal presence (Cuddy et al., 2015).

Individuals who prepared their job speech while using a high-power pose scored significantly higher than individuals who prepared with a low-power pose on both the overall job interview performance ($F(1, 60) = 8.33$, $p = 0.005$, $d = 0.73$) and hire ability ($F(1, 60) = 7.22$, $p = 0.009$, $d = 0.68$). The results indicate that presence is not just about what a person thinks but also how someone carries themselves bodily. An individual who assumes a more assertive stance exudes confidence and improves personal performance (Cuddy et al., 2015).

Cuddy et al. (2015) implied that presence is not limited to a state of mind, and physicality also plays an essential role in interpreting actions. Leaders should take time to prepare both words and actions when communicating, as conviction of words combined with confidence improves results. Leaders who act in the best interest of others may have higher confidence through their beliefs and appear fully present; however, caution should be exercised to verify that the outward appearance matches the goals of the organization and the individual.

Heightened Resilience

Wibowo and Paramita (2022) studied how mindful, and present leadership builds employee resilience and reduces turnover intention. Across 83 hospitals in India, 188 nurses dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic were selected to take a survey assessing the mindfulness/presence of their leaders. Each nurse ranked questions using the Mindfulness

Attention Awareness Scale rewritten from the employee's point of view. Questions rated the employee's observation of their supervisor's behavior on items such as a supervisor's recall of the employee's personal aspects and if the supervisor provided recognition for good work. Using descriptive statistics, mindful leadership emerged as statistically significant in the development of empathetic leaders ($r = 0.365$, $p < 0.01$), reduced turnover intention ($r = .212$, $p < 0.01$), and improved employee resilience ($r = .499$, $p < 0.01$).

According to Wibowo and Paramita (2022), employees who worked under leaders who were mindful and present are better supported and plan to stay with the organization long-term. When leaders were aware, employees experience better stress management and improved resilience. Organizations would benefit from providing mindfulness training to leaders, teaching them to become more fully present when interacting and working with employees.

Fostered Leader/Employee Relationships

Does a mindful/present leader improve the quality of employee/leader interactions? Saragih et al. (2020) sought to answer the question by surveying 413 individuals working in the Indonesian pharmaceutical industry. Participants were selected by purposive sampling to ensure an even distribution according to gender, age, and education. Self-reported survey questions rated on a Likert scale asked employees to rank their agreement level with the perceptions of leadership fairness, leader mindfulness, and the quality of the employee and leader interactions.

Saragih et al. (2020) incorporated empirical analysis for the development and validity of the survey instrument. Through structural equation modeling to analyze the data, it was discovered that leader mindfulness had a statistically significant and positive influence on the quality of employee/leader interactions ($p < 0.05$). Organizations can improve employee

engagement and employee/manager relationships by offering training and support for applying leadership mindfulness practices.

Empathy

The ability to know, care about, and understand how others feel comprises the primary essence of empathy (Kalisch, 1973; Smith, 2017). Empathy differs from sympathy because the behavior is more action-oriented than simply remaining immobile while feeling sorry for another person's situation (Davis, 1990). Compassionate leadership adapts the definition of empathy, translating the focus on the leader's motivation to act to resolve the problems experienced by employees. Empathy by the leader involves stepping into the employee's shoes to determine the best action to alleviate the employee's distress (Shuck et al., 2019).

Elevated Innovation

Employees from a large private motor coach company in the United States were surveyed to determine if empathic leadership was related to job satisfaction and innovative behavior. The researchers (Kock et al., 2019) electronically distributed 434 surveys, of which 59% or 257 usable surveys were completed. Correlations among latent variables with square roots over average variants extracted (AVEs) compared the measure of empathetic leadership against the dependent variables of satisfaction, innovation, and performance.

Kock et al. (2019) analyzed results directionally, building the findings on each other. Empathic leadership was found to increase job satisfaction (path coefficient 0.489), and job satisfaction increased innovation (path coefficient of 0.406), resulting in improved performance (path coefficient of 0.525). The directional analysis implies that empathy precedes improved performance. Leadership empathy reduces mental limitations for employees, freeing them to take

risks and become more innovative. A leader who uses empathy to support employee growth improves performance outcomes.

Even despite differences in culture, empathy still leads to improved performance. Rahman and Castelli (2013) studied 216 leaders, 51.9% from the US and 48.1% from Malaysia. Using a one-way ANOVA, the researchers compared the mean for empathy with the mean for leadership effectiveness. Although empathy scores were higher for US leaders (3.42) than for Malaysian leaders (3.14), when compared to leadership effectiveness, results of an independent t-test found higher empathy had a statistically significant influence on leadership effectiveness ($t = 3.09$, $df = 48$, $p = 0.003$). In contrast, the difference was insignificant when empathy was low to medium ($p > 0.05$). Findings indicate that higher empathy leads to greater leadership effectiveness.

Kinder Organizational Culture

Cochrane et al. (2019) investigated the need for empathy and kindness in healthcare. By conducting a qualitative review of the practices of four hospital systems known for their approaches to compassionate care, Cochrane et al. (2019) concluded that building a culture that embodies empathy and kindness takes planning, discipline, and time. Eight consistent themes highlighted the best practices used to support compassionate care across all four hospital systems:

1. Compassionate care is an established and well-known goal of the hospital.

2. Senior leaders must buy into and support an environment of compassionate care.

3. Hiring practices and onboarding must support the goals of compassionate care.

4. Communication skills to meet goals must be taught.

5. Learning programs teach and reinforce the desired skills.

6. Goal attainment must be an effort made by all individuals, not just leaders.

7. Community involvement furthers the goals of compassionate care.

8. Goals must be measured and acted on to create sustainable change.

Cochrane et al. (2019) implied that training and early measurement of empathy give leaders the tools to provide better care. Screening measures should be implemented to weed out job candidates and existing employees who struggle to adopt the required behaviors. Accountability moderates the application of the desired behaviors in the workforce and can only be successful when fully embraced by the highest levels of leadership.

Authenticity

The term authenticity is a construct often left open to interpretation by others in their personal assessment of the mental intention behind visible actions (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Authenticity frequently implies that outward behavioral manifestations result from genuine intentions and truthful emotions, even when such behaviors may not always be viewed positively (Salmela, 2005). Compassionate leadership expands the definition of authenticity by explaining how vulnerability and openness by the leader inform the trust of the follower. Having the courage to be fully clear in what one believes, feels, expects, and stands for demonstrates leadership authenticity (Shuck et al., 2019).

Amplified Fairness at Work

Kyei-Poku and Yang (2020) reported that authentic leaders created open and fair work environments that improve employees' behavior. In two different phases, pre-coded, matching questionnaires were provided to 350 employees of a Canadian insurance company. Phase 1

focused on the employee assessing the authenticity of their leader. Despite the assurance of confidentiality, only 136 (39%) of the questionnaires were returned. One month later, questionnaires asking employees to rank their feelings about the fairness of the work environment, belonging, and organizational citizen behaviors were distributed. Of the 136 employees who completed the phase 1 surveys, only 79 returned completed surveys for phase 2.

Kyei-Poku and Yang (2020), following a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, found that leadership authenticity positively influenced employee feelings of fairness about the work environment ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$), employee feelings of belonging ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), and employee organizational citizenship behaviors ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$). Although the response rate was low, the researchers specified the benefit of leadership authenticity in the workplace remained stable.

Building authenticity should be a focus for organizations. When employees sense the openness of a leader demonstrated by open and honest communication, it improves the work environment. Kyei-Poku and Yang (2020) implied that coaching and development for leaders to become better communicators would be beneficial in developing the trait of authenticity.

Greater Acceptance for Risk Taking

Testing a conceptual model for how authentic leadership influenced employee creativity and work engagement formed the basis of research conducted by Chaudhary and Panda (2018). Three hundred employees working in the Indian heavy engineering and automobile industry used paired surveys given to employees and their supervisors. Employees responded by rating their leader on 16 items on the Authentic Leadership Inventory using a 5-point Likert scale according to the level of agreement (1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*). Employees also rated themselves on nine items assessing work engagement using the same Likert scale.

Simultaneously, supervisors rated each direct report on a 12-item creativity assessment using a Likert scale (1: *not at all characteristic*, 5: *very characteristic*).

Chaudhary and Panda (2018) found through regression analysis that authentic leadership had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee creativity ($c1 = 0.5283$, $p < 0.001$). Authentic leadership also had a statistically significant positive relationship with work engagement ($a2 - 0.5128$, $p < 0.001$), and increased work engagement similarly predicted higher employee creativity ($b2 - 0.4148$, $p < 0.001$).

By being authentic, Chaudhary and Panda (2018) implied that leaders could promote dialogue to encourage employees to take more risks. Leader openness inspires employees to explore different ways to tackle tough organizational challenges. When employees are confident in their abilities, they do not hold as much fear in making mistakes. Executive programs that train, promote, and support leader authenticity may indirectly help decrease employee perfection anxiety, so individuals think more creatively, and propose new and innovative solutions to business problems.

Elevated Employee Engagement and Trust

Winton et al. (2022) hypothesized that a positive relationship existed between authentic leadership and employee engagement. A convenience sample of 100 students enrolled in graduate education programs was used to conduct the study, testing the hypothesis. Participants rated personal employee engagement on an 18-item Job Engagement Scale and their direct supervisor's leadership authenticity using the 12-item Authentic Leadership Inventory. Ordinary least squares regression analysis determined authentic leadership had a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$), and the hypothesis was accepted.

Winton et al. (2022) implied that leader authenticity is the baseline for employee engagement. Supporting leader openness and transparency aids organizations by achieving the benefits of engaged and productive workers. However, it is not enough for organizations to provide training around leader authenticity; business culture must also support the practice of authenticity through values identification and corporate reinforcement.

Jiang and Luo (2018) reported that employee trust and engagement are increased by leader authenticity. The researchers conducted a quantitative survey by selecting a simple random sample of 391 employees from various industries across the United States. Relevant measures included 14 items assessing authentic leadership and 11 items to measure employee engagement.

Performing a two-step structural equation modeling analysis, Jiang and Luo (2018) determined that the relationship between authentic leadership and trust was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$). Trust also positively influenced employee engagement ($\beta = 0.0.17$, $p < 0.050$). Open and transparent communication, which is a crucial characteristic of authenticity, also benefits trust ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$) and engagement ($\beta = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$).

The results summarized by Jiang and Luo (2018) implied that organizations should focus on creating authentic leaders to improve individual and team performance. Additionally, open, honest, and transparent communication at the corporate level supports the authenticity required to engage employees better.

Enhanced Well-Being

Structural equation modeling was used by Semedo et al. (2019) to analyze how authentic leadership contributed to employee happiness at work and organizational commitment. Semedo

et al. selected 543 random employees working at various public and private organizations in Cape Verde, Portugal. Authentic leadership used a 16-item measure with the frequency of observation on a Likert scale (1: *never*, 5*: often, if not always*). Well-being was determined by employees rating frequency of feelings for 15 items about treatment at work on a Likert scale (1: *never*, 5: *always*). Employees rated their opinions on organizational commitment to the company and used a Likert scale (1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*).

Authentic leadership was found to have a positive and statistically significant influence over well-being ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.002$). Semedo et al. (2019) implied that businesses that develop authentic leaders could achieve greater employee well-being and commitment. Employee well-being may lead to less stress, reduced healthcare claims, and greater engagement. Organizational commitment leads to improved adherence to corporate values and goals and reduced turnover intention, benefitting long-term profitability.

Dignity

Aristotle equated being dignified with nobility (Lawler, 2017). Some scholars view dignity as rightfully granted to each person because all human life holds equal value. Others believe dignity is only achieved when earned as rewards resulting from intentionally living a life of practicality and purpose (Herrman, 2019; Lawler, 2017). Compassionate leadership focuses on dignity with a framework centered on inclusively affirming the worth of each person while concurrently developing, equipping, and enabling them to be accepted for who they are (Shuck et al., 2019). Each person has various strengths, skills, personal characteristics, and lifestyle choices, but the leader promotes diversity and inclusion by blending the dissimilarities, resulting

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in a more equitable and dynamic workplace (Shuck et al., 2019; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010).

Increased Psychological Capital and Innovation

Fang et al. (2019) reported that leadership inclusion results in more outstanding workplace psychological capital and employee innovation. Of 372 surveys provided to randomly selected staff from Zhejiang, China, 351 were returned for a total response rate of 94.35%. The questionnaire asked employees to rate statements with a Likert scale for three combined, adapted assessments: The Inclusive Leadership Scale, the Employee Innovative Behavior Scale, and the Psychological Capital Scale.

Fang et al. (2019) used correlational analysis to determine that the independent variable of inclusive leadership had a statistically significant positive effect on the dependent variables of innovation outcomes ($F = 13.324, p < 0.001$), innovative thinking ($F = 15.601, p < 0.001$), and psychological capital ($F = 23.700, p < 0.001$). The researchers (Fang et al., 2019) implied that when employees feel accepted for who they are, are treated fairly, and are recognized for their accomplishments equally, they will improve their feelings about the organization. Employees with high psychological capital think and produce more significant levels of innovation. Human resource departments should guide managers in creating dignity through inclusive leadership behaviors.

Higher Respect for Others

Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) explored whether the respect a leader demonstrates positively affects subordinate job satisfaction. Self-determination was added as a mediating effect to weed out any bias from individuals with a lower work ethic. Utilizing a snowball sampling process, 391 participants, primarily graduate students, were incentivized to participate

in a questionnaire measuring respect compared to job satisfaction. The average age of each participant was 37.53 years, with an average of 15.72 years of work experience.

To gauge perceptions of respect, Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) used the Appraisal Respect for Leaders scale, which contained nine questions focused on direct observation of the individual leader. Participant job satisfaction was measured with three additional questions from the Job Diagnostic Survey. The mediating effect of self-determination was measured through nine questions comprising the Basic Needs Satisfaction in Relationship assessment. A Likert scale was used for responding to all questions (1: *do not agree at all*, 5: *agree completely*).

Through a confirmatory factor analysis of covariances, Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) tested results using the mediating variable of self-determination. Findings indicate that self-determination mediates the relationship between respectful leadership and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), positively influencing the variables.

Decker and Van Quaquenbeke (2015) implied that human resources departments would benefit from providing leaders with feedback via a mechanism such as 360-degree assessment to provide helpful information on how the employee perceives the leader. Job satisfaction increases when an employee perceives that they are treated with dignity through inclusive and respectful leadership actions.

More Inclusive Environments

Social and racial injustices have created a compelling need for corporations to design and implement programs that achieve greater employee dignity through work cultures that embrace and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Adams et al. (2020) investigated how inclusive leadership affected diversity and well-being.

The Adams et al. (2020) study analyzed the influence of three positive leadership styles on improving inclusion and reducing discrimination. A sample of employees across South Africa was provided with a written questionnaire assessing their experience with authentic, inclusive, and respectful leadership. Of the 616 surveys attempted, 569 were completed correctly and provided usable data. Demographic information captured included gender, age, education level, and ethnicity.

The survey comprised questions from four different scales related to the variables. Authentic leadership was measured using the 8-item Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$); inclusive leadership was measured using an unpublished 17-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.97$); respectful leadership was measured via the 12-item Respectful Leadership Scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$); inclusion was measured by an unpublished 9-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$); and discrimination was measured using the Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment Scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). All questions used a 5-point Likert scale (1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*) except for inclusion and discrimination which used a 7-point Likert scale (1: *never*, 7: *always*) for measurement (Adams et al., 2020).

Adams et al. (2020) used descriptive statistics to analyze data by calculating means and comparing them via correlation. The correlations between the three means indicated a positive relationship and consistency across the leadership styles of authentic leadership ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.83$), inclusive leadership ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.90$), and respectful leadership ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.88$). The three positive leadership styles collectively correlated to increased feelings of inclusion ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$) and decreased feelings of discrimination ($\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.001$).

Authentic, inclusive, and respectful leadership styles contain important behaviors for workplaces to cultivate. When all three types are present, the employee's dignity is preserved,

and individuals are given the necessary opportunities to succeed. Organizations should not single out any one leadership style but instead adopt programs to support all three styles to nurture the right environment needed for diversity and inclusion to flourish (Adams et al., 2020).

Summary

The focus of this literature review centered on the six compassionate leadership behaviors named as the basis for the current study. As demonstrated throughout the literature, multiple benefits are possible when integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity are present in the workplace.

Exploring how integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity benefit the workplace provides insight for program development needed to close leadership development gaps. Implications discovered from the literature support recommendations for how human resource departments can focus on effecting meaningful organizational change.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors include integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied was an Am Law 100 law firm.

Description of Research Design

A case study design was used for the research. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study is a methodology that, through inquiry and observation, investigates the collective experiences of individuals within the same context, timeline, or place within a bounded system such as an organization, team, department, or location. The qualitative data, when analyzed, provides insight into relevant perspectives according to the parameters outlined for the boundaries of the case. This study was best suited to the case study method because the researcher aimed to explore one team's perceptions regarding applying compassionate leadership behaviors within a particular type of organization, an Am Law 100 law firm.

Participants

A purposive sample was used to select the participants for the study and was comprised of an entire team of five individuals. The researcher requested and achieved permission to interview the group from the department's director, who was also a group member and

participated in the study. The team was selected because of the unique nature of how their function supports all employees and leaders across the entire firm. All study participants work in a role where they provide strategic and practical managerial advice to the firm's senior leadership, office managing partners, practice group chairs, and other firmwide management. The five participants are each assigned a different section of the firm so that all departments, practice groups, and functions have equal support and representation. The team's breadth of perspective gives a unique cross-sectional view of enterprise leadership practices.

The five individuals interviewed hold varying levels of management experience (two currently have direct reports, and three currently do not have direct reports). The group is comprised of four females and one male. All individuals have a bachelor's degree, one participant has a master's degree, and two have a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. To protect the anonymity of the participants and preserve the ambiguity of what department they work in, Table 1 provides only the averages for aggregate physical age, tenure at the current firm, legal industry experience, and overall professional experience.

Table 1

Participant Experience

Category	Average in Years
Physical Age	48.2
Tenure at Current Firm	9.19
Legal Industry Experience	19.43
Overall Professional Experience	24.4

Role of Researcher

The researcher works in the human resources field with a specific career focus on learning and employee engagement. She has worked for the past 17 years for the Am Law 100 law firm studied, and her more than 30 years of experience in leadership and management development has involved defining strategies, establishing goals, managing projects, and implementing programs to improve management practices. However, achieving sustained improvement in leadership habits has remained an elusive challenge within her organization. The researcher proposed the subject of compassionate leadership to learn how better to influence the consistency of enhanced organizational leadership habits; however, when searching the literature, few empirical studies existed. Obtaining more data on the concept of compassionate leadership motivated the researcher to explore this model further through research.

Measures for Ethical Protection

Steps for ensuring the ethical protection of subjects were taken according to the procedures outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018). Along with the invitation to participate in the interview, participants received an informed consent document that provided an overview of the research steps, participant rights, and information regarding the use of collected data. Before commencing the interviews, individuals were required to read, digitally sign, and submit the document. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher again reviewed the specifics of the informed consent form with the participants and detailed how the data would be presented in the final report. Interviewees were reminded that they could decline to answer any interview questions and withdraw from the research process anytime.

Dialogue recordings were captured on a Zoom meeting platform outside the firm's systems. After the meeting, participants were provided their Zoom transcripts via email, and their

approvals of the transcript were received before proceeding with data analysis. Records for the interviews are stored in a secure, cloud-based drive that is password protected. No personally recognizable demographic information was listed in the final report. Participants were identified by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 when quotes or observations were attributed in the reporting of the study.

Research Questions

The central question guiding this research was, "How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace?"

Data Collection

Instrument Used in Data Collection

The data collection instrument was an interview guide (Appendix A) designed by the researcher and reviewed by the dissertation committee to enhance reliability according to the instructions provided by Creswell and Poth (2018). The interview guide included the definitions for the six compassionate leadership behaviors and listed eight corresponding open-ended questions. The design of the interview questions focused on the contextualization of responses according to the descriptions provided. The first question focused on overall experience with compassionate leadership. Questions 2 through 7 centered on compassionate leadership behaviors, and the final question encouraged participants to share anything else they wished to contribute regarding compassionate leadership.

Procedures

An application requesting approval to conduct the study was submitted to the IRB committee at Southeastern University. Upon approval, 45-minute interviews were scheduled with study participants using the virtual location of the researcher's personal Zoom meeting room.

Attached to the meeting invite was a copy of the informed consent form with instructions to read, digitally sign, and return the form to the researcher. A second attachment defined the six compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, authenticity, empathy, and dignity. Participants were told that the interview would involve gathering their perspectives regarding how each behavior was encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace.

At the beginning of the interview meetings, the participants were reminded that their involvement in the recorded interviews was optional, that their responses would remain strictly confidential, and that they reserved the right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the process at any time. The researcher then started the recording and shared a PowerPoint slide on the screen, which wrote out each question and the definition for the corresponding compassionate leadership behavior. Individuals were given time to read the definition before answering each question. The researcher only offered to answer questions related to the process and did not provide additional explanations regarding the interpretation of the question or definition. Follow-up questions were not used to probe for additional information.

After all the questions were asked and answered, the recording stopped, and the interviews concluded. Each person was thanked for their participation. Transcripts were automatically generated from the Zoom platform within 15 minutes and sent by the researcher to participants for validation. Once confirmed by all participants, the audio files were uploaded into the Otter.ai program and transcribed. The transcription upload took approximately 4 minutes per interview. The second transcript through Otter.ai allowed for a comparison to the original Zoom transcript, further ensuring the accuracy of the data. The researcher listened to the audio recording to interpret unclear words in the final transcription.

Methods to Address Assumptions of Generalizability

According to Joyner et al. (2018), case study research seeks to provide greater insight into a clearly defined scenario within a designated boundary. Generalizability within case study research is often limited and difficult to achieve unless the researcher chooses to cross-compare a large number of multiple cases or use additional sources of data such as observations, documents, or procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Generalizability for this study was limited because of the pre-established study parameters, the small sample size of five individuals, and no additional data sources collected besides interviews. To address this assumption, the work team studied was purposively selected because of their full access to, experience with, insight into, and support across all aspects of the organization. However, Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicated that the purposeful selection of the case is still insufficient to create broader applicability to other audiences.

Data Analysis

Research Question

The central question guiding this research was: How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace? This question provided the basis for establishing the research protocol. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case study research should utilize collected data to determine themes, assertions, and insights relevant to the goal of inquiry. Interviews were conducted and recorded using the Zoom meeting platform. Upon completion of the interviews, meeting transcripts were reviewed, with the researcher making notes and observations on the transcripts—a total of five data reviews were completed before classifying data.

Using the notes collected during the data reviews, the researcher created a codebook in Excel and organized the data into categories. The researcher cross-compared each compassionate leadership data point according to how the participant saw it applied in the workplace (encouraged, discouraged, or combined). Out of 28 categories, eight themes emerged. After additional review, the themes were further collapsed into four foremost themes. The predominant themes are leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. The overall themes answered the central research question regarding how the application of compassionate leadership is encouraged and/or discouraged in the selected organization in the case study.

Summary

A case study research design was used to answer the question: How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace? Interviews were conducted with five individuals from one work team supporting leadership and management across all areas of one Am Law 100 law firm. Data were analyzed using a coding method, and four themes emerged. The researcher identified the key themes of leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. Detailed analysis and results from the data will be reported in the next chapter.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors included integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied was an Am Law 100 law firm.

Methods of Data Collection

Upon IRB approval, the researcher invited participants purposively selected to attend one-on-one interviews. At the time of the meeting invitation, the participants were given the definitions for the six compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, authenticity, empathy, and dignity, with instructions to review the definitions before the interview. Participants were also given an informed consent form to read, digitally sign, and return to the researcher before the interview.

During the interviews, participants were reminded that their responses were voluntary, and any information included in the final report would not be attributed to personally identifiable information. The sessions were recorded using the Zoom technology platform. After concluding the interview, the researcher downloaded and sent the Zoom transcript to the respective interviewee for approval. All five transcripts were approved without any modifications by participants. The audio recordings were uploaded to the Otter.ai application to generate a second

transcript, and the two transcripts were compared to further improve the accuracy of the information.

The researcher analyzed the data according to the guidelines presented in Creswell and Poth (2018) using the data-analysis spiral procedure (p. 185). The transcripts were reviewed multiple times, with notes and observations made during each read-through. Next, the data were organized and grouped into codes, and a codebook was created in Excel to allow for visual representation of the data. During the coding process, commonalities were identified and cross-compared to the compassionate leadership behaviors according to how the participant described the application of the information in the workplace (encouraged, discouraged, or combined).

Research Question

The central question guiding this research was, "How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace?"

Themes

The researcher identified four primary themes by conducting an in-depth analysis of the data: leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. Each theme was broken into four subthemes, providing additional facets to describe the data. Table 2 summarizes the themes and subthemes. During data analysis, the researcher classified each of the themes according to how they were associated in the data with the compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity. The categories were then sorted according to the frequency of how they were either encouraged or discouraged in the workplace.

Table 2

Interview Themes and Categories

Theme	Subthemes
Leadership Courage	Managing Consistently and Fairly
	Being Transparent
	Communicating Honestly
	Taking Risks
Growth Mindset	Working Intentionally
	Developing Others
	Learning Continuously
	Self-Reflecting to Improve
Empowerment	Dispersing Decision Making
	Fostering Diversity of Thought
	Seeking Employee Input
	Respecting/Caring for the Individual
Coaching Performance	Giving/Receiving Feedback
	Upholding Accountability
	Setting/Clarifying Expectations
	Facilitating Productive Conversations

Theme 1: Leadership Courage

As defined from the data, leadership courage encompasses making difficult decisions and taking the right course of action despite personal challenges, difficulties, or vulnerabilities that may arise. The theme emerged by summarizing participants' thoughts reflecting how a leader, especially a senior leader, needs to be more heroic by role-modeling compassionate leadership behaviors to support compassionate leadership behaviors. The participants described how a top leader's behaviors limited how compassionate leadership behaviors were used within the firm. Courage requires bravery as a precursor to achieving improved outcomes. Participant 2 expressed, "So I think we just need more bravery. We need more role models. [And] I would love

to see more modeling from the top." The leaders in the current environment do not consistently display the outward manifestations needed to demonstrate the desired actions and behaviors, resulting in decreased overall effectiveness. According to Participant 2, "If they aren't seeing it from their senior leader, they have no real incentive to implement, and it's unfortunate."

Expanding on the leadership courage theme, the researcher identified four subthemes from the data, further describing how the interviewees viewed the application of compassionate leadership. The categories of managing consistently and fairly, being transparent, communicating honestly, and taking risks provided additional details about how the theme of leadership courage was encouraged or discouraged in the workplace. Data supporting the theme of leadership courage and the corresponding categories were noted in the responses for all six compassionate leadership behaviors comprising integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity.

Managing Consistently and Fairly

When leaders interact with employees, it is essential for the employee to feel as if they are being treated reasonably. Participant 3 reflected, "Everyone has absolutely the same opportunity to meet with me, to reach out and talk with me [and] the result may change based on the situation, but the approach is going to be the same for every person."

It is not always easy for a leader to remain fair and consistent; they must also hold themselves accountable to ensure that results remain balanced. As Participant 1 said,

I do think that we emphasize here that integrity is important but also to be fair. Be sensible. Follow through on our promises. I've really seen people here not only do those things or strive to do those things but hold themselves accountable when they did not follow through on those things or did not necessarily meet their own expectations. When

action is promised by leadership, it should be followed through to completion. Otherwise, the promise should not be made in the first place.

Participant 4 said, "We strive not to make promises we can't keep, not to make assurances that are not based in fact, and we try to keep just to the facts and be as transparent as we can."

At times leaders do not always stay true to their word. While discussing the importance of words matching actions, Participant 3 expressed the damage which can occur when leaders are not operating fairly and consistently:

> [When] a leader considers themselves to be open, transparent, and especially consistent in their word and actions in order for it to be effective, the audience has to perceive that as well. Otherwise, it is either non-existent or its a lack of integrity. It moves them all backwards.

Inconsistent management practices also make it harder for people to know how they will be viewed in a particular situation, and "that sort of lends itself to the individual person, not feeling like they can make a mistake, and so that creates some extra stress here in this environment" (Participant 1).

Being Transparent

Respondents shared similar beliefs about how a leader can demonstrate transparency. Transparency involves openness and vulnerability and the willingness to take ownership of personal mistakes and shortcomings. When a leader shows this type of sincerity, it improves an employee's feelings of safety and encourages problem-solving. Participant 5 said,

> I think that there is a desire to create a safe space so that people feel comfortable and confident, and being open and transparent, especially when not going well. A mistake

may have happened. There is sense that the leaders are open to hearing about why it happened, and it's talking through how to fix the mistake and how to prevent it from happening again in the future. [And] I think that's part of integrity to have the space to be honest about what is going well as well as what is not going well.

Participant 5 further shared that when conversations with leaders focus on problem-solving after something has gone wrong, it has encouraged them also to be more transparent: "I've definitely been encouraged to be open and honest about what happened, and not to try to hide the ball in any way, which I think is important." Participant 3 shared a similar thought about how their transparency helped their team: "Admitting I don't know and that can be a very unifying part of the conversation."

Participant 4 was the only interviewee who shared thoughts on how transparency was discouraged in the workplace, albeit unintentionally. The organization desires to be transparent but does not achieve the goal. Participant 4 explained,

> I can think of ways in my workplace where we succeed and we failed. We try to succeed. They want to be transparent; they want to be consistent; they want to be fair, though I think transparency falls through the cracks.

Communicating Honestly

Participants also gave examples of how individual leaders often demonstrate honesty when discussing their specific personal shortcomings or vulnerabilities. Participant 5 shared their experience: "Leaders that I worked with here have been very open about their vulnerabilities." Participant 3 provided a specific example:

> Someone in a leadership position shared a challenge they were having, and how they were working to improve it, but in that, they were incredibly vulnerable. This was an area

they needed to improve on, and they were willing to not only let our team know but also what they were doing and how they were learning so we could all be better.

Communicating honestly requires bravery, especially in a change- and risk-averse organizational environment. However, if a leader can be honest and show vulnerability, it also benefits the work team. If an employee sees the example of their leader encouraging open communication even when it may be difficult or against cultural norms, the employee may be more likely to replicate a similar level of openness. Participant 3 explained,

I need to stop and that does take a lot of courage, because being vulnerable in front of somebody, especially a subordinate, is hard. I mean you're putting yourself out there in a way that there's a risk and huge benefits. There are risks of doing that but doing so is to the benefit of the team, the benefit of the organization, to the benefit of that person almost always is a huge move forward.

A leader who takes ownership of a mistake influences others. Participant 1 shared a specific example of how one leader's honest communication was an exemplary example of the application of integrity:

I was really impressed with one of our leaders when she made a pretty public mistake [and] she publicly shamed somebody in a department setting, and I thought she had a lot of integrity when she came back and apologized publicly, saying she was wrong [and] I thought that was a really good moment of leadership that I haven't, that I don't see as often as I'd like to.

The organization is frequently not as communicative on a broader scale of corporate messaging to all employees equally. Participant 4 shared how the firm provides information in comparison to peer law firms:

In my view we give more information than most other organizations of our size and in our sphere would give, but I don't think that is paramount to whether we are transparent. Just because we do better than our peers does not mean we are really embodying this characteristic.

When the organization asks for input but does not communicate honestly about its intention, the effort is often viewed as counterproductive and may even damage employee engagement. When they explained the need for honest communication and what happens when it is not achieved, Participant 3 said, "You're moving the ball backwards in certain ways, but it's a huge loss because the intention is over here, and the perception may be over there." Participant 2 added, "We can't share that information, and at the heart of it is a distrust of colleagues and subordinates which has a whole host of other impacts on culture and leadership."

Taking Risks

The subtheme of taking risks, which involves a leader stepping out of their comfort zone to act, was noted as not being an encouraged practice within the organization; however, Participant 2 shared an experience about leadership bravery and skill from a previous place of employment:

I think leaders and individual contributors need more support in what it looks like and how to do it because I don't know that they've all experienced it. I've seen it in action, both in my own direct leadership and in watching other leaders. I think it's critical to an organization's health and success.

Participants all responded that fear keeps leaders from taking appropriate organizational risks. When leaders do not model or teach employees how to take risks, employees do not feel

supported to take chances either. Moving into the new territory of taking calculated risks requires shifting a mental model. According to Participant 2,

> It's going to require some bravery and willingness to fail. I think we have a lot of people who are more focused on what others think of them and that perception. Are you going to get fired if you do it? Has anyone told you, you can't do it?

And when discussing the root of all the challenges with risk-taking, Participant 2 added, "It's really challenging for people to be authentic and leaders to be vulnerable because they are afraid of misstepping."

Calendar management and the feeling of an overwhelming daily schedule and workload also detract from the ability to take risks. When leaders do not push back and say no to unrealistic expectations, it creates added pressure that can hold individuals back from exploring options or conducting much-needed research and learning. Participant 2 added,

> We're often in the position of choosing the most comfortable or the first [decision] and we're not even choosing like we are defaulting to the most comfortable or the first [idea] rather than thinking about it. [And] there is a lot of victim thinking around calendars. People are afraid of saying no.

Summary of Leadership Courage

An overview of the data reported for the theme of leadership courage and corresponding subthemes included examples for both encouragement and discouragement of compassionate leadership behaviors recorded for the workplace defined in this study. Encouragement was noted 27 times, discouragement 19 times, and combined three times. Encouragement examples were provided for the compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, empathy, authenticity, and overall compassionate leadership. Discouragement examples were provided for

integrity, accountability, presence, authenticity, dignity, and overall compassionate leadership. Combined examples were comprised of integrity and overall. A visual breakdown is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Theme 1: Leadership Courage Application Summary

Theme/Subthemes	Application Outcome		
Leadership Courage:	Encouraged	Discouraged	Combined
Managing Consistently and Fairly	27	19	3
Being transparent	Leadership Behaviors Noted		
Communicating honestly	Integrity	Integrity	Integrity
Taking Risks	Accountability	Accountability	Overall
	Empathy	Presence	
	Authenticity	Authenticity	
	Overall	Dignity	
		Overall	

Theme 2: Growth Mindset

The theme of growth mindset emerged from the stories participants shared about how mistakes could be used for learning if a leader focused on them correctly. When a leader chooses to explore mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow instead of looking to punish what goes wrong, it enhances an organization's ability to pivot quicker to solve problems when needed (Dweck, 2006). If embraced by an organization, the elements involved with the growth mindset theme allow individuals to become more attentive about how they approach their work and pursue development. When a focus on embracing the opportunities within the workday is exhibited, "we call it leading with curiosity, or being open-minded, or being open to learn" (Participant 5).

Expanding on the growth mindset theme, the researcher identified four subthemes from the data, further describing how the interviewees viewed the application of compassionate leadership. The categories of working intentionally, developing others, learning continuously, and self-reflecting to improve provided additional detail about how the growth mindset theme was encouraged or discouraged in the workplace. Data supporting the theme of growth mindset and the corresponding categories were noted across five of the six compassionate leadership behaviors, namely integrity, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity. Accountability was the only compassionate leadership behavior where growth mindset data were not found.

Working Intentionally

Participants did not describe the subtheme of working intentionally as an encouraged practice. However, it was mentioned as a goal pursued by some of the interviewees. Participant 3 shared their perspective on their personal plan for attempting to become more intentional: "[If] I'm in a meeting or on a call that I'm not being engaged in terms of participating. It requires a great deal of intentionality for me to remain present in those calls." Participant 3 also commented that a few leaders do a good job of being more intentional about their work, but overall, "I think there is room for improvement on that [being intentional]."

A consistent topic reported by participants was how leaders and individual contributors were often multitasking and not focused during meetings and conversations. Participant 3 explained, "There are people, I can see them, you know, looking around and looking at emails or looking at different things, and it is clear, and it sends a message as well." Participant 2 shared a similar reflection: "Most of our leaders are multitasking through meetings. Am I fully engaged with what I'm doing onscreen or the person I'm talking with? And more often than not the answer is no."

One reason for the multitasking behavior noted by Participant 2 was poor calendar management skills. Like what was reported under the theme of leadership courage and the category of taking risks, the ability for individuals to say no to meeting requests and other assignments is difficult at the firm. Participant 2 said, "I think their calendar management skills and kind of creating space to be available is really challenging." Spending time to be more intentional is outside of the normal behavior for leaders and is not pursued because "it takes a very long time to implement change" (Participant 5).

Developing Others

Similar to what was reported for leadership courage and transparency, the ability to turn mistakes into opportunities for growth is a positive example of how leaders manage. When talking about a specific leadership example, Participant 3 described one leader's modeling of the importance of personal learning by acknowledging mistakes and turning them into learning opportunities: "I've heard her share with the team members where she has made a mistake or misstep [and the mistake] gives them the opportunity to grow and let them know they can make a mistake too." Focusing on development for individuals will "help them grow" (Participant 5) to achieve more robust career opportunities.

Participants did not report any information suggesting that developing others is discouraged. Rather, the researcher's impression from the data is that the organization focuses on supporting individuals' growth. Career and on-the-job professional development were mentioned as emphasized by leaders for how they develop their people.

Learning Continuously

When looking at continuous learning, the focus of acknowledging that everyone needs to improve was noted by interviewees as an essential step in the constant growth journey. Participant 4 explained,

One of the core principles on our team is never assume you're the smartest person in the room, and going into meetings and knowing that you have something to learn from whoever is sitting around you and that is really important.

When talking about how mistakes should be turned into learning opportunities, Participant 5 provided an example they experienced during the recruiting process. In this instance, an extended offer omitted information that would have created a more substantial offer. Instead of placing blame, the leaders involved took a problem-solving approach, which created a learning moment for the participant to understand how to improve future offers. Participant 5 shared,

A mistake may have happened. There is a sense that the leaders are open to hear about why that happened and its talking through how to fix it the mistake and how to prevent it from happening again in the future.

Enhancing business through learning involves the leader building into daily procedures a process to "take a step back [and] conduct an after-action" to understand how to improve work in the most efficient way (Participant 1).

Participant 2 was the only interviewee who believed that continuous learning was discouraged. Their perspective was shared that the firm does not emphasize looking beyond what is obvious, especially when making decisions. As a result, understanding is hampered.

Participant 2 reflected, "You know we don't have time for new ideas. We just need to go with what we know."

Self-Reflecting to Improve

The ability to improve one's own self-awareness was achieved through self-reflection and was mentioned as a much-needed practice by respondents. Participant 3 depicted a process used for practicing their self-reflection to improve:

> Having some checks and balances in place to make sure what you are intending, the message you are intending to send, and the way you are intending to show-up is the way you are perceived and if its not, there needs to be some exploration.

Self-reflection creates an enhanced learning environment for the organization and provides the much-needed space for a leader to improve their daily work practices, so hubris is kept in check and decisions are improved. When discussing the benefits of self-reflecting, Participant 3 expounded on the types of improvements gained by engaging in such a process:

> It's not about being right, it's about getting it right, because we don't need to be right. That is not what is important and if you feel that way you need to stop. If you got a notion tied to your own ego, your righteous indignation, that's your sign to stop because you are not going to approach it [the situation] the right way.

Time constraints was one of the most significant difficulties participants shared about obstacles to using self-reflection and improvement. Participant 2 explained, "I think people largely have those skills. I think they don't have the time, or they don't make the time to stop and consider it [the solution]." A second obstacle was motivation. Participant 2 added, "Unless somebody is prompting that conversation [to self-reflect], very few people are just sitting around self-reflecting."

Summary of Growth Mindset

The theme of growth mindset and the corresponding subthemes were represented in the data showing how the application of compassionate leadership behaviors were encouraged, discouraged, and combined. Encouragement was noted 11 times, discouragement 13 times, and combined two times. Encouragement examples were provided for the compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, presence, authenticity, and overall compassionate leadership. Discouragement examples were provided for integrity, presence, empathy, authenticity, dignity, and overall behaviors. Combined examples were comprised of presence and authenticity. Accountability was the only compassionate leadership behavior not represented in the theme. A visual breakdown is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Theme 2: Growth Mindset Application Summary

Theme/Subthemes	Application Outcome		
Growth Mindset:	Encouraged	Discouraged	Combined
Working Intentionally	11	13	2
Developing Others	Leadership Behaviors Noted		
Learning Continuously	Integrity	Integrity	Presence
Self-Reflecting to Improve	Presence	Presence	Authenticity
	Authenticity	Empathy	
	Overall	Authenticity	
		Dignity	
		Overall	

Theme 3: Empowerment

The interviewees discussed the theme of empowerment as a trait essential to esteeming individual personalities, preferences, and expertise. Empowerment involves a leader going beyond basic information presented during discussions to seek out and support unique and divergent perspectives actively. Supporting and respecting individual differences was indicated

by all participants as a vital element of the organization's culture. Participant 4 said, "Whether you agree or disagree with someone on a personal or professional level, you're expected to treat that person with respect and understanding." On the other hand, embracing diversity of thought was not always observed by participants as a common practice. Employees often do not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts freely as leaders repeatedly do not support nonconforming ideas. Participant 2 explained, "I think people learn pretty quickly here not to raise dissenting opinions, which is a real bummer. I think it's going to limit our success in the long term."

Expanding on the theme of empowerment, the researcher identified four subthemes from the data describing how the interviewees viewed the application of compassionate leadership. The categories of dispersing decision-making, fostering diversity of thought, seeking employee input, and respecting/caring for the individual provided additional details about how the theme of empowerment was encouraged or discouraged in the workplace. Data supporting the theme of empowerment and the corresponding codes were noted across five of the six compassionate leadership behaviors, including integrity, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity. Accountability was the only compassionate leadership behavior where empowerment data were not found.

Dispersing Decision Making

Participant 3 was the only interviewee who provided information on how dispersing decision-making was promoted at the firm based on their leadership example. When talking about the importance of recognizing the significance of considering all viewpoints in decision-making, Participant 3 said, "It doesn't matter what your title is. You could bring the most important perspective to the table."

Participants 2, 4, and 5 agreed in their comments that decision-making was not appropriately distributed at the levels needed for the best overall efficiency. Participant 4 pointed out the caution involved with controlled decisions and the problems it causes for employee engagement:

As a firm we are generally a consensus culture, and we want input from as many stakeholders as we can get, and we take the time to get information. When you take time to get people's input and then the actions you take are contrary to what many of the people told you they want, or they need in an outcome that further demoralizes your stakeholder base. As a leadership team you just made a decision you felt was best for the organization. I struggle with that a bit. I love that the organization wants input, I wish it was consistently viewed and taken into account for decisions.

Participant 2 described two of the reasons behind controlled decision-making. One reason is that "Decisions are always having to be driven up because people don't have the tools and information and perspective." The second reason is that people are not included in the conversation: "Other departments that I supported, senior leadership teams weren't brought into play." Participant 5 expressed a belief that non-inclusive decisions were simply a matter of efficiency even if they were not the best approach:

I think top-down models are highly effective at quick action, but I also think that over the long term, they can be less effective at providing the necessary flexibility for a workplace to be agile to changes that need to be implemented on the flip side.

Fostering Diversity of Thought

Participants described standard views that individual leaders take time to inquire about the various perspectives of the people they oversee. When talking about how individuals are

asked for their input, Participant 1 shared an example of their leader: "She encouraged listening to both sides and hearing both experiences, bringing those two experiences together." The need for collecting different perspectives was broadened by Participant 5: "I think we have to understand or at least have a willingness to understand the alternative viewpoints that people are going to have based on their different backgrounds."

Although participants agreed that general requests for information happen frequently, the way the information is used creates discouragement. Even when data are solicited, it often is only used when it aligns with the perspectives of the higher level leaders or the current ingrained organizational thought patterns. When ideas are questioned and not used, it crushes the momentum needed to obtain future diverse perspectives. Participant 2 clarified the problem with this approach:

> We have a lot of work to do around difference in thinking, not only thinking styles, but just bringing different ideas to the table. We stop at the first person [who raises an idea] or we don't challenge the first [person who raises an idea]. I see a lot of group think.

Participant 3 gave an example of the risks people take when they speak out against the currently accepted corporate thought patterns: "If there is a training session for which we're expected to participate verbally, one must clearly be careful and make sure that the participation is not going to be negatively perceived." Participant 5 shared how they believed that ingrained thought patterns and resistance to change generally created the chasm between soliciting divergent thought patterns and using the information:

> I think there is an acceptance that people may hold other thoughts and ideas. I think there is an encouragement for people to speak up and share those. But I think our firm faces some of the same challenges that other firms have in that there is a tendency to fall back

on the way things have always been and rely on that very heavily with a hesitancy to pursue a particular thought or action and maybe too divergent from what was done in the past.

Seeking Employee Input

Like fostering diversity of thought, seeking employee input was viewed as encouraged, but only according to the examples set by individual leaders. When employee input was obtained, it helped people move past conflicts. Participant 3 shared, "My boss, my leader is incredible and helps me understand [other individual's views] because she understands me." When a leader seeks input on a particular subject, it creates a sense of respect because "you feel as if your views are being respected" (Participant 5).

When discussing the challenges of seeking employee input, Participants 2 and 4 both talked about how the compassionate leadership behavior of empathy is heavily involved. If a leader does not have empathy to consider the employee's viewpoint, it is more challenging to support the individual. Participant 2 explained, "If there is a problem, we're not going to consider it from their [the employee's] perspective." Participant 2 went on to add that leaders who work with them wonder why an employee does not understand basic information or concepts. However, if they just considered the employee's perspective, it would change the leader's consideration:

> [The leader says] I don't know why they don't understand this or why they're not getting with the program. [I say] Well, no, you've been talking about it for months. They [the employee] haven't heard anything about this, yeah, or they got one email about this.

Participant 4 explained that if a leader does not have insight into the work or expertise of their employee, it may not be possible to understand how to solicit or use the employee's input.

The activity of seeking information becomes more difficult. Participant 4 shared a personal example to explain their thought process:

> Our singular supervisor, who is an outstanding asset to our team and the organization, hasn't necessarily been in any of our shoes. I think she has a broad range of amazing experience of a [job title], but I am not sure in this role she could add a ton of insight into my very specific day to day counseling that I'm doing with my stakeholders.

Respecting/Caring for the Individual

Positively respecting and caring for an employee was seen as a dominant strength consistently supported by firm leaders. All participants reported examples of how the firm encourages respect and care for the individual. Much of the credit was given to the efforts around diversity and inclusion work that the firm focused on continuously. Participant 1 said, "We actively pursue it [supporting care for the whole person], appreciating differences in most ways." Participant 2 stated, "Our work around D&I [Diversity & Inclusion] is the best example I have seen." Participant 3 mentioned, "Dignity [of culture, ethnicity] is highly encouraged in our organization." Participant 5 added, "I see this [respecting the dignity of the individual] coming out a lot. I see this being encouraged a lot in the D&I context."

Participant 4 illustrated a particular and representative personal example of how respecting/caring for the individual was shown to them by leadership:

> I have a different faith than all of my teammates. I will answer any questions they have about different rituals. I love that. I have had partners from the organization participate in my [religious observation]. Somebody obviously not [religion name] by nature, faith, birth who wanted to for the first time [participate in the observation] and this 60 year old

guy, participate and learn about the traditions that we hold in my family and that was really, really meaningful to me.

The examples of discouragement were minimal in comparison to those that were encouraged. For the samples that were given, Participant 1 explained that different personal belief systems are not always embraced: "I think there's definitely room for improvement when it comes to, maybe ideology differences [referring to the firm's position on political ideology]." Participant 5 also shared that although the firm respects certain elements of caring for the individual, it is not where it needs to be: "I have seen respect for diversity in action, although that doesn't necessarily imply acceptance or at least full acceptance."

Summary of Empowerment

The theme of empowerment and the corresponding subthemes were represented in the data showing the application of compassionate leadership behaviors were encouraged and discouraged. No examples were noted as combined behaviors. Encouragement was noted 33 times, and discouragement 23 times.

Table 5

Theme 3: Empowerment Application Summary

Theme/Subthemes	Application Outcome		
Empowerment:	Encouraged	Discouraged	Combined
Dispersing Decision-Making	33	23	0
Fostering Diversity of Thought	**Leadership Behaviors Noted**		
Seeking Employee Input	Presence	Integrity	
Respecting/Caring for the	Empathy	Empathy	
Individual	Authenticity	Dignity	
	Dignity		
	Overall		

Encouragement examples were provided for the compassionate leadership behaviors of presence, empathy, authenticity, dignity, and overall compassionate leadership. Discouragement examples were provided for integrity, empathy, and dignity. Accountability was the only compassionate leadership behavior not represented in the theme. A visual breakdown is provided in Table 5.

Theme 4: Coaching Performance

The interviewees discussed the theme of coaching performance as a trait essential to manage employees and the work performed across the organization. However, as important as coaching performance was said to be, it was noted that the firm was not fulfilling most of the key elements involved, and the concepts were more aspirational in nature. One of the bigger challenges observed with implementing a change of this nature was how the firm was beginning to improve accountability, which was not well received by all audiences. Participant 3 explained,

> Changing the level of accountability has to be intentional, careful, and well thought out. What has been okay for a long time, if the organization has let behaviors continue and condoned them and then decide to change [it is] wonderful, it is an important initiative and has to be done in a way that is incredibly careful. It is a question of level setting the expectation now needed. Instead of saying they were wrong before, it's now a question of we're in a new world.

The organization aims to improve how it holds employees accountable, but employees feel like they are being maltreated because the expectations have changed. Part of the change was explained to employees as a requirement for operating a successful business. However, employees do not always see how the change will help them personally. Participant 4 described the tension involved,

I am currently in the process for making sure performance standards are met in many of

our ranks and one of the issues that we're seeing is that the same performance that you

are getting in trouble for today, or terminated for today, or getting a performance plan for

today. If you had been doing the same thing three years ago, you might not have had the

same outcome…And now there seems to be what people are viewing as an inconsistency

in our approach.

Expanding on the theme of coaching performance, the researcher identified four

categories from the data, further describing how the interviewees viewed the application of

compassionate leadership. The categories of giving/receiving feedback, holding people

accountable, setting/clarifying expectations, and facilitating productive conversations provided

additional detail about how the theme of coaching performance was encouraged or discouraged

in the workplace. Data supporting the theme of coaching performance and the corresponding

categories were included in the responses for all the six compassionate leadership behaviors

comprising integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity.

Giving/Receiving Feedback

Participant 5 echoed the aspirational desire of the coaching performance theme and

described how the firm is beginning to create better structure and importance around giving and

receiving feedback: "I think there is a lot of emphasis on how we are going to convey necessary

feedback and information in a way that is going to be most constructive." Participant 1 affirmed

that "performance discussions to encourage people to get better" are happening more frequently.

Formal processes involved with giving and receiving more programmatic feedback were

described as working well. Participant 4 said, "I think the annual process is great. Having real-

time feedback [formal process] with our managers is great."

The manner in which a manager aimed to provide constructive feedback influenced how an employee perceived and assimilated the information. When talking about their manager, Participant 4 reflected, "I have a one-on-one with my supervisor every week, and we talk about things, and she shared feedback that she's received on my work, both positive and negative." Participant 3 shared their particular intent when giving feedback:

Being incredibly honest, if you can't say something, own that, say I understand what you're asking me. Goes a long with building credibility with my team. I'll tell you everything I can. I am never going to hide the ball. And will do it [give feedback] in a clear and compassionate way.

Although giving and receiving feedback was described as becoming more emphasized and supported, roadblocks persisted that worked against full incorporation into consistent management practice. One reason for the resistance is that not all organizational leaders are convinced feedback is necessary. According to Participant 2, "I don't know that we have a widespread feeling that it's in everybody's best interest to give feedback." Sometimes the leadership savvy needed to give feedback is also missing. Participant 2 indicated, "I think people are really scared of doing it [giving feedback]. They felt they needed to give it [feedback] but they didn't know how to deliver it."

When discussing cultural norms affecting the giving and receiving of feedback, Participant 5 inferred that sometimes it does not happen as leaders are more interested in being expedient versus taking the time needed to address a situation thoroughly: "There is a tendency to move on without providing feedback and without much more follow-up." Another cultural norm exists when leaders do not model receiving feedback to improve. Instead of taking ownership, blame or deferral may be exhibited instead. According to Participant 1,

Some were finger-pointing at groups of people [when dealing with challenges], not looking for the source of the solution but instead looking to cast blame. We could strive to share some of those failings with others, and instead, we're like, your data is wrong.

Upholding Accountability

Participants talked about accountability in terms of aspirational focus rather than functional practice. It is not that the participants believed it was not occurring, but rather it was not happening at the levels desirable for long-term organizational success. Participant 3 described one way they created shared accountability with their team:

It's being incredibly clear but in an enrolling way, not a condescending way [about the work]. Not, why haven't you been doing this? But let's [try this new way]. This is our new reality. Let's figure out how we're going to do that in terms of performance challenges in terms of addressing difficult situations. That is a more difficult level of accountability to improve.

Employees and the organization will be more likely to embrace accountability when the benefits of improved performance are made clear. If rewards are built into the process, and employees see the payoff from enforced accountability, it "allows them to see the benefits of holding themselves to a higher standard" (Participant 3). The motivation for holding others accountable is boosted by witnessing the value gained from seeing enforcement in action.

Holding others accountable requires creating tangible performance metrics, and most leaders skip the steps needed to provide the criteria. Participant 2 shared, "I don't know that I've received a work assignment here that had conditions of accountability." As reflected previously for other themes, time constraints often factor into why the correct actions are not used. A lack of follow-through from the leader occurs because their many work demands compete for their

limited time and attention. Participant 2 shared an example, "The expectations have been set, have been communicated, the help has been there, the resources have been there, and then the accountability for the person is not there." The leader may know what to do but does not have enough time to hold someone accountable.

Participant 4 described the difficulty in creating performance measures for more soft-skill behaviors: "I think the only place where accountability really may fall short is sometimes when you're in a softer skill job it's hard to figure out what the metrics are." Sometimes, leaders face negative consequences by holding people accountable, which keeps them from acting. Participant 2 shared an example: "At least five leaders [are not] walking the performance management path because of fear of not [being able to] replacing them [the employee who is not performing]."

Setting/Clarifying Expectations

When referencing how business professionals are managed, Participant 4 said, "I think we [the firm] do a pretty good job with clarity around expectations." Successful application requires that a leader has to set an example and "make themselves more clear" (Participant 1). When expectations are sufficient, it presents the necessary "level of clarity and enrollment" (Participant 3), and employees know what to do.

When expectations are not set, it leaves the interpretation of what is needed up to the employee. Participant 3 reiterated, "If something is not addressed or changed, it is deemed condoned behavior." Participant 2 echoed a similar thought when they shared an example:

Every time a leader has reached out to me about [an employee] missing an expectation, I'll say, talk to me about how you set the expectation. Silence, you know, like they could

not [explain how they set the expectation]. When those expectations aren't set, I'm

[referring to the employee] assuming I am empowered to work to my own priorities.

Not providing clarity around expectations elicits a similarity to a crisis environment in

that everything becomes equally and dramatically essential and seems like an emergency.

Participant 2 clarified, "It creates a lot of last-minute fire drills." Unclear expectations also make

it hard for employees to understand boundaries for high performance which ultimately

diminishes organizational effectiveness. Participant 2 illuminated, "When you are interested in

everything but not focused on anything, you're half-assing everything. Nothing is getting your

attention, whether it is your work or your people."

One area of resistance to setting and clarifying expectations was how leaders perceived it

negatively. The belief is that providing too much detail or clarity is taking away the ownership

and control of the employee. The employee doesn't have as much say in how they approach their

work; the worry is that "people label it as micromanagement" (Participant 2).

Facilitating Productive Conversations

According to participants, the ability to converse with employees is often an overlooked

and missing skill set that is critically important. It involves more than talking. It also involves

active listening, the ability to ask questions, and managing conflicting perspectives to create

productive outcomes for future success. Participant 3 explained, "Just listening, and not

interrupting and just letting someone talk [about what is going on] is I think, 80% of the battle

many times." Participant 3 also shared an example of how their own leader uses empathy to

skillfully facilitate conversations: "This is another area where my boss, my leader, is incredible

and helps me understand from different perspectives because she understands me."

Participants 4 and 5 described how leading with curiosity has improved the conversations they have experienced. Participant 4 said, "Respecting a person goes back to leading with curiosity. Suppose you don't understand a certain perspective. In that case, it's better to not immediately dismiss it as wrong or different than your own but to ask questions about it." When trying to solve problems, "being curious about what is going on" (Participant 5) helps employees feel heard.

In practice, more leaders are not skilled at facilitating conversations. Participant 2 explained how leaders do not spend adequate time engaging with employees on critical issues, "They ask a question, they hear one voice, they move on to the next topic." But when clarifying, Participant 2 added,

I don't know that we've given our leaders all of the tools to both facilitate and invite diverse opinions, and I don't know that they have the tools to know what to do. I think people are uncomfortable managing dissent or different opinions. [Facilitating conversations] requires a leader to be thoughtful about their role as a leader and their role in inviting and encouraging, and valuing all of these things [employee voice, dissenting opinions, etc.].

A leader's failure to hold productive conversations can create harm to employees. Participant 3 shared an observation solidifying how a leader's ability to communicate enhances or damages employees' feelings of worth and respect:

Communication is one of the most important ways to show dignity. Freezing somebody out or not including them in a conversation that is necessary or not allowing them to have a seat at the table it is very detrimental in this respect.

Summary of Coaching Performance

The theme of coaching performance and the corresponding subthemes were represented in the data showing how the application of compassionate leadership behaviors was encouraged and discouraged. No examples were noted as combined. Encouragement was noted 24 times and discouragement 26 times. Encouragement examples were provided for the compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, dignity, and overall compassionate leadership. Discouragement examples were provided for integrity, accountability, presence, authenticity, dignity, and overall compassionate leadership. A visual representation is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Theme 4: Coaching Performance Application Summary

Theme/Subthemes	Application Outcome		
Coaching Performance:	Encouraged	Discouraged	Combined
Giving/Receiving Feedback	24	26	0
Upholding Accountability	**Leadership Behaviors Noted**		
Setting/Clarifying Expectations	Integrity	Integrity	
Facilitating Productive Conversations	Accountability	Accountability	
	Presence	Presence	
	Empathy	Authenticity	
	Authenticity	Dignity	
	Dignity	Overall	
	Overall		

Evidence of Quality

The researcher applied strategies recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018) to improve the validity and reliability of the research strategy and data analysis, including providing extensive detail in reporting, presenting both positive and negative elements in the reporting of

the data, maintaining a deep understanding of the field environment, and reporting the researcher's bias in the case (pp. 200-201). The data collection instrument was an interview guide (Appendix A) designed by the researcher based on the purpose statement, problem statement, and theoretical framework, and was reviewed by the dissertation committee to enhance reliability according to the instructions provided by Creswell and Poth (2018). The researcher improved the consistency and accuracy of the data obtained by consistently using procedures to conduct all interviews.

After the interviews were completed, each interviewee had the opportunity to review and approve the transcript before it was submitted for analysis. Upon transcript approval, two different transcripts were produced, one from Zoom and the second from Otter.ai, and cross-compared. Any unclear information in the transcript was validated by the researcher listening to the audio recording for clarification. The researcher reviewed the data a minimum of five times and created a code book defining themes and categories to report on the data according to the guidelines presented in Creswell and Poth (2018).

Summary

A qualitative case study design was used to answer this question: How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace? Chapter 4 presented an overview of the data from interviews with five individuals from one work team supporting leadership and management across all areas of one Am Law 100 law firm. Data were analyzed using a coding method, and four primary themes emerged: leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. The following chapter will discuss the data by summarizing the results, study limitations, implications for future practice, and recommendations for future research.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors included integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied was an Am Law 100 law firm.

Methods of Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Southeastern University Institutional Review Board, the researcher invited a team of five participants to attend one-on-one interviews. Using a qualitative case study design, the researcher sought to understand how the participants experienced the application of compassionate leadership within their workplace, an Am Law 100 law firm. Before the interviews were held, participants were given an informed consent form to read, digitally sign, and return. Participants were also provided definitions for the six compassionate leadership behaviors of integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019).

Interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom technology. Audio recordings were also uploaded into the Otter.ai app to produce a second transcript. Both versions of the transcripts were then compared to improve accuracy in reporting the data. The Zoom version of the transcript was sent to the participants for approval before continuing with the study. The

researcher next analyzed the data and created a codebook in Excel, grouping the data by commonalities to determine themes.

Summary of Results

The qualitative data collected from five participants who work for an Am Law 100 law firm indicated how compassionate leadership behaviors were applied in the workplace. The stories provided by participants revealed that compassionate leadership behaviors were encouraged, discouraged, or combined according to four main themes: leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. The themes were divided into four subthemes detailing participant examples and clarifying the interpretation of how compassionate leadership behaviors were applied. Leadership courage was defined through examples in the subthemes of managing consistently and fairly, being transparent, communicating honestly, and taking risks. Growth mindset was expressed through the subthemes of working intentionally, developing others, learning continuously, and self-reflecting to improve. Empowerment was defined through the subthemes of dispersing decision-making, fostering diversity of thought, seeking employee input, and respecting/caring for the individual. Coaching performance was expressed through the subthemes of giving/receiving feedback, upholding accountability, setting/clarifying expectations, and facilitating productive conversations. This section will discuss all four themes including the additional subthemes under each.

Research Question

The central question guiding this research was, "How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace?"

Discussion of Results

Theme 1: Leadership Courage

All five participants commented that leaders within the organization needed to demonstrate courage by modeling the same behaviors they want to see from employees. However, as they also noted, exhibiting the behaviors was not consistent in the firm and was observed as more of a goal than a common practice. Participant 2 explained how frequently employees must manage up, which means the employee takes full ownership of tasks or projects by providing guidance, setting benchmarks, and ensuring accountability for outcomes despite the missing guidance from their direct supervisor. Instead of the leader directing the work or showing the appropriate example, the employee takes full responsibility for guiding the situation. Managing up is not always a bad idea, but it becomes problematic when it happens in lieu of appropriate supervisory involvement. Connecting to this point, Participant 2 said, "[I coach] a lot of conversations with people on how to manage up."

People look to their leaders to understand how to perform, so a leader's example is crucial for generating productivity and ensuring quality. Participant 2 gave the employee's perspective: "I [the employee] need to be able to get what I need from my leader, and I need them to be accountable [to model the correct behavior]." Without the right example to follow, an employee guesses the correct performance criteria needed to act or perform their work. The employee's results become haphazard as they may or may not meet unknown standards. In this situation, the employee is not given the structure to perform at the highest levels. Alternatively, Pradhan et al. (2018) found that when a leader shows a positive example, and employees see the leader's behavior as appropriate, it encourages employees to work harder and produce better results.

Managing Consistently and Fairly

According to participants, a leader should consider how their daily actions affect the employees reporting to them. If an employee perceives they are treated well by the leader, it positively influences what the employee expresses about the leader and the team. However, if a leader is not fair and consistent, the employee perceives the behavior as undesirable and holds a more negative interpretation. Participant 3 emphasized how necessary the leader's actions are in a similar situation:

> [A leader should recognize] how important their actions are, how important their words are, and that everything they say and do is watched…if words and actions don't match, if decisions don't seem fair…it again serves to move the ball backwards.

When a leader acts with integrity, it also influences how employees feel about their organization. When sharing a personal example about how leadership consistency created a positive work experience for them, Participant 3 talked about how their leader provided a positive example they wanted to follow: "I try to mirror that [consistency and fairness] with my team." Similarly, Jung et al. (2020) found that employees have improved performance outcomes and engagement when they work for leaders who are uniform in how they work with and manage employees. The leader's example creates a top-down influence replicating the behavior.

Being Transparent

When considering their respective leaders, respondents reported that being transparent was an important trait that improved the organization's psychological safety, which means employees feel reasonably safe from negative consequences when they express opinions, voice concerns, and share ideas. Participant 5 explained how leadership transparency improves accountability: "Situations where our leaders have been transparent about things they did not

achieve…that goes a long way towards creating a place where there is accountability…and seeing that transparency encourages them [the employees] to be accountable as well." A leader who shows integrity by communicating transparently with employees increases work integrity within the team and across the organization (Chupradit et al., 2022). Participant 5 explained, "I've been encouraged [by leaders] to be open and honest…and not try to hide the ball in any way, which I think is important."

Communicating Honestly

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 emphasized the importance of honest communication in their responses. Participant 2 talked about a recent reduction in force that gave both positive and negative aspects of honest communication. Participant 2 elaborated on the negative aspects first:

> We were a lot of months into the discussion of that reduction happening…I don't know that [senior leaders] had a clear vision of what they wanted to accomplish with the reduction. But if they did, it wasn't communicated downward to the people supporting it. There was a fear of engaging people in the conversation.

The teams who did not receive the information in advance suffered: "They had no time to be thoughtful. They had no time to engage in [the discussion]. Is this right? Are these the right people?…that whole process was a good example of a failure around integrity" (Participant 2). Congruent with the findings of Kyei-Poku and Yang (2020), when leaders communicate honestly and transparently, it increases employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace. The reduction-in-force event would have benefited from higher levels of honest communication because the byproduct would have supported the believability of management in the future.

Sharing an example of how the leader's honest communication instilled more trust in the leader and directly benefitted the team, Participant 2 said, "That chief [of the department] was

very transparent with [their] leadership team about what was happening. It gave them the tools to plan for, prepare for, and manage. He trusted them to keep things confidential." Because of the leader's honesty, the team felt more supported and was better prepared to handle the event's fallout. According to Chaudhary and Panda (2018), a leader's openness enables dialogue necessary to build trust, enhancing employees' ability to handle challenging situations. Jiang and Luo (2018) similarly reported that honest communication from the leader also increases employee trust.

Taking Risks

Participant 2 gave an example of the questions they ask as a leadership coach to help leaders think through the importance of taking more risks: "What do you need to be successful? Are you willing to be brave in that? Just because someone isn't doing it doesn't mean you shouldn't or couldn't." As previously reported, Chaudhary and Panda (2018) implied that an authentic leader promotes dialogue and encourages employees to take more risks. A leader encouraging open and honest dialogue increases people's psychological safety, leading to more incredible innovation often preceded by calculated risk-taking (Kock et al., 2019).

The theme of leadership courage explains a vital quality that gives leaders the daring often needed to take a stand and demonstrate the right behaviors necessary to become a role model, representing the organization's desired outcomes. When a leader shows bravery by managing fairly and consistently, being transparent, communicating honestly, and taking risks it helps increase an employee's commitment. A leader's ability to take a stand to do what is right ethically and consistently improves employees' actions and increases employee engagement scores (Jung et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Growth Mindset

Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 referenced the benefits achieved when a leader takes the appropriate steps to develop personally. The leader's effort is a visible example. Even if the example does not change employee behavior, it creates more motivation for the team to learn. A leader who approaches learning helps employees better understand "where you [the employee] need to grow" (Participant 3), helping improve individual and team performance long term. As previously reported, Reb et al. (2019) found that when a leader is more mindful and present, it positively correlates directly and indirectly to employee performance.

Working Intentionally

Reflecting on the examples in the data, the subtheme of working intentionally involves a leader setting guidelines and using mindfulness tools to help them prioritize their projects and time to create a balanced schedule. According to Participant 2, when leaders do not work intentionally they create more stress for themselves and their teams. Mixed priorities require hours beyond what is reasonable for an employee working 40 hours a week to produce. Participant 2 shared how they often coach leaders on setting boundaries to help with this problem, telling leaders: "I don't care what other people's boundaries are. I care what yours are and what you need to be successful."

Participants 1, 2, and 3 all talked about how multitasking negatively affects others, especially during meetings. Participant 1, when discussing the adverse effects of leaders not being focused during meetings, said, "You can see people are multitasking. That is a big thing." Participant 3 shared how they keep themselves from multitasking by using a simple tool: "So one of the best ways [to focus] is to actually pencil and paper take notes that allows me to stay present much better when it would be easy for my focus to be, to go somewhere else." When

leaders prepare to be more intentional in what they say and do, confidence is improved, which positively influences employees (Cuddy et al., 2015). An intentionally mindful leader enhances an employee's resilience while improving the employee's desire to remain working at the organization (Wibowo & Paramita, 2022).

Developing Others

Developing others was strongly emphasized by both Participants 1 and 3 as an essential aspect of effective leadership. Participant 3 talked about their approach to developing others: "My experience has always been centered around meeting people where they are and understanding what is going to motivate, what they care about, and what will move them forward in their career and in their professional lives." A leader should take the time needed to purposely develop the people who report to them to "help them grow" (Participant 1). As previously reported, Chaudhary and Panda (2018) found that employees with leaders who support their development become more creative and engaged.

Learning Continuously

Contemplating the need for ongoing development, participants explained how the emphasis on persistently utilizing daily work situations to better recognize mistakes, grasp opportunities, and learn was an essential element of a successful organization. As Participant 1 talked about the importance of continuous learning, they also noted that people are not as focused on learning in the firm because they are not given space to make mistakes. A fear of repercussions exists. Participant 1 stated, "They [employees] can't make mistakes, so that creates extra pressure." According to Fang et al. (2019), the opposite is true when an environment of continuous learning exists. The leadership focus on education enhances the workplace by

boosting employees' optimism about the organization. When employees feel more optimistic about the organization, they become more innovative.

Self-Reflecting to Improve

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 indicated that inner analysis was a valuable practice for leaders to improve their job performance. Participant 4 shared how they believed self-reflection was necessary for personal growth: "We can all sit and criticize how decisions are made and what people are doing, but if we're not able to look at our own shortcomings [it limits our progress]." Self-reflection may also help balance a leader's ego and prevent unnecessary mistakes. Egocentric blunders happen when due diligence for planning, research, and collaboration is forgone because the leader begins to forget that they are fallible, or thinks they are better than other decision-makers. They trust their intuition when, instead, "having some checks and balances" (Participant 3) would help them make better decisions.

Participant 5 discussed how self-reflection to improve can extend beyond just one individual: "[When a mistake is made] there is a conversation with leadership over what has happened and how to prevent it from happening again in the future." Similar to what was reported previously, Reb et al. (2019) showed that when a leader engages in mindfulness for improvement, it creates improvement in others. Additionally, if the leader visibly demonstrates the process of mindfulness, it is a practice that team members and peers may adopt.

As reflected by study participants, the theme of growth mindset suggests that leaders should encourage people to explore gaining knowledge and improving skills instead of placing blame when mistakes happen (Dweck, 2006). If leaders supported improvement opportunities more often, it would help employees and the organization. When a leader attends to working intentionally, developing others, learning continuously, and self-reflecting to improve, it creates

greater engagement for employees and enhances organizational commitment (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; Reb et al., 2019; Wibowo & Paramita, 2022).

Theme 3: Empowerment

The theme of empowerment was referenced more frequently in the data than all other themes. Participants discussed that although the organizational climate was incredibly constructive at celebrating personal qualities such as race and gender, it was significantly limited in other areas such as thought processes and decision-making. Leaders were repeatedly not consulted about decisions or were not given the right resources or information to help them become more empowered. When partners, who own the firm, do not trust senior leaders to operate autonomously, the lack of trust is described as cascading down to the lower level team leaders. Alternatively, when trust is present, and authority is given, it creates better efficiency and productivity (Ackermann et al., 2021).

Dispersing Decision Making

Controlled decision-making created operational issues when "senior leadership teams weren't brought into play" (Participant 2) for significant business problems. The reasons why authority is not dispersed for decision making was interpreted by Participant 2: "It is a distrust of colleagues and subordinates which has a whole host of other impacts on culture and leadership." Even when top leadership wants the decisions to be made at a lower level, it does not happen because the same leaders keep all the information and do not provide the resources needed to make the best decision.

Ackermann et al. (2021) studied dispersed decision-making. They found that when teams were given more authority to make decisions along with appropriate tools and resources to inform the conclusions, decisions were quicker and resulted in better long-term outcomes—and

employee satisfaction also improved. The study results also revealed that leaders cannot simply delegate every decision to their teams. A thoughtful process should be engaged in to determine classifications and authority levels needed to make decisions.

Fostering Diversity of Thought

The organization has a goal to accept divergent viewpoints. However, according to Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5, even though many leaders meet this goal or attempt to meet this goal, the majority of leaders' behaviors counter the goal. Employees bring up unique or contrary perspectives, which are ignored or discounted. People also fear getting in trouble for asking the wrong questions or bringing up opposing thoughts. Kock et al. (2019) researched the impact of leadership empathy on employee engagement and innovation. As previously reported, empathy, which involves understanding employee viewpoints and encouraging diverse thinking, creates better job satisfaction, resulting in higher levels of innovation.

Seeking Employee Input

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 consistently believed that the firm actively seeks employee opinions and ideas. However, what they see happen repeatedly is that employees' feedback does not get used. Even when the employee contribution is incorporated, employees do not make the connection perceiving it that way. Participant 2 explained that what employees contribute is often filtered and changed through the leader's perspective to the point where it no longer reflects the employee's voice. The leader feels they have used the information and cannot see why the employee might not see it the same way. The leader sees the outcome through their own eyes "so everything comes through in the name of me [the leader]" (Participant 2).

Rahman and Castelli (2013) suggested through their study on corporate culture that empathy plays an integral part in how a leader's caring about an employee's perspective

increases their leadership performance. Leaders who seek to understand the employee's viewpoint can see where communication is ineffective. The leader can also uncover ideas and attitudes that lead to using an employee's feedback to solve problems and improve operational outcomes.

Respecting/Caring for the Individual

Each of the five participants shared how the firm embraced and empowered individuals on a personal level. Respondents reported how the organization did an exceptional job supporting individual differences when considering race, gender, ethnicity. The firmwide encouragement around diversity and inclusion was witnessed by all participants and described as a strength of firm leadership universally and consistently applied throughout the organization. Participant 4 reflected, "I have nothing but respect for the people I work with. People have always treated me with respect." Cochrane et al. (2019) reported that environments that embody care and respect for their employees are carefully designed with planning, training, policies, and dedication by senior leaders. Continuous emphasis assures results do not regress.

The theme of empowerment, as reflected by study participants, suggests that leaders excel at promoting individual liberation by embracing employees for all that makes them unique. Failure occurs when attempting to encourage more diverse opinions, as most leaders do not encourage open discussion; even when they do, employees may feel unsafe speaking up. Distrust around decisions also creates bottlenecks and inefficiencies for leaders and their teams. Leaders empower their people through dispersing decision-making, fostering diversity of thought, seeking employee input, and respecting/caring for the individual. If more study and care could be focused on teaching leaders how to dig into curiosity using empathy to trust their people, it

would improve organizational decisions and leadership effectiveness (Ackermann et al., 2021; Kock et al., 2019; Rahman & Castelli, 2013).

Theme 4: Coaching Performance

Ongoing performance management skills were depicted by participants as properly defining, assigning, managing, and communicating with employees to improve daily work to achieve short and long-term goals. Leaders who took the necessary steps to spend time working with employees in this capacity fully demonstrated compassionate leadership behaviors. Participant 2 clarified their impression about a common misunderstanding related to using performance management skills through coaching: "There's a misunderstanding and fear around clarity and the [productive power] that it offers. People mislabel it as micromanagement…in my mind, it's the, you know, the kindest thing you can do for your employees." Pradhan et al. (2018) reported that when leaders clarify policies, procedures, and expectations, employees exert tremendous effort to meet goals while working.

Giving/Receiving Feedback

All five participants indicated the importance of a leader who shares feedback with their people regularly. Like other subthemes, the goal exists for leaders in the organization to engage in the feedback process; however, many leaders do not regularly practice giving/receiving feedback to employees. Leaders resist giving feedback because delivering it is intimidating to them. Participant 2 reflected, "They felt like they needed to give it, but they didn't know how to deliver it." Managers who utilize feedback, if approached correctly, make a difference. Participant 3 described how they tackle feedback compassionately: "I choose to be compassionately direct." Adding that it is not helpful only to give feedback, it is also vital to hear from the employee and work with them to solve problems. Participant 2 shared,

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Providing people with the ability to understand clearly what the situation is and then allowing them the time to respond, and then working together to move forward, whatever that solution may be…it is, in my opinion, vital for people to truly understand what the situation is…in a way where they know that they have a partner in moving forward with whatever the solution is.

Church and Dawson (2018) concluded that most individuals they surveyed reported performance improvement because of their leader's feedback. Productive feedback involving positive and negative elements produces more remarkable, longstanding business outcomes. The feedback process benefits both the individual and the organization.

Upholding Accountability

Becoming more accountable was cited by Participants 2, 3, and 4 as a critical facet of managing people that was oft desired but not consistently practiced. Participant 3 explained the importance compared to the challenge involved:

I believe my organization cares a great deal about accountability and about improving the level of accountability…it's a fundamental pillar of having any successful organization, and I think one of the hardest behaviors to improve upon consistently for any number of reasons. So first changing the level of accountability, it has to be an incredibly intentional, careful, well thought out initiative.

Participants 3 and 4 discussed how when job expectations recently changed to reflect a higher level of mandatory productivity, employees who were affected became upset with the changes. For years, standards were lower and poor performance was not always addressed. Now that employees were being held accountable to even higher standards, they felt like they were being unfairly treated.

Participant 2 referenced skill inadequacies with leaders who do not know how to hold employees accountable. It takes time to pay attention to an employee's work product and then be responsible for their results. Participant 3 shared how individual leaders set good examples for accountability. Leader reinforcement of accountability involved "celebrating…in a way that allows them [the employee] to see the benefits of holding themselves to a higher level of accountability" (Participant 3).

Holding employees accountable contributes to employee thriving. Ahmed Iqbal et al. (2021) found that when leaders demonstrated strong leadership and held employees accountable, it improved the employees' work experience. Alternatively, when leaders do not hold employees responsible, it creates suffering. A less engaged leader who does not keep employees' accountable harms the thriving of employees on their team. Similarly, Chupradit et al. (2022) found that a solid personal work ethic, where employees hold themselves accountable, produces improved productivity.

Setting/Clarifying Expectations

The five participants mentioned the importance of communicating and establishing clarity around expectations. Like many other themes and subthemes, the practice of creating expectation clarity for employees is discussed within the firm as a leadership best practice but is unevenly applied and inconsistent. Although some leaders do an excellent job building the necessary framework to help employees understand outcomes and performance metrics, most leaders do not. Participant 4 shared, "I think we do a pretty good job with creating clarity around expectations." However, Participant 2 shared a different perspective which came from their experience in coaching multiple leaders: "Every time a leader has reached out to me about, you know, missing an expectation, I'll say, talk to me about how you set the expectation…they could

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not [share the expectation]." Significant gaps exist between the intention and the execution of setting and clarifying the expectations.

When discussing how leaders need to ensure employees understand expectations, Participant 3 shared, "Providing people with the ability to understand clearly" was essential. Participant 1 also expressed their desire to improve in creating clarity: "Clarity is really important, and that's something I am trying to be better about." Leaders who are strong enough to set and clarify expectations for the employees reporting to them improve the employee's ability to perform work (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021). Ackermann et al. (2021) found that when explicit directions are provided to employees to understand the context of the work needed for performing well, higher quality outcomes for decisions are achieved.

Facilitating Productive Conversations

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 spoke about how a leader's ability to facilitate productive conversations improves work outcomes. Participants 3, 4, and 5 saw it as a practice that was well displayed. Participant 5 said, "[Leaders] enter feedback discussions where they are leading with curiosity. They [the leader] enter in where they are leading with curiosity and are fully attentive to and appreciative of the people [perspective]." In this example, a leader asks questions and discusses the differences in opinions.

Conversely, Participant 2 disagreed that leaders have the necessary skills to hold complex discussions with employees. Participant 2 said, "We're not having those types of conversations." Instead of exploring a complex topic and asking questions of their employees to engage in discussion, leaders "throw something out, and we go and don't evaluate" (Participant 2). Leaders are "uncomfortable managing dissent or different opinions" (Participant 2). Planning, mental preparation, and physical practice offer opportunities to enhance performance which may help

give a leader more confidence in facilitating conversations (Cuddy et al., 2015). A leader who engages in planning may be more "thoughtful about their role as a leader and their role in inviting and encouraging and valuing [divergent perspectives]" (Participant 2).

As reported by the study participants, the theme of coaching performance explained how a leader who practices basic, yet essential, management actions help employees perform, thrive, and grow. Although many leaders at the organization were noted as using the defined coaching performance actions, the steps were often inconsistent. A leader supports an employee's required performance through giving/receiving feedback, upholding accountability, setting/clarifying expectations, and facilitating productive conversations. Leaders who focus on how to help employees by giving better clarity of performance expectations and implementing improved accountability can benefit individual and collective employee engagement and productivity (Ahmed Iqbal, 2021; Church & Dawson, 2018; Cuddy, 2015; Pradhan et al., 2018).

Themes Summary

The data in the assorted themes and subthemes answered the research question: How are compassionate leadership behaviors encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace? For each category, examples of encouragement and discouragement were observed. The participants indicated encouragement of compassionate leadership behaviors 95 times, discouragement 81 times, and combined application (encouraged and discouraged together) five times. All five participants agreed that the behaviors were used inconsistently. Even so, leaders in the organization still desired to apply the behaviors more consistently. Some reasons for leaders not using the behaviors steadily included time constraints, lack of skill, fear of consequences, and ineffective leadership modeling. All participants described the organizational desire to improve compassionate leadership behaviors' reliability and positive application.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this case study revealed how compassionate leadership behaviors were applied in the workplace. Qualitative data provided examples of how the behaviors were encouraged and discouraged within the Am Law 100 law firm studied. Filtering the results through the theoretical framework of Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership theory helped explain the problems inherent when the divergence between a leader's intended and actual application of compassionate leadership is incongruent. Unreliable leadership practices diminish the centricity of a leader's focus on the individual, and the overall employee experience wains. Conversely, when a leader puts the employee first by following a servant leadership approach, the more people-focused method benefits the employee, improving productivity and engagement. An organization achieves consistent leadership practices by identifying and implementing the standards, procedures, training, criteria, and accountability needed for effective leadership.

One of the biggest challenges noted in the organization studied is the inconsistency of applying desired leadership practices. Defining leadership standards is a simple yet powerful step to provide guidelines to help leaders become more consistent in managing or supervising people. Human resource practitioners should partner with organizational leaders to research, clarify, and implement policies, standards, and procedures for how leaders interact with, support, and lead people to improve the employee experience. Creating standards would clarify roles and reduce confusion about acceptable practices for supervising, managing, and coaching employees.

Skill building is another critical area of focus. Training departments should partner with human resources and organizational leaders to build curriculums and associated scaffolding to evaluate, teach, develop, and allow for the practice of the defined standards. Human resource practitioners should establish the rewards and consequences surrounding leadership compliance.

The program should also include measurement and feedback mechanisms such as multi-rater assessments, employee engagement surveys, and department/employee productivity reports to provide data back to leaders. Coaching, mentoring, and remedial training should align with the learning program to enhance development or address corrections when goals are unmet or poor leadership performance occurs.

Cultural challenges make it difficult to change longstanding leadership behaviors. Top-level support is needed to affect improvement. Executive leadership must start by championing the new standards and processes. Companies should also consider creating communication campaigns to proclaim the critical nature of new leadership standards and sharing research studies and talent statistics to inform doubters about the importance of compassionate leadership on enterprise employee engagement and productivity.

The study contributed to the leadership development field by identifying opportunities to improve how managers and supervisors treat their employees to achieve high-value work. The study established the importance of consistent leadership practices through leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance. Future work focused on defining and measuring standards, developing effective skill-building programs, and addressing cultural challenges, if implemented, would support sustained leadership improvement.

Implications of the study extend beyond the Am Law 100 law firm examined. Leaders operate at various levels and positions throughout all organizations of society globally. Developing practices to improve compassionate leadership applies wherever leaders exist.

Study Limitations

As a result of this qualitative case study, valuable insight was gained into the compassionate leadership practices of the Am Law 100 law firm researched. One limitation is

that all data were collected from a small sample of five team members within the organization. Gathering data only from the sample participants' interviews ignored other sources and limited the study's generalizability.

A second limitation is the concentrated focus of the selected organization, an Am Law 100 law firm, which limited the generalizability to different industries. As explained in Chapter 1, an Am Law 100 law firm is an exclusive ranking of the top 100 law firms in the United States. Although similar in governance to other professional services firms, the unique characteristics of a more prominent law firm may vary significantly from firm to firm based on size, type of law practiced, and geographical location.

A third limitation is that the research was constrained by compassionate leadership behavior definitions as reported by Shuck et al. (2019). The constrained descriptions created a particular contextual framing for interviewees. Each respondent was asked to answer the questions according to the definitions provided to them. More than one respondent commented that they would not have defined the named behavior in the same way as defined in the Shuck et al. research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research involve replicating the study with other groups. Expanding the study within the same organization would involve selecting leaders from multiple departments and repeating procedures. Comparing data among different teams would enhance the reliability and validity of the research and provide greater credibility for firm leaders to buy in and support recommended actions to improve leadership. Duplicating the study in other law firms of similar size would enhance generalizability within the legal industry to support industry-specific development and collaboration among firms to generate improved leadership practices.

Future researchers should consider collecting additional data beyond interviews to better understand the cultural elements and artifacts related to existing leadership practices, such as competency models, performance review procedures, existing leadership training, reward and recognition programs, and compensation structures. The researcher should also consider adding a quantitative study to compare employee and leader perceptions of the applied behaviors.

Conclusion

Leaders hold a significant influence over the time an employee spends in the workplace. Effective leadership practices benefit the employee's experience, enhance trust, and improve employee confidence, whereas poor leadership creates suffering. A compassionate leader approaches managing people through a servant-leader mindset to support the employee and reduce workplace complexity. The leader prioritizes the employee over personal ego.

The current study presented a critical path for ensuring the consistent application of compassionate leadership behaviors, so they are encouraged more frequently than discouraged. Study participants indicated the aspirational aspect of how their workplace leaders desired to be good leaders—however, skill deficiencies, time limitations, and fear of consequences constrained achievement. Closing the gap between the desire for accomplishment requires leadership courage, growth mindset, empowerment, and coaching performance.

Establishing a culture that supports compassionate leadership requires a concerted effort to define standards, provide training, and enforce accountability. Most critical, longstanding change is infrequent without top-level leadership bravery to stand up for what is right and champion the importance of effective management practices. Without intentional and focused advocacy from senior leaders to enact and sustain change, efforts of human resources and training professionals remain futile. However, with the right sponsorship, programs can be

designed that allow leaders to become more compassionate to create workplaces where people

thrive.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Interview Subject: Exploring the Application of Compassionate Leadership Behaviors in the Workplace

Date: To Be Scheduled

Place: Virtual Meeting Room

Interviewer: Tracy Laurie

Interviewee: Perkins Coie Participant

Position of interviewee: Mid-Level Leadership Position

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how compassionate leadership behaviors are encouraged and/or discouraged in the workplace. At this stage in the research, compassionate leadership behaviors include integrity, accountability, presence, empathy, authenticity, and dignity (Shuck et al., 2019). The workplace studied will be an Am Law Top 100 law firm.

Definitions:

The following six definitions of compassionate leadership behaviors are paraphrased from and listed in the same order as provided in the research conducted by Shuck et al. (2019).

1. **Integrity:** A leader demonstrates integrity when they are open, transparent, and consistent in their words and actions. Leadership integrity involves carefully considering relevant criteria before making agreements, decisions, and assurances affecting the workforce and the business. Leaders with integrity are honest, fair, and sensible in their dealings with others; they follow through on promises made and are not afraid to admit mistakes.

2. **Accountability**: A leader demonstrates accountability when setting high-performance standards, creating clarity around expectations, and sharing productive feedback consistently. Leadership accountability involves holding others responsible for their work outcomes and having the courage needed to address difficult situations and performance challenges as they arise. Accountable leaders are not afraid to establish and carry out consequences of poor performance and appropriately provide rewards and incentives for good performance.

3. **Presence:** A leader demonstrates presence when fully attuned to, attentive to, and appreciative of other people and their wants and needs. Leadership presence involves the ability to remain focused on the needs of others while in social settings and during interpersonal interactions. Leaders with presence not only intentionally make themselves available, but they go out of their way to understand and authentically connect with and help others.

4. **Empathy**: A leader demonstrates empathy when they can reflect an understanding, caring, and awareness of another individual's situation or experience. Leadership empathy involves a leader placing themselves in the follower's shoes to consider alternate viewpoints and then acting accordingly to adjust the work situation as needed to improve results. An empathic leader actively tries to understand the whole person to gain valuable perspectives needed to enrich work quality, quantity, and social connectedness.

5. **Authenticity:** A leader demonstrates authenticity when they defer personal ego to show vulnerability and sincerity by sharing personal learnings, mistakes, challenges, and opportunities. Leadership authenticity reflects self-confidence and courage. Authentic leaders have a strong sense of purpose and are focused on doing the right thing instead of impressing others.

6. **Dignity**: A leader demonstrates dignity when displaying respect, acceptance, and appreciation for divergent thought and action. Leadership dignity involves encouraging, valuing, and promoting the individual and collective differences needed to create a fully diverse and inclusive environment. Leaders with dignity actively pursue creating a culture where people can bring their whole selves to work and are accepted, appreciated, and valued for who they are as individuals.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your experience with compassionate leadership?

2. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for integrity: How is integrity encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

3. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for accountability: How is accountability encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

4. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for presence: How is presence encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

5. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for empathy: How is empathy encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

6. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for authenticity: How is authenticity encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

7. Using the compassionate leadership definition provided for dignity: How is dignity encouraged and/or discouraged in your workplace? Please provide any specific examples that come to mind.

8. What else would you like to contribute from your experience with compassionate leadership in your workplace?

Thank you for your participation in the case study. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be shared with Southeastern University faculty who are supervising this project.