

**CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD**



**The Role of Empathy Management in Enhancing
Team Performance with Mediating Effects of
Stakeholder Engagement and Stakeholder
Management, and the Moderating Role of Top
Management Support in Pakistani Project
Based Organizations**

by

Ghulam Jaffar

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

in the

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*“This thesis is dedicated to my father, my mother,
my sisters, and all my well-wishers.”*



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Abstract

This research examines the influence of Empathy Management (EM) on Team Performance (TP) with emphasis on the mediating roles of Stakeholder Management (SM) and Stakeholder Engagement (SE) and the moderating role of Top Management Support (TMS) in Pakistani project-based organizations. This research is based on General Stakeholder Theory, emphasizing the absolute significance of stakeholder relationships in achievement of organizational success. Quantitative approach was used, and data were gathered from 389 project-based organization employees in Pakistan. Using Process Macro Model 83 in SPSS, a set of statistical tools—from descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, to mediation and moderation analysis—was utilized to test hypothesized hypotheses. Results show that Empathy Management has no direct effect on Team Performance. However, Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement act as mediators, supporting the hypothesis that empathy affects team effectiveness through systematic stakeholder relationships. In addition, Top Management Support was established as a moderator that affects the empathy-stakeholder management relationship, hence enhancing its indirect effect on performance outcomes. This research makes a substantial contribution to the theoretical frameworks by basing its arguments on General Stakeholder Theory, suggesting that empathetic leadership enhances stakeholder relationships but not team performance. It also provides prescriptive advice to organizations, suggesting that project managers adopt engagement activities based on empathy and are strongly supported by top management to realize maximum stakeholder alignment and team performance. Future research should extend its scope to include cross-cultural research and longitudinal research to validate these findings.

Keywords: Empathy Management (EM), Stakeholder Management (SM), Stakeholder Engagement (SE), Team Performance (TP), Top Management Support (TMS), General Stakeholder Theory.

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Abbreviations

DV	Dependent Variable
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EM	Empathy Management
HEC	Higher Education Commission
IV	Independent Variable
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (measure of sampling adequacy)
MS	Master of Science
PBOs	Project-Based Organizations
SE	Stakeholder Engagement
SM	Stakeholder Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TMS	Top Management Support
TP	Team Performance

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Empathy management has become a key part of modern project management, making a big impact on how teams work together and how they interact with stakeholders. Empathy management means intentionally using both emotional and cognitive empathy to understand and address what team members and stakeholders need. Emotional empathy is about actually sharing others' feelings, while cognitive empathy focuses on understanding someone else's viewpoint. Using both methods encourages honest communication, builds trust, and boosts teamwork, which improves leadership and helps project teams perform better ([Goleman, 2020](#)); ([Cicmil et al., 2006](#)).

When leaders manage their teams with empathy, they create trust and openness. Everyone feels respected and understood. This increases motivation and productivity, and helps teams work together and share new ideas. Empathy management also plays a key role in handling the different needs of stakeholders, making decisions smoother, and leading to stronger project results ([Rothouse, 2020](#)). However, empathy on its own may not lead to the best results. Top Management Support (TMS) is important because it offers guidance, resources, and authority. This support helps leaders use empathy management better, creating stronger connections with stakeholders and improving team performance ([Aga et al., 2016](#)).

Stakeholder management is vital for project success. It involves finding and understanding the people who affect or are affected by the project, then working with them. By using empathy management, project leaders can predict and meet stakeholder needs more effectively, which helps build teamwork and reduces conflicts. Studies show that empathy management brings stakeholder interests in line with project aims, resulting in better cooperation and more value (Eskerod et al., 2015); (Akgün et al., 2015). TMS boosts these efforts by giving enough support for stakeholder engagement, increasing trust and lowering resistance (Lloyd-Walker and Walker).

Empathy management enables project leaders to communicate more effectively with stakeholders by understanding their emotions and perspectives. Emotional empathy allows for connection on a personal level, while cognitive empathy facilitates alignment of stakeholder expectations with project goals. These approaches enhance trust, reduce resistance, and improve overall project performance (Davis, 2017). Furthermore, TMS strengthens these efforts by providing the necessary resources and strategic framework to ensure alignment of project goals with stakeholder needs (Chiocchio et al., 2012).

Empathy management helps with negotiation and conflict resolution by making stakeholders feel heard and appreciated. This leads to smoother project work and more stakeholder support (Karlsen, 2008); (Davis, 2017). TMS strengthens this process by providing the supportive framework leaders need to be effective. With this backing, empathetic leadership can boost stakeholder satisfaction and team performance, leading to better project outcomes (Aga et al., 2016).

Stakeholder engagement goes beyond basic management by involving people in decision-making. Empathy management supports this engagement by creating an environment where stakeholders feel important and empowered, which increases their commitment and accountability. Studies show that using empathy with stakeholders makes teamwork and decision-making better, which leads to stronger project outcomes (Silvius and Schipper, 2019). Empathy management also helps align project goals with different stakeholder interests, reducing conflicts and keeping things running smoothly (Conallin et al., 2017). TMS supports this approach

by providing the needed resources and focus to make stakeholder engagement a priority ([Chiocchio et al., 2012](#)).

Teams generally do better if they communicate well, cooperate effectively, and stay flexible when things change. Empathy makes a real difference in this process. When leaders genuinely care about their team members and understand how they feel, motivation goes up, creativity flourishes, and everyone becomes more resilient. TMS helps keep these positive conditions going by providing structure and guidance ([Rezvani et al., 2018](#)); ([Miao et al., 2018](#)).

Empathy management also makes it easier for teams to handle conflicts and cooperate more smoothly. Research shows that empathetic leaders can resolve personal issues faster, leading to stronger unity and better performance. Teams with empathetic leaders tend to show greater responsibility and commitment ([Mysirlaki and Paraskeva, 2020](#)). TMS adds another layer of help by offering clear goals, enough resources, and a shared vision, so teams can handle challenges effectively ([Müller and Turner, 2010](#)).

Empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance all connect to form the core of this theoretical framework. Empathy management is the key element that boosts both stakeholder and team processes, leading to better results. It helps project leaders bring in different viewpoints, lessen conflicts, and encourage teamwork ([Melita Prati et al., 2003](#)). TMS acts like a spark, adding resources and strategic support so empathy management can deliver top outcomes ([Handy, 1995](#)).

By focusing on empathy for both team interactions and stakeholder relationships, and getting support from TMS, project leaders can reach higher performance levels. Emotional intelligence, which relies on empathy management, becomes a major factor in keeping stakeholders satisfied and helping teams succeed ([Sergey et al.](#)).

1.2 Research Gap

Although many studies have explored empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, team performance, and top management support

(TMS) by themselves, there are still important gaps. We know empathy management helps improve team relationships and communication (Melita Prati et al., 2003); (Sergey et al.). But there isn't much research on how empathy management works as a mediator in a bigger model that includes stakeholder management, with TMS acting as a moderator. For example, most research focuses on empathy's impact inside the team, but not on how it helps connect teams with outside stakeholders—an important issue when projects involve many different stakeholders (DuBois et al., 2015). In a similar way, most studies on stakeholder engagement and management treat these topics separately, rather than looking at how they work together with TMS. Stakeholder management usually follows a task-based approach, focusing on project results but leaving out the emotional skills that help build strong relationships. As a result, we don't fully understand how empathy management can deepen stakeholder engagement by boosting commitment and participation beyond just basic collaboration. Also, there is limited research on how empathy-based engagement and TMS work together to improve team performance through active stakeholder participation (Bourne and Walker, 2005). Another gap emerges from the literature on project success, which tends to focus significantly on quantitative criteria such as completing deadlines, sticking to budgets, and satisfying stakeholders. While these measurements are clearly significant, they frequently overlook the qualitative aspects of project success, such as emotional intelligence, teamwork, and conflict resolution (Druskat and Wolff, 2001). Empathy management and top management support play an important role in these qualitative aspects, although they are under represented in current research. Empathetic leaders, for example, who have strong top management support are better able to mediate disagreements, increase team morale, and align team and stakeholder objectives. This element has not received much attention, since project management research continues to prefer transactional leadership models over transformational leadership (Müller and Turner, 2010).

Furthermore, modern projects feature increasingly complex stakeholder landscapes, including global, cross-functional teams and highly collaborative workspaces (Cicmil et al., 2006). However, typical project management solutions, which account for the

majority of current research, usually fail to address these issues. Although there is a growing need for empathetic communication and engagement approaches that cater to different stakeholder needs and dynamics, empirical research on how these strategies effect team performance and project success is limited (Aga et al., 2016). Despite TMS's acceptance as an important success component, empirical research on its link with empathy-driven stakeholder involvement and team performance is sparse (Zwikael, 2008). This gap is particularly significant given the evolving nature of project environments, where soft skills such as empathy management, supported by strong top management, are becoming increasingly crucial to managing complex stakeholder relationships (Bendoly et al., 2012).

Addressing these research gaps is crucial for developing theoretical models of empathy management in project management and offering practical, evidence-based assistance to project managers. Creating a holistic model that includes empathy management, stakeholder management, and engagement procedures will provide more insight into how teams may improve performance through emotional intelligence. Future study should investigate the dual function of empathy in internal team dynamics and external stakeholder interactions, as well as how these elements work together to improve project success.

1.3 Problem Statement

In today's dynamic project-based environments, teams often struggle to meet performance expectations due to misaligned stakeholder interests, poor engagement, and weak interpersonal coordination. While organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of stakeholder management and emotional intelligence, project managers still lack a clear, structured approach to integrating empathy-driven leadership and top management support (TMS) into stakeholder processes to boost team performance. Although empathy management is known to foster trust and improve communication, its strategic role in enhancing stakeholder management and engagement—both

critical to project success—has not been fully explored or applied in practice. Similarly, the role of Top Management Support as a moderator that can empower project teams and improve stakeholder alignment remains under-investigated. This results in lost opportunities to enhance collaboration, reduce conflict, and elevate team performance.

Compounding the problem is the lack of empirical data and validated models that quantify the combined effects of empathy management and TMS on stakeholder dynamics and team output. Without such data, project leaders are left without actionable frameworks or evidence-based strategies to manage emotionally complex stakeholder environments effectively.

This persistent gap in practice and evidence highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive understanding of how empathy and leadership support interact with stakeholder dynamics to influence team performance — a critical area that remains insufficiently addressed in project environments.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to investigate the relationships between Empathy Management (EM), Stakeholder Management (SM), Stakeholder Engagement (SE), Team Performance (TP), and the moderating role of Top Management Support (TMS) within project-based environments. These questions align with the conceptual framework and findings discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, ensuring a structured exploration of these interactions:

1. Does empathy management positively influence stakeholder management in project teams?
2. Does stakeholder management mediate stakeholder engagement within project teams?
3. Does stakeholder engagement mediate the relationship between empathy management and team performance?

4. Does Top Management Support (TMS) moderate the relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management?
5. Does Top Management Support (TMS) moderate the indirect relationship between empathy management and team performance via stakeholder engagement? engagement?

These research questions aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of how empathy-driven leadership impacts stakeholder relationships and team performance while considering the role of top management in shaping these interactions.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to assess the moderating influence of Top Management Support (TMS) while investigating the effects of Empathy Management on stakeholder relationships and team performance. The study aims to shed light on how management, stakeholder engagement, and overall team performance are impacted by empathy-driven leadership.

1.5.1 Understanding the Role of Empathy Management in Project Teams

This study explores how empathy management shapes team dynamics and stakeholder relationships by analyzing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive empathy traits that promote inclusion and collaboration for project success.

1.5.2 Evaluating Stakeholder Management Practices

The study evaluates how stakeholder management practices align interests with project goals and how empathy contributes to conflict mitigation and engagement during the project lifecycle.

1.5.3 Investigating Stakeholder Engagement and Its Role in Project Success

This objective examines how stakeholder management fosters engagement, and how empathy-driven techniques improve stakeholder participation, alignment, and project outcomes.

1.5.4 Examining the Mediating Role of Stakeholder Engagement

This objective focuses on how stakeholder engagement mediates the link between empathy management and team performance by amplifying trust, innovation, and collaboration.

1.5.5 Assessing the Moderating Role of Top Management Support (TMS)

The study explores how TMS moderates the effect of empathy on stakeholder relationships and team performance, and how leadership support strengthens empathy-based strategies.

1.5.6 Identifying Practical Implications and Best Practices

This research aims to propose practical empathy-led leadership approaches and stakeholder strategies to support sustained performance in dynamic project-based environments.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study arises from its potential contribution to the theory and practice of empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, team performance, and the moderating role of Top Management Support

(TMS) in project management. This study seeks to provide substantial insights into these critical areas, resulting in a better understanding of how empathy, leadership, and stakeholder relationships influence project success and business performance.

This case study is offering a very thorough and intensive comprehension of how the leader's empathy of using TMS can lead to better results of the interaction with all the involved parties and team work. The result of this study which is valuable is the implementation of a leadership approach which links empathy to stakeholder management. The study gives the leader the proper tools to develop a proper communication through good team management and understanding of each other. Therefore, the project will be executed much smoother and better. In environments where there are many different teams and numerous stakeholder networks, empathy recognizable leadership may play a significant role in the resolving of conflicts and in the establishment of the trust with clients who will then be more compliant with the project delivery. The emergence of particular findings can be very resourceful to the leaders as they are empowered to get a grasp of empathy-driven leadership, one which would be equally as effective for both internal team dynamics and external stakeholder relationships. Not only does this make the team stronger, but it also betters the quality of stakeholder interactions, which in turn is a major determinant of the project's success and the overall growth of the organization.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates how empathy in leadership promotes a more beneficial and psychologically safe workplace for both employees and stakeholders. Organizations that foster a culture of emotional intelligence may improve well-being, minimize burnout, and increase work satisfaction. This, in turn, leads to increased staff retention and lower turnover rates, so improving overall organizational stability. The study also investigates the direct association between empathetic leadership and employee happiness. Employees who feel heard and understood by their leaders and stakeholders are more engaged and motivated, resulting in better job performance and organizational loyalty.

In terms of team performance, this study demonstrates how the combination of empathetic management and effective stakeholder involvement boosts productivity and efficiency within project teams. Empathy-driven leadership promotes greater

communication, trust, and cooperation, which leads to increased team performance and enhances the chance of project success. Furthermore, the findings offer organizations significant insights into creating tailored development programs to strengthen empathic capacities and stakeholder management skills. These programs will help teams negotiate complicated project contexts with more cohesiveness and efficacy, leading to increased team productivity.

The study also contributes to corporate culture by underlining the necessity of cultivating an environment that values empathy, diversity, and stakeholder involvement. An organizational culture that values these characteristics fosters an atmosphere in which employees feel appreciated, heard, and actively participated, therefore improving both individual and collective performance. Furthermore, an inclusive culture that incorporates empathy management and stakeholder involvement promotes innovation, creativity, and problem-solving skills, all of which are critical for long-term organizational success. This study recommends a shift in organizational norms to foster emotional intelligence and stakeholder-centered initiatives, ensuring that organizations remain adaptive and lucrative in the future.

Finally, this study advances academic research by addressing gaps in the current literature on the relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, and team performance. It provides a more comprehensive and integrated model that investigates how various factors interact, particularly in complex project-based situations. The approach proposed in this study lays the groundwork for future research into empathy-driven leadership models, stakeholder management strategies, and the role of Top Management Support (TMS) in enhancing project outcomes. By providing a more complete knowledge of these processes, the study lays the road for future research on how empathy impacts leadership behaviors and organizational success.

1.7 Under Pinning Theory

The proposed theoretical framework of this study is grounded in General Stakeholder Theory free ([Freeman et al., 2010](#)), which maintains that organizational success is

largely

dependent on the ability to understand and address the needs and expectations of various stakeholder groups, rather than focusing exclusively on shareholder interests. This theory promotes a broader and more inclusive approach to value creation, where the active involvement of stakeholders contributes directly to achieving project objectives and long-term sustainability (Mok et al., 2015). Within project-based environments, particularly in sectors marked by complexity and rapid change, Stakeholder Theory offers a valuable lens for understanding the dynamic relationships between leadership behavior, stakeholder interactions, and team outcomes (Mok et al., 2015). A central component of the proposed model is Empathy Management, which serves as the independent variable. Empathy in leadership is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and respond to the emotions and concerns of others in a thoughtful and constructive manner. Leaders who demonstrate high levels of empathy are often more effective at building trust, facilitating inclusive dialogue, and resolving conflicts. In the context of stakeholder-oriented project environments, empathy enables leaders to develop stronger relationships with stakeholders, resulting in higher levels of engagement, collaboration, and commitment (Muss et al., 2025); (Vallette d’Osia and Meier, 2024); (Goleman, 2020). Recent evidence suggests that empathetic leadership fosters trust and positive emotional climates within teams, which in turn improve team cohesion, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall project performance (A’yuninnisa et al., 2024); (Muss et al., 2025).

Top Management Support (TMS) plays a pivotal role in reinforcing the effects of empathy management. TMS refers to the active involvement of senior leadership in providing strategic guidance, allocating resources, and aligning projects with organizational priorities. When empathy is present in top leadership, it contributes to a culture of openness, trust, and psychological safety. Empirical studies show that emotionally intelligent leaders significantly influence team performance and stakeholder relationships through improved communication and leadership effectiveness (A’yuninnisa et al., 2024); (Sun et al., 2024).

In this framework, Stakeholder Management functions as a mediating variable. It involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing stakeholders, and

maintaining ongoing communication to align project outcomes with stakeholder expectations. Empathy plays a critical role in this process by allowing leaders to better understand stakeholder perspectives and respond appropriately to concerns. Leaders who practice empathy are more capable of managing stakeholder relationships in a way that fosters trust, loyalty, and shared ownership (Mitchell et al., 1997).

The model also incorporates Stakeholder Engagement as a second mediating variable. Unlike stakeholder management, which is often strategic and operational, engagement emphasizes the depth and quality of stakeholder involvement in decision-making and project co-creation. Empathetic leaders are more likely to personalize engagement strategies based on stakeholder needs, thereby enhancing collaboration and shared commitment. This inclusive approach fosters stronger stakeholder alignment and increases the likelihood of project success (Greenwood, 2007).

Finally, Team Performance is the dependent variable and represents the ultimate outcome of the proposed model. High-performing teams exhibit strong communication, adaptability, and collaboration—traits that are influenced by empathetic leadership and effective stakeholder interactions. When empathy management is combined with stakeholder-centered practices and is supported by top management, teams are more likely to function cohesively, remain motivated, and achieve intended results. A growing body of research confirms that emotionally intelligent and empathetic environments contribute to enhanced creativity, productivity, and accountability at the team level (Goleman, 2020); (A'yuninnisa et al., 2024).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Literature

Team performance is a critical driver of organizational success, particularly in projects that need collaboration among several stakeholders. Existing research has thoroughly examined factors that impact team performance, such as leadership styles, communication tactics, and stakeholder management strategies (Mitchell et al., 1997); (Bourne and Walker, 2005). However, little research has been conducted on the integration of empathy management into leadership frameworks and its influence on team performance through stakeholder management and engagement. The current study presents a model that examines the role of empathy management as an independent variable (IV) in influencing team performance as a dependent variable (DV) through stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement. This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by integrating these characteristics into a cohesive framework that emphasizes their interconnection and cumulative influence on project success.

Empathy management is the strategic ability of leaders to empathize, understand, and respond to team members' and stakeholders' feelings and concerns, a core aspect of emotional intelligence (Davis, 1983); (Goleman, 1998). Empathy management-achieved leaders can establish a culture of cooperation and trust, which has been shown to improve team morale, reduce conflict, and optimize overall team functioning (Boyatzis et al., 2000); (Kellett et al., 2002).

Empathy management has not only been shown to enhance interpersonal relationships but also to be a key component in managing complex stakeholder relationships (Mahsud et al., 2010). Effective empathy management results in improved decision-making, participative leadership, and coordination of conflicting stakeholder objectives, all predictors of high team performance (Goleman, 2020). The findings aside, the immediate processes through which empathy management affects team performance—i.e., stakeholder management and participation—have not been extensively researched, and that is what this study aims to address.

Stakeholder management involves identification, analysis, and solving of issues and needs of affected people or groups by organizational activities (Mitchell et al., 1997). Successful stakeholder management facilitates the integration of various interests with project objectives, reduces conflict, and facilitates cooperation (Bourne and Walker, 2005).

Empathy management is central to improving stakeholder management because it allows leaders to deal with conflicting priorities with some foresight and sensitivity. Empathy allows leaders to build trust and develop long-term relationships with stakeholders, thus creating a context for successful collaboration and project success (Harrison et al., 2010). The specific mechanisms by which empathy management influences stakeholder management practices, however, remain to be studied, and this study aims to explore them.

Stakeholder engagement is the direct involvement of stakeholders during decision-making stages and subsequent implementation phases (Greenwood, 2007). In comparison to stakeholder management with its emphasis on goal coordination and conflict resolution, engagement is founded on the requirement for inclusivity and cooperation, resulting in ownership of project outcomes (Golob and Podnar, 2014).

Empirical studies have established that higher levels of stakeholder engagement are associated with better project outcomes and team performance (Freeman et al., 2010). Leaders possessing empathy management skills are able to significantly increase stakeholder engagement by creating inclusive settings where stakeholders feel valued and recognized (Greenwood, 2007). Empirical studies on the effects

of empathy management on engagement—namely, team performance—are still limited, and hence further studies are required. Team performance is the degree to which a team is successful in its quest for goals in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of output (Kozłowski and Ilgen, 2006). High-performing teams are marked by high cohesion, open communication, and shared goal commitment (Hackman, 1987); (Davis, 1983).

Literature highlights the strong impact of leadership, stakeholder management, and stakeholder engagement on team performance (Harrison et al., 2010). Leaders who are able to manage stakeholder relationships and foster engagement are likely to resolve conflicts, align goals, and deliver superior results (Achterkamp and Vos, 2008). This study adds to these works by investigating the mediating roles of stakeholder management and engagement in the relationship between empathy management and team performance.

The relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance is complex and multifaceted. Empathy management enhances stakeholder management by helping leaders to align stakeholder interests with project objectives. It encourages stakeholder participation by creating inclusive, collaborative environments. Together, these mediating characteristics boost empathy management's favorable impact on team performance, resulting in increased efficiency, effectiveness, and project success (Harrison et al., 2010); (Mitchell et al., 1997). This integrated framework serves as the foundation for the assumptions presented in the following section.

2.2 Hypothesis Development

2.2.1 Empathy Management and Team Performance

Empathy management, or the systematic process of understanding, managing, and capitalizing on empathetic engagement among team members, has become a critical leadership skill in contemporary organizational environments. High empathy management leaders build trust, collaboration, and psychological safety, all of which

are critical to high team performance (Keusters et al., 2024). Empathetic leaders create an inclusive and compassionate corporate culture in which employees feel valued, engaged, and committed to shared goals (Müller and Turner, 2010). Empathy management is ultimately vital for improving communication quality and reducing workplace conflicts, which are both required for positive team dynamics and cohesion (Ewin et al., 2021). Empirical evidence has proven that highly empathetic management leaders allow teams to respond to complex problems with higher adaptability, with the effect of maximizing diverse perspectives to create innovative solutions. This element is critically important in high-stress working environments, where the capacity to grasp the emotional and cognitive states of team members directly influences the effectiveness of decision-making and problem-solving (Dolamore et al., 2021).

Besides, empathic leadership is linked with higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction, which boost team morale and productivity in the long run (Subramanian et al., 2024). Compassionate leadership is likely to have more cohesiveness, resilient, and creative problem-solving teams, which boost team performance (Corazza et al., 2024). Furthermore, research on stakeholder engagement shows that empathy-driven leadership improves not just internal teams but also external partnerships, boosting project execution and organizational outcomes (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). Given the importance of empathy management in improving team performance, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H—₁: Empathy management is positively associated with team performance.

2.2.2 Stakeholder Management and Team Performance

Stakeholder management is an important driver of team performance, particularly in project-oriented environments where collaboration among several stakeholders is essential. Successful stakeholder management requires identifying, assessing, and matching stakeholder expectations with project goals, which leads to more efficient workflows and team efficiency (Ebekozién et al., 2024). Organizations that excel at stakeholder management foster trust, transparency, and collaboration, all of which lead to greater team commitment and engagement (Corazza et al., 2024).

Stakeholder management promotes team effectiveness in several ways, including limiting external interference and aligning the interests of diverse players. Research indicates that when stakeholder expectations are well-communicated and well-managed, teams are less likely to experience conflicts, have increased motivation, and exhibit increased operational efficiency (Moreira et al., 2024). Stakeholder management-conscious leaders provide an environment where teams can concentrate on their goals without distraction from external pressures, ultimately translating to increased project success rates (Ebekoziem et al., 2024).

Stakeholder management is also a critical conflict resolution and decision-making tool, ensuring that various interests do not undermine team performance. Research indicates that active engagement of stakeholders and open communication channels prevent misunderstandings and project delays (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). In situations where stakeholder expectations have a direct impact on team operations, leaders who prioritize cooperative stakeholder management foster environments that enhance team cohesiveness, adaptability, and productivity (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Empirical research shows that teams functioning in businesses with strong stakeholder management strategies obtain greater levels of project success and performance metrics. For example, successful stakeholder engagement leads to better resource availability, better risk management, and higher alignment with organizational objectives, all of which lead to higher team efficiency (Lin et al., 2024). By removing external obstacles and creating strong stakeholder relationships, leaders enable teams to perform better, innovate more easily, and recover from setbacks (Walrave et al., 2024). Because of the significant role of stakeholder management in team performance, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: *Stakeholder management is positively associated with team performance.*

2.2.3 Mediating Role of Stakeholder Management

Empathy management is an important leadership ability that encourages collaboration, trust, and participation within the organization. Leaders who have higher levels of empathy not only build close relationships with their teams but also effectively manage the interacting stakeholders outside of the organization (Keusters

et al., 2024). Empathy-based leadership will result in leaders that understand stakeholder issues, address expectations proactively, and provide a collaborative environment for successful stakeholder engagement and management (Müller and Turner, 2010).

However, the direct influence of empathy management on team performance is frequently mitigated by the success of stakeholder management. Stakeholder management acts as a bridge between empathy-driven leadership and improved team performance, ensuring that stakeholder expectations are aligned with project goals and that external pressures are minimized (Ebekozién et al., 2024). Leaders who employ empathy when dealing with stakeholders are more effective in building trust, dealing with conflicts, and getting people on board to create a more effective team (Corazza et al., 2024).

Empirical research has proven that leaders who exercise empathy management perform well in stakeholder relations, and thus the stakeholder's alignment with the objectives of the team is higher. Research has shown that when the leader proactively manages stakeholder expectations through empathetic engagement, the chances of project success and team cohesion increase by a huge margin (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). Furthermore, research into stakeholder management effectiveness indicates that clear communication, participative decision-making, and conflict resolution efforts-all essential parts of empathy-based leadership-are positively associated with stakeholder support for team projects (Moreira et al., 2024).

Therefore, stakeholder management becomes one of the critical steps that can make empathic leadership quantifiable outputs of the performance of a team. Leaders who effectively control stakeholder expectations and concerns can create a work environment in which teams pay attention to productivity, innovation, and teamwork without unnecessary disturbances (Chatterjee et al., 2024). In other words, stakeholder management reduces stakeholder-related uncertainties and enables organizations to ensure the smooth collaboration of teams and other external parties while maximizing the positive impact of empathy management on team performance.

Given the mediating role of stakeholder management, the following hypothesis is advanced.

H3: *Stakeholder management mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.*

2.2.4 Moderating Role of Top Management Support

Top management support, for quite some time now, has been perceived as an element that impacts organizational initiatives success especially in more complicated processes such as stakeholder management (Siddiqui et al., 2024). TMS simply refers to the involvement, acceptance, and even support offered by top management; this in itself directly influences how managerial practices would be implemented as well as be effective or otherwise (Lin et al., 2024). According to research, TMS enhances the influence of leadership styles, including transformational and empathetic leadership, on organizational performance, stakeholder involvement, and team performance (Chatterjee et al., 2024).

In the case of empathy management, TMS plays an important moderating function by assisting in the deployment of empathy-driven stakeholder management initiatives. Empathy management is the process of identifying and fulfilling stakeholders' emotional and relational needs, creating trust-based interactions, and ensuring stakeholder satisfaction (Keusters et al., 2024). In any event, the efficacy of empathetic management is decided by the level of support provided by higher management. Leaders are more likely to apply empathetic stakeholder management strategies in organizations where senior leadership actively supports and encourages empathy-based engagement (Ebekozién et al., 2024). When TMS is inadequate or inconsistent, leaders may fail to implement empathy-based solutions effectively, reducing their positive impact on stakeholder relationships and organizational performance (Müller and Turner, 2010).

Top management's support is, therefore, highly likely to further enhance the correlation between empathy management and stakeholder management because, in addition to strategic direction and vital resources, it also sets a culture regarding empathy in top leadership (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). Senior leaders encourage and

implement practices of empathy during organizational policies further help midlevel leaders to adequately address stakeholder concerns, make open communication effectively, and get disputes resolved through effective means too (Corazza et al., 2024). In the absence of such organizational support, even the leaders with a very good management skill for empathy will be structurally and resource-relatedly constrained to not engage their stakeholders appropriately (Walrave et al., 2024). Hence, TMS is an essential moderator that decides whether the link between empathy management and stakeholder management is enhanced or constrained. If TMS is high, then leaders would have a better opportunity to leverage empathy-driven strategies, thereby securing greater stakeholder relationships and higher subsequent team performance. When TMS is low, the positive impacts of empathy management on stakeholder management may have a tendency to be weakened, resulting in weaker stakeholder alignment and lower organizational efficiency.

Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: *The relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management is moderated by top management support, such that the relationship is stronger when top management support is high.*

2.2.5 Moderated Mediation Effect of Top Management Support

Empathy management is a critical leadership competency that enables leaders to understand stakeholder emotions, anticipate concerns, and foster trust-based relationships. When effectively implemented, empathy management enhances stakeholder engagement and collaboration, leading to better organizational outcomes (Keusters et al., 2024). However, the extent to which empathy management successfully influences stakeholder relationships is often dependent on broader organizational factors, particularly top management support (TMS).

Top management support (TMS) is an aspect of how strategic commitment and resource allocation of senior executives positively reinforce organizational practice (Lin et al., 2024). Previous studies imply that TMS is a primary enabler in the

success of leadership strategies especially in complex interactions with stakeholders. In the sense of empathy management, TMS augments the effect of empathy-based leadership in stakeholder management by instilling the appropriate amount of structural, financial, and strategic resources for engagement efforts (Ebekozien et al., 2024).

Top management actively promotes empathetic organizational culture, and hence leaders at every level are facilitated to implement the stakeholder management strategies based on empathy effectively. This reinforcement helps in creating an environment where the engagement of stakeholders is more robust, leading to stronger collaboration and trust (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). Conversely, in cases where TMS is deficient or inconsistent, the ability of leaders to apply empathy-driven engagement strategies is reduced, which subsequently reduces stakeholder responsiveness and the adaptability of the organization (Corazza et al., 2024).

Moreover, TMS moderates the mediating effect of stakeholder management on the relationship between empathy management and team performance. That is, when TMS is high, the link between empathy management, stakeholder management, and team performance is significantly strengthened. Leaders are better able to engage stakeholders, align interests with team objectives, and create a more stable and productive team environment (Walrave et al., 2024). In contrast, when TMS is weak, stakeholder management may not function effectively as envisioned, causing a potential mismatch between stakeholder expectations and team goals, making team performance very weak (Müller and Turner, 2010). This makes empathy management-TMS interaction even a more efficient process of stakeholder management that directly leads to effective team performance. This suggests the criticality of TMS to amplify sequential impact of empathy management on the performance of the teams through the stakeholders.

On that basis, here is what has been developed:

H5: *The relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management is positively moderated by top management support, such that the positive effect of empathy management on stakeholder management is stronger when top management support is high.*

2.2.6 Relationship between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management

Empathetic management is a sophisticated leadership ability that enhances stakeholder relationships through partnership, mutual understanding, and trust. Sophisticated empathetic management capability leaders have a higher ability to understand stakeholder issues, actively respond to their expectations, and create collaborative engagement strategies (Keusters et al., 2024). Empirical findings suggest that stakeholder management effectiveness is significantly enhanced by empathetic leadership because the synergy enables organizations to align stakeholder interests with strategic objectives while, at the same time, reducing conflict and resistance (Müller and Turner, 2010).

Stakeholder management involves identification, prioritization, and engagement of stakeholders to align their interests with the organizational goals (Freeman et al., 2010). Integration of empathy into stakeholder management practices allows the leader to use their competence to build trust-based relationships, enhance the efficacy of communication, and reveal a long-term commitment to the stakeholders (Ebekozién et al., 2024). Empirical research shows that leaders who apply high levels of empathy in practice attain enhanced performance in stakeholder expectation management that leads to a stable project and alignment towards organizational goals (Marcon Nora et al., 2023).

Secondly, empathetic leaders create open communication channels and inclusive decision-making structures, which are critical to effective stakeholder engagement (Corazza et al., 2024). Research has shown that stakeholder management program success is greatly enhanced when leaders engage in active empathetic behavior, leading to long-term stakeholder satisfaction and commitment to the success of the project (Moreira et al., 2024). Finally, leaders with greater empathetic stakeholder management capability are more effective in conflict resolution, reducing resistance to change, and ensuring that stakeholder concerns are well addressed (Walrave et al., 2024).

Therefore, the relationship between stakeholder management and empathy management is crucial to improve organizational performance. Leadership sets up

collaborative cultures that facilitate continuous stakeholder engagement and successful project achievement by sensing, articulating, and integrating the stakeholder needs into the decision-making process (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: *Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder management.*

2.2.7 Relationship Between Stakeholder Engagement and Team Performance

Stakeholder engagement is a key determinant of team performance, especially in project environments, where decision-making, collaboration, and stakeholder alignment are success drivers (Ebekoziem et al., 2024). Stakeholder engagement refers to the active involvement of stakeholders in decision-making and project work, in a way that their interests are converged with organizational and team objectives (Freeman, 2010). Engaged stakeholders provide quality resources, inputs, and feedback, and this increases team efficiency and project success (Marcon Nora et al., 2023).

Research has confirmed that teams perform best when stakeholders are actively engaged in project work. Research has confirmed that stakeholder engagement promotes trust, transparency, and goal convergence, resulting in better collaboration and lower organizational conflict (Corazza et al., 2024). In addition, engaged stakeholders provide key inputs enabling teams to cope better with project setbacks, with strategically guided decisions based on high-quality information and aligned with macro-organizational objectives (Moreira et al., 2024).

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement has a positive effect on team motivation and unity, as it instills a culture of responsibility and accountability (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Teams operating in highly engaged stakeholder contexts have improved morale, greater resistance to project setbacks, and increased adaptability (Walrave et al., 2024). This is due to the fact that inclusively involved and valued stakeholders are likely to assist the team's work, minimizing resistance and improving overall project implementation (Lin et al., 2024).

The effect of stakeholder engagement on team performance is most pronounced in dynamic, high-stakes contexts, where teams need to constantly adapt their strategy according to stakeholder feedback and expectations. Empirical studies show that firms that prioritize stakeholder participation obtain greater levels of team performance, improved innovation, and long-term project success (Siddiqui et al., 2024). Organizations may build a high-performance team environment that produces long-term outcomes by reducing external distractions, ensuring strategy consistency, and utilizing stakeholder expertise (Müller and Turner, 2010).

Based on this relationship, the following theory is proposed:

H7: *Stakeholder engagement is positively associated with team performance.*

2.2.8 Relationship Between Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement are mutually dependent processes that have a significant impact on organizational success, especially in team-oriented and project-oriented settings. Stakeholder management entails the identification, analysis, and alignment of stakeholder interests with organizational objectives, ensuring the strategic management of key stakeholder relationships to reduce conflicts and enhance collaboration (Freeman, 2010); (Mitchell et al., 1997). On the other hand, stakeholder engagement is concerned with involving stakeholders actively in decision-making, enhancing transparency, and establishing trust to improve participation (Greenwood, 2007). Proper stakeholder management is critical to obtaining effective stakeholder engagement, as it sets the stage for effective collaboration and long-term stakeholder commitment (Ebekozi et al., 2024).

Organizations may increase stakeholder participation by using effective stakeholder management techniques. According to the study, when stakeholders believe their interests are being properly managed, they are more likely to actively participate in organizational activities and projects (Moreira et al., 2024). For example, detailed stakeholder identification and prioritization processes guarantee that engagement

tactics are targeted to individual needs, resulting in increased participation and collaboration (Corazza et al., 2024). Transparent communication and conflict resolution methods increase stakeholder confidence, enabling for ongoing engagement and commitment to team performance (Marcon Nora et al., 2023).

Furthermore, effective stakeholder management enables stakeholder engagement through the encouragement of an inclusive culture and collaborative decision-making. Research shows that organizations that actively integrate stakeholder input into decision-making processes involve higher engagement, trust, and cooperation (Lin et al., 2024). Research shows that stakeholders who believe that management is responsive to their needs are more likely to contribute meaningfully to team and project objectives, encouraging alignment of stakeholder expectations and organizational outcomes (Siddiqui et al., 2024).

This is particularly critical in dynamic organizational environments where stakeholder interactions directly affect project execution and long-term performance. By ensuring that stakeholder concerns are systematically addressed and expectations are aligned with team objectives, leaders can create an engagement-driven culture that maximizes stakeholder participation and commitment (Müller and Turner, 2010).

The above relationship brings forth the following hypothesis:

H8: *Stakeholder management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.*

2.2.9 Mediating Role of Stakeholder Engagement

Empathy management is a very vital leadership competence because it instils trust, teamwork, and commitment from the stakeholder; it is one of the important enablers for effective stakeholder engagement. Empathetic leaders are much better at resolving stakeholders' issues while ensuring that information is communicated appropriately and inclusive in decision-making (Müller and Turner, 2010). Open communication and trust-based relationships that empathetic leaders foster enhance the participation of the stakeholders, resulting in stronger alignment with organizational objectives (Marcon Nora et al., 2023).

However, the impact of empathy management on team performance is often intermediated by stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement refers to active participation by stakeholders in decision-making and project implementation in such a way that the interests of the stakeholders are integrated with organizational priorities (Greenwood, 2007). A research study indicates that empathetic leadership has the effect of increasing stakeholder engagement because the stakeholders feel valued, heard, and included in the decision-making process (Moreira et al., 2024). It develops more commitment, resource sharing, and long-term collaboration-all of which enhance team performance (Ebekozi et al., 2024).

Engaged stakeholders also bring the much-needed value input, resource access, and strategic support that facilitate more effective working. Evidence shows that stakeholder engagement lowers resistance, improves trust, and aligns external contributions with the team's internal objectives, which maximize the productivity of teams and overall success of the project (Corazza et al., 2024). More importantly, engaged stakeholders give constructive feedback and work in furthering the initiatives of the team while enhancing organizational resilience as well as its ability to adapt (Lin et al., 2024).

Thus, stakeholder engagement is a mediating factor that converts empathy-driven leadership into tangible team performance improvements. Leaders who can successfully engage stakeholders through empathy management practices create an environment at work that encourages teamwork, reduces conflict, and makes teams effective (Walrave et al., 2024).

With this relationship, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: *Stakeholder engagement mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.*

2.2.10 Relation between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Engagement

Some significant leadership skill has associated empathy management with considerably well higher stakeholder engagement on bases of trust, inclusion, and meaning.

The good empathy leader can very easily highlight the problems involving the stakeholders, be proactive in providing solutions in handling expectations, and create settings for the value of the stakeholders' voices to be heard (Keusters et al., 2024). Stakeholder engagement can be referred to as the active participation of a stakeholder in the decision-making process so that his or her interests are brought in conformity with project and organizational objectives (Greenwood, 2007). Research has indicated that leaders who practice empathy during stakeholder interaction increase commitment, collaboration, and long-term involvement from the stakeholders (Müller and Turner, 2010).

Empathy management mainly enables better stakeholder engagement by helping promote open communication and trust. Leaders who express empathy encourage their stakeholders to become active and constructively engaged; hence, more resistance is expected to be reduced, and more cooperation is to be improved, according to various research studies (Ebekozen et al., 2024). Additionally, empathetic leaders offer participatory decision-making, where the views of stakeholders are well represented in organizational strategy (Moreira et al., 2024). This enhances stakeholder alignment with the project objectives, and it is a factor that enhances greater organizational adaptability and resilience (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). In addition, empathetic leadership increases stakeholder engagement by developing emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. Studies indicate that stakeholders who view leaders as empathetic are more likely to trust organizational decisions, provide valuable feedback, and commit to long-term collaboration (Corazza et al., 2024). More harmony and engagement-driven culture is yielded from organizations using empathy-driven stakeholder management and will eventually contribute to better involvement and commitment (Chatterjee et al., 2024).

In dynamic, project-based environments, the relationship between empathy management and stakeholder engagement is quite critical. Stakeholder alignment is what differs sometimes to successfully carry out and complete projects. Leaders who make sure stakeholders are included and hear them out create a collaborative ecosystem that encourages innovation, mitigates conflict, and maximizes engagement (Lin et al., 2024).

Given the above relationship, the hypothesis is:

H10: *Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.*

2.2.11 Sequential Mediated Relationship Between Empathy Management, Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Engagement, and Team Performance

Empathy management forms the basis of the shape designed for stakeholder relationships, which then goes on to influence the shape of performance designed for teams as a sequential mediation process involving both stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement. Trust, inclusivity, and proactive communication form the right foundation instilled by empathetic leaders to ensure effective stakeholder management (Müller and Turner, 2010). Application of empathy in stakeholder interaction could help the leaders align stakeholder expectations, neutralize hostility, and enhance cooperation. All these ways help to strengthen stakeholder management practices (Ebekozi et al., 2024).

Stakeholder management, on the other hand increases stakeholder involvement because well-formulated stakeholder strategies ensure that stakeholders are involved in decision-making, project implementation, and organizational processes (Greenwood, 2007). Followed with good practice on stakeholder management, makes stakeholders become effective because good stakeholder management enhances proper flow of channels in communication, along with trust held by both parties. This gives a greater level of commitment for the stakeholders and resource contribution in order to acquire the objectives presented in front of the project with high alignment set forth (Corazza et al., 2024).

Moreover, stakeholder engagement bridges the two concepts of stakeholder management and team performance through more cooperation, better decision-making, and stronger support systems for teams (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). Some research findings have suggested that teams operating in organizations that emphasize stakeholder engagement are also more efficient, their goals better aligned, and projects more likely to be successful (Lin et al., 2024). Engaged stakeholders provide critical insights, reduce external resistance, and help teams navigate challenges

more effectively, thereby reinforcing team adaptability and resilience (Chatterjee et al., 2024).

That is, stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement act as a mediator between empathy management and team performance. When applied successfully, the principles of empathy management will encourage leaders to make effective stakeholder management strategies, which improve stakeholder engagement, thereby improving team performance overall (Walrave et al., 2024). This sequential mediation process underlines an integrated leadership approach in which empathetic leadership, structured stakeholder management, and active engagement function to optimize the effectiveness of the team (Siddiqui et al., 2024).

Given this relationship, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H11: *The sequential relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance is mediated by both stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement.*

2.3 Hypothesis Summary

H1: Empathy management is positively associated with team performance.

H2: Stakeholder management is positively associated with team performance.

H3: Stakeholder management mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.

H4: The relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management is moderated by top management support, such that the relationship is stronger when top management support is high.

H5: Top management support moderates the mediated relationship between empathy management and team performance via stakeholder management, such that the indirect effect of empathy management on team performance through stakeholder management is stronger when top management support is high (moderated mediation).

H6: Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder management.

H7: Stakeholder engagement is positively associated with team performance.

H8: Stakeholder management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.

H9: Stakeholder engagement mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.

H10: Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.

H11: The sequential relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance is mediated by both stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement.

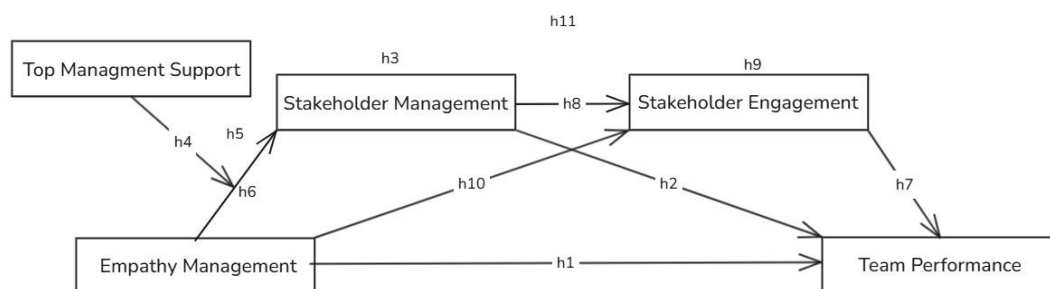


FIGURE 2.1: Research Model

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study explores the relationships of empathy management with stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance, including the moderating role of top management support. This investigation falls under the positivist paradigm wherein researchers work on causality related conditions, which require objective measurements and testing of hypotheses. This study investigates the relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance, with the moderating role of top management support. Because these relationships were cause-and-effect in nature, this research was conducted using the positivist approach, which highlights objective measurements and hypothesis testing.

A hypothetico-deductive research methodology was used; it identifies the research problem and develops hypotheses from the constructs by collecting data to analyze the outcome and interpret results to see whether the hypotheses hold or were rejected. This makes sure that such relationships were subjected to a proper, structured system of investigation.

Since the study was based on theory-hypothesis confirmation that tests the already existing theoretical constructs within a research framework, constructs were measured using validated scales, hence possible for quantification and statistical analysis between them, and thus, a quantitative design was followed.

Data collection was based on a cross-sectional study on a sample population at one point in time. A survey-based approach was applied to collect empirical data, and it ensured the structured and objective examination of hypothesized relationships.

3.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this research was employees of PBOs in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, more specifically in the IT sector, as well as other project-based industries. They work in very dynamic and complex environments that need effective empathy management, stakeholder management, and stakeholder engagement to improve general team performance.

In consideration of the nature of this study, directly interacting with the stakeholders and project teams' members were targeted for response. It analyses the indirect and direct effect of empathy management on team performance through stakeholder management and engagement with the stakeholder. Also, the role of top management support was gauged to be the moderating factor of the aforementioned relations. By recruiting participants from PBOs, this study attempts to offer empirical evidence on how organizations can make leadership and stakeholder strategies better by fostering high-performance teams.

3.3 Sample Size

Since the total population of project-based employees in Rawalpindi and Islamabad was unknown, the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977), which is widely used for calculating sample sizes in large or undefined populations. The formula is suitable when no prior population data is available and assumes maximum variability to ensure statistical accuracy.

Using a confidence level of 95% ($Z = 1.96$), a margin of error of 5% ($e = 0.05$), and a response distribution of 50% ($p = 0.5$), the minimum required sample size was calculated as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2} \approx 384$$

Therefore, a sample of at least 384 respondents was required. In this study, a total of 389 valid responses were collected through questionnaires distributed to employees working in project-based organizations in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. This exceeds the minimum requirement and ensures sufficient statistical power for subsequent analyses.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Non-probability sampling constitutes several types: the type which was utilized for this study goes by the term convenience sampling that will be deployed for sampling, convenience sampling pertains to cases where units easy to access enter the sample in the sampling exercise. Convenience sampling was selected because of some of its advantages like: there were fewer rules because of which it can be carried out easily, time and cost required to perform convenience sampling was lower as compared to other sampling techniques, sample data was easily accessible, and data was collected quickly.

3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

Questionnaires self-administered were prepared in google forms to calculate the data, and they were given to the members of different project-based organizations. Respondents filled out the questionnaires and returned without bothering to put their details online for knowing them, because it had been declared that this data was made only for academic research purposes and would be kept confidential. Data was calculated by sending questionnaires on email to different project-based organizations of Pakistan. Email and messages on LinkedIn were sent to different project-based organizations, and I managed to get 389 complete responses which basically fulfilled the requirement of 384 responses according to the sample size

calculated. Employees were given ample time as well as privacy for them to easily complete their responses.

3.6 Instruments

3.6.1 Empathy Management

Engagement management is actually the active, continuous involvement of stakeholders in all project activities and ensures alignment to the goals and objectives of a project. In this sense, it aims to build strong relations through regular communications and collaborations wherein stakeholders are felt valued and committed to the successful completion of a project. Developed by (Mora-Pelegrín et al.), this scale had 18 items that measured how stakeholders were involved throughout a project.

“When I am with someone, I can identify which part of what I am feeling is caused by that person.”

3.6.2 Top Management Support

Top management support is very important in project success, especially in an agile environment. It involves top leaders' commitment to providing all the necessary resources, guidance, and participation in decision-making to ensure that the projects are within the organizational goal. This is measured by a 6-item scale, involving setting methodologies, monitoring progress, and actively participating in key phases of project execution (Ahmed et al., 2016).

“Top managers of the company are aware of the methodology used for managing projects.”

3.6.3 Stakeholder Management

Effective stakeholder management is very important for aligning project activities with the needs of stakeholders and encouraging engagement at every stage of

a project's lifecycle. It identifies key stakeholders, assesses their influence, and ensures continuous communication to integrate their expectations into project plans. This construct, measured by an 11-item scale developed by (Mitchell et al., 1997); (Olander and Landin, 2005), focuses on stakeholder relationships and perspectives, and has been validated in studies by (Pinto et al., 2009).

“Project stakeholders were formally identified.”

3.6.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement refers to the active and continuous involvement of stakeholders in organizational processes with a view to aligning their interests and expectations with project or operational goals. This is emphasized on the need for trust, transparent communication, and collaboration as means of creating an inclusive environment in which stakeholders meaningfully contribute to the success of the project. This construct adapted from the partnership evaluation framework will be measured by a scale that focuses on community perspectives, partner input, and collaborative sustainability. The scale captures such dimensions as stakeholder communication, participation, and co-learning for achieving organizational objectives.

“All partners have the opportunity to share ideas, input, and leadership responsibilities.”

3.6.5 Team Performance Scale

The construct of team performance in agile software development refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of the team in its performance, characterized by collaboration processes, quality output, and a supportive environment. The 10-item scale is used for measurement, and the focus was on the quality of teamwork, communication, and collaborative processes that were validated by studies such as those by (Goleman, 2020).

“The team leader directed the project team members to do what was required in project.”

3.7 Contribution of Study

This research contributes to the fields of project management, leadership, and organizational behavior by examining the influence of empathy management on stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance. Key contributions are:

3.7.1 Theoretical Framework Expansion

This study gives a new theoretical framework, thereby connecting the empathy management with team performance through managing stakeholder engagement. It has been a development of previous literature on emotional intelligence and leadership, but fills a gap on the literature of impact that the management of empathy-as-a-leadership-trait would have on project success. This new framework brings forth new insights into the emotional dimensions of leadership and how these influence the processes of project management. The proposed model further strengthens the theoretical bases around stakeholder engagement and team performance.

3.7.2 Empirical Validation

Empirical evidence is drawn from this research to validate the link between empathy management and both stakeholder management and engagement. Findings would vindicate the assertion that empathy management, an integral component of emotional intelligence, plays a critical role in improving stakeholder relationships, and hence team performance. The study contributes to an emerging body of research literature that focuses on soft skills, such as emotional competencies, as the key leadership skills.

3.7.3 Practical Leadership Implications

It gives findings with actionable points for leaders and project managers. In the research, the study points out the relevance of empathy management, thus

advocating that organizations invest more in leadership development programs that raise emotional intelligence levels among leaders. Such skills will enhance stakeholders' relationships with leaders, thus improving project outcomes. The work encourages a move from such technical skill leadership development to more holistic approaches that consider skill bases in emotional competencies to better address complexities in the project environment.

3.7.4 Influence on Team Performance

The intervening role of stakeholder management and engagement prevails in the association between empathetic management and team performance in this study. Effective stakeholder strategies are necessary for project success, and these insights can be drawn upon by organizations to fine-tune stakeholder engagement practices. Organizations, by aligning project goals better with stakeholder expectations, will significantly improve team cohesion, collaboration, and overall performance.

3.7.5 Enhancement of Stakeholder Theory

This research contributes to refining stakeholder theory, showing how empathy management can foster collaboration among stakeholders. It further extends literature that exists because emotional intelligence can be a factor in stakeholder needs and project goals, leading projects to achieve more success. This study opens up leadership and the way leaders manage diverse stakeholder interests in one of the new perspectives.

3.7.6 Integration of Diverse Stakeholder Perspectives

This integration of views from different stakeholders revolves around the role that diversified perspectives can play in problem-solving and decision-making. This is likely to be an innovation and results-enhancing factor in the projects since varied experiences and expertise will produce success in a project. The study lists the importance of stakeholder engagement towards the quality of deliverables about projects, which will indirectly encourage processes of more inclusive and dynamic decision making.

3.7.7 Foundation for Future Research

This study shall act as a basis for further research into empathy management in complex project environments. It provides avenues for further research to extend on the proposed model and identify variables that may mediate or moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence, stakeholder management, and team performance. It advocates for holistic leadership that goes beyond the technical competence and elaborates upon the emotional and relational dynamics that are essential for leading a project to its success. It has good value as a reference to future research in the field of leadership development and management of projects.

3.8 Method of Analysis

Data was collected using survey questionnaires. After collection of data it was entered, cleaned and processed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences-23 (SPSS-23). For analyzing this data in SPSS-23 PROCESS macro by Andrew F. Hayes ([Darlington and Hayes, 2016](#)) was used. PROCESS macro was used because many types of models can be analyzed by using PROCESS macro like: Mediation, multi-mediation, mediation-moderation, and moderation-mediation. And it can test highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions. List of tests that were conducted using SPSS is as follow: Test of Descriptive Statistics for finding Frequencies of demographic variable, Test of descriptive statistics for finding mean, and standard deviation, Correlation Analysis, and Regression, (Model 83) were tested using PROCESS macro version 4.0 by Andrew F Hayes.

3.9 Characteristics of Sample

3.9.1 Gender

According to the data from **Table 3.1**, out of **389** respondents, **270** were male and **119** were female. Male respondents accounted for **69.4%** of the total sample,

while female respondents made up **30.6%**. This indicates that the number of **male respondents was higher than female respondents** in this study.

TABLE 3.1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Female	119	30.6	30.6	30.6
Male	270	69.4	69.4	100.0
Total	389	100.0	100.0	—

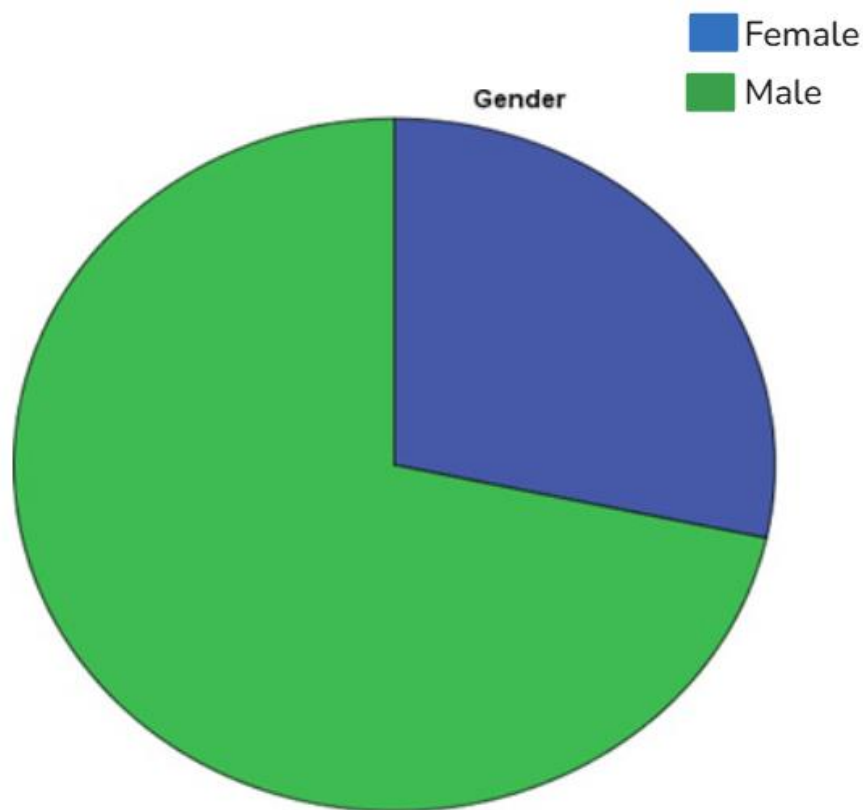


FIGURE 3.1: Gender Distribution

3.9.2 Age

According to the data from **Table 3.2**, out of **389** respondents, **239** were aged **between 18-25 years**, accounting for **61.4%** of the total sample, while **150** respondents were aged **between 26-33 years**, making up **38.6%** of the sample.

This indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the **18-25 age group**, representing a larger proportion of the surveyed population.

TABLE 3.2: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
18-25	239	61.4	61.4	61.4
26-33	150	38.6	38.6	100.0
Total	389	100.0	100.0	—

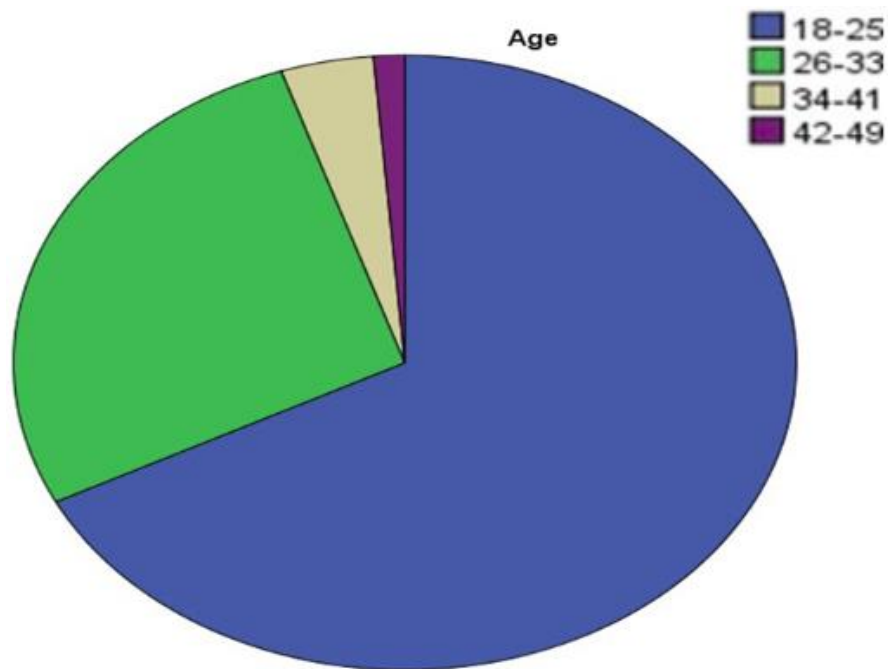


FIGURE 3.2: Age Distribution

3.9.3 Qualifications

According to **Table 3.3**, the highest number of respondents, 256 (65.8%), held a **Bachelor’s** degree. This was the most common qualification among the respondents. A total of **108 respondents** (27.8%) had an **MS/MPhil** qualification, showing a significant proportion with higher education. **15 respondents** (3.9%) had an **Intermediate** qualification, and **10 respondents** (2.6%) had a **Matric** qualification.

TABLE 3.3: Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Bachelors	256	65.8	65.8	65.8
Inter	15	3.9	3.9	69.7
Matric	10	2.6	2.6	72.2
MS/MPhil	108	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	389	100.0	100.0	100.0

This table offers a breakdown of the qualifications of the respondents. The **Bachelor's degree** holds the largest share, followed by **MS/MPhil** qualifications, with much smaller proportions holding **Intermediate** and **Matric** qualifications.

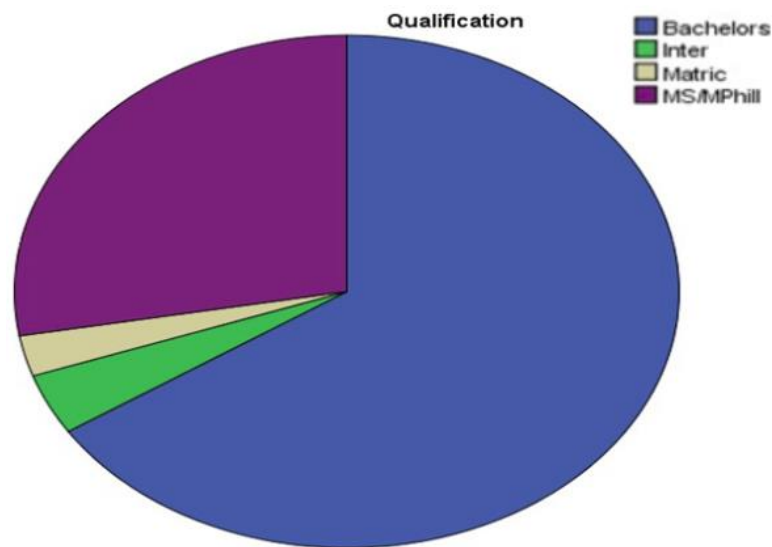


FIGURE 3.3: Qualification

3.9.4 Professional Experience

The data reflects the distribution of professional experience among 389 respondents. **0-5 Years:** The majority of respondents (85.6%) have professional experience between 0 to 5 years. **6-10 Years:** A smaller portion, 14.4%, has professional experience between 6 to 10 years. The **cumulative percentage** column shows

that by the time you include respondents with 6-10 years of experience, the total percentage reaches 100%.

TABLE 3.4: Professional Experience

Professional Experience	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
0-5 Years	333	85.6	85.6	85.6
6-10 Years	56	14.4	14.4	100.0
Total	389	100.0	100.0	100.0

This table clearly shows that the majority of respondents have relatively less professional experience (0-5 years), while a smaller percentage have more experience (6-10 years).

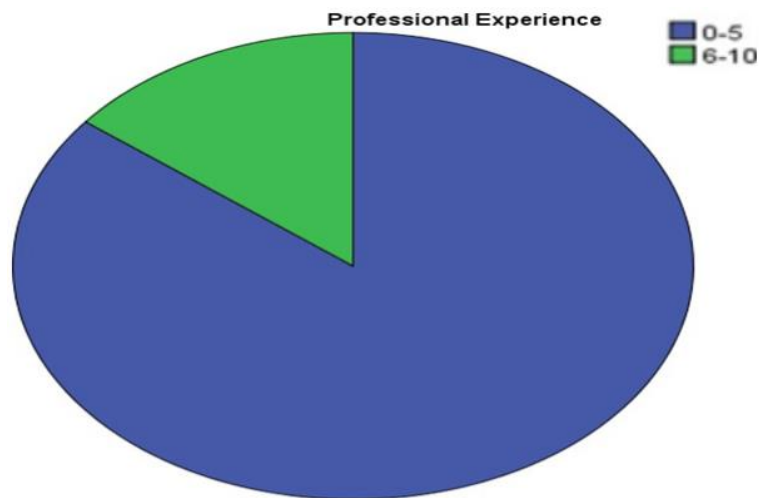


FIGURE 3.4: Professional Experience

Chapter 4

Result & Analysis

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The purpose of the reliability analysis is to assess the internal consistency of the items within each variable, ensuring that they consistently measure the intended construct. Reliability analysis helps determine how closely related the items within a scale are. According to (Hair et al., 2010), a scale is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.7. A higher Cronbach's Alpha indicates greater internal consistency, suggesting that the items within the scale are well-correlated and effectively measure the same underlying concept.

The reliability analysis results for the variables used in this study are presented in Table 4.1 below.

TABLE 4.1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Empathy Management	18	0.733
Top Management Support	6	0.831
Stakeholder Management	11	0.895
Stakeholder Engagement	32	0.901
Team Performance	11	0.904
N = 389		

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

To assess the construct validity of the adapted Stakeholder Engagement scale in the context of Pakistani project-based organizations, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. The scale was adapted from the original Partnership Evaluation Framework, and EFA was necessary to confirm whether the original factor structure held in this new cultural and organizational setting.

The analysis was performed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation in SPSS. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.848, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.6 and indicates meritorious suitability for factor analysis (Kaiser 1974). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 10,367.31$, $df = 496$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the appropriateness of the data for factor extraction.

Based on the eigenvalue > 1 criterion, a total of eight factors were extracted. These eight components together accounted for 75.47% of the total variance, indicating a strong explanatory power of the underlying structure. All items displayed factor loadings above the accepted threshold of 0.50, and no significant cross-loadings were observed, supporting the discriminant validity of the retained factors.

The results confirm that the adapted Stakeholder Engagement scale demonstrates robust factor structure and construct validity in the sampled context.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.848
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10367.308
	df	496
	Sig.	.000

FIGURE 4.1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

4.3 Descriptive and Normality Analysis

Descriptive analysis includes the central tendency, dispersion, and distribution of variables in a dataset. Such analysis helps establish patterns and decide whether the data is suitable enough for further statistical analysis. This can be calculated

as mean value, which expresses the average response of participants; SD shows how variable the responses are.

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics for the key variables of this study:

TABLE 4.2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EM	389	2.28	5.00	3.19	0.46
SE	389	2.81	5.00	3.67	0.53
SM	389	2.18	5.00	3.60	0.62
TP	389	2.55	5.00	3.91	0.61
TMS	389	1.67	5.00	3.77	0.72

The descriptive statistics indicate that all variables have mean values ranging between 3.18 and 3.90, suggesting that responses are generally distributed around the mid-to-high range of the scale.

1. Empathy Management has a mean value of 3.1898 with a standard deviation of 0.46403, indicating that responses are moderately dispersed around the mean.
2. Stakeholder Engagement has the highest mean value (3.6734), showing that respondents generally reported higher engagement levels.
3. Stakeholder Management and Top Management Support also show relatively high mean values of 3.6043 and 3.7746, respectively, suggesting a strong presence of these factors in the dataset.
4. Team Performance has a mean of 3.9065, the highest among all variables, indicating a positive perception of team effectiveness.

The standard deviation values for all variables range from 0.46403 to 0.71979, indicating that responses are relatively consistent, with Top Management Support (0.71979) having the highest variation.

These results confirm that the dataset is suitable for further statistical analysis, including correlation, regression, and mediation-moderation analysis.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation test has been employed to check the correlations between variables under study. The Pearson correlation coefficient lies within a range of values from -1 through +1. The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction in which two variables are linearly related. Closer the value to +1 or -1 indicates a stronger relationship, and values closer to 0 signify a weaker relationship. The sign gives the direction of the correlation; a positive value indicates a direct relationship, whereas a negative value indicates an inverse relationship.

The results show that Mean Empathy management has a moderate positive correlation with Mean Top Management Support ($r = 0.312$), indicating that as empathy management increases, top management support also tends to increase. Similarly, EM is moderately positively correlated with Mean Stakeholder Management ($r = 0.327$), suggesting that improvements in empathy management are associated with better stakeholder management.

The correlation between EM and SE is a little weaker ($r = 0.292$), though still in the moderate range, indicating a positive relationship between empathy management and stakeholder engagement. The correlation between EM and TP is relatively weak ($r = 0.205$), meaning that the impact of empathy management on team performance is smaller.

Other variables indicate that TMS has a very strong positive correlation with SM at $r = 0.600$, meaning that the better the top management support, the closer it is to the improvement of stakeholder management. A similar strong positive correlation is found between TMS and SE at $r = 0.486$, meaning that increased top management support leads to better stakeholder engagement. Additionally, TMS and TP have a strong positive correlation of $r = 0.587$, that suggests that an effective top management support leads to a better team performance. SM and SE has a strong correlation of $r = 0.521$, that says improvements in stakeholder management will be strongly linked to increased stakeholder engagement. Further, SM and TP are also positively correlated ($r = 0.555$), which implies that effective management of stakeholders significantly influences team performance. The highest

correlation in the analysis is found between SE and TP at $r = 0.763$, which indicates that improvements in stakeholder engagement are strongly associated with better team performance.

The values of all correlation coefficients are significantly high, where p-values have been less than 0.01, hence there is an error of less than 1%. This confirmed the reliability of the findings so that the obtained relationships between variables are not chance relationships but relationships reflecting true association. These findings show that Empathy management, Top Management Support, Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Engagement, and Team Performance are all very interdependent; thus, enhancing one area would most likely cause a ripple effect of positive change in the other areas.

TABLE 4.3: Correlation

	EM	SE	SM	TP	TMS
EM	1				
SE	.312**	1			
SM	.327**	.486**	1		
TP	.292**	.486**	5.00	1	
TMS	.205**	.587**	.555**	.763**	1

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

4.5 Testing Theoretical Relationships

This section presents the direct effects of Empathy Management on Team Performance along with the results for all hypothesis tests. The analysis follows PROCESS Macro Model 83, incorporating direct, mediation, and moderation effects.

4.5.1 Direct Effects Analysis

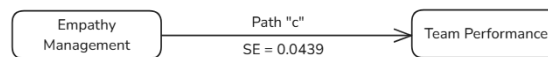
H_1 : Interpretation: Empathy Management \rightarrow Team Performance

In the first step, the relationship between the EM (empathy management) variable and the dependent variable TP (team performance) is considered. This is known as the path "c" in the model, representing the direct effect of empathy management on team performance.

TABLE 4.4: EM \rightarrow TP

Predictor	Effect	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
EM \rightarrow TP	-0.0836	0.0439	-1.9038	0.0577	-0.1699	0.0027

The direct effect of Empathy Management on Team Performance is not statistically significant ($p = 0.0577$). This indicates that the relationship between EM and TP is likely mediated by other factors such as Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement.

FIGURE 4.2: EM \rightarrow TP

4.5.2 Mediation Analysis

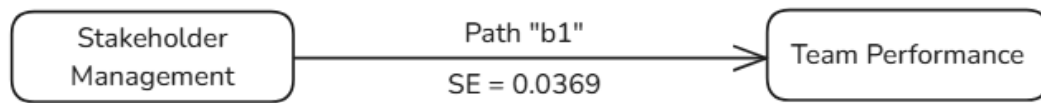
H₂: Interpretation: Stakeholder Management \rightarrow Team Performance

The findings confirm that Stakeholder Management significantly enhances Team Performance. This suggests that when stakeholder management is effectively implemented, teams perform better, reinforcing the importance of stakeholder engagement and coordination in achieving high performance levels.

TABLE 4.5: SM \rightarrow TP

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.2268	0.0369	6.1407	0.0000	0.1542	0.2994

With $p < 0.01$, the results confirm that effective stakeholder management significantly enhances team performance, supporting H2.

FIGURE 4.3: SM \rightarrow TP

H₃: Interpretation: Stakeholder Management Mediates EM \rightarrow TP

The mediation analysis indicates that Stakeholder Management partially mediates the relationship between Empathy Management and Team Performance. This means that empathy management alone does not directly lead to better team performance but exerts its influence through effective stakeholder management.

TABLE 4.6: SM Mediation

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
0.1099	0.0235	0.0699	0.1627

Since BootLLCI and BootULCI do not include zero, the mediation effect is significant, supporting H3. This confirms that Empathy Management does not directly improve team performance, but its effects are channeled through effective Stakeholder Management.



FIGURE 4.4: SM Mediation

H₆: Interpretation: Empathy Management \rightarrow Stakeholder Management

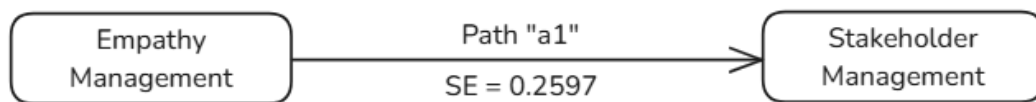
The results show a significant negative association between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management. This suggests that while empathy management

plays a role, it may not always be aligned with stakeholder management practices, potentially indicating the need for better integration between these aspects.

TABLE 4.7: EM \rightarrow SM

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-2.2350	0.2597	-8.6048	0.0000	-2.7457	-1.7243

With $p < 0.01$, these findings suggest that while Empathy Management plays a role, it may not always be aligned with structured Stakeholder Management strategies.

FIGURE 4.5: EM \rightarrow SM

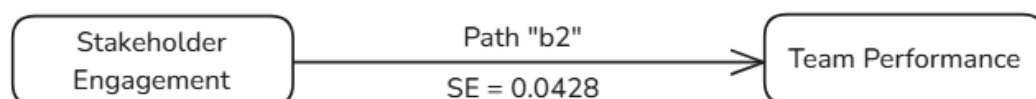
H₇: Interpretation: Stakeholder Engagement \rightarrow Team Performance

Stakeholder Engagement exhibits a strong positive impact on Team Performance. This underscores the critical role of stakeholder engagement in ensuring team effectiveness, as engaged stakeholders contribute to improved communication, collaboration, and goal alignment.

TABLE 4.8: SE \rightarrow TP

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.7620	0.0428	17.7906	0.0000	0.6778	0.8463

The results ($p < 0.01$) confirm that greater stakeholder engagement significantly enhances team performance, fully supporting H7.

FIGURE 4.6: SE \rightarrow TP

H₈: Interpretation: Stakeholder Management \rightarrow Stakeholder Engagement

The findings highlight that Stakeholder Management significantly enhances Stakeholder Engagement. This suggests that teams that effectively manage stakeholders are more likely to foster greater engagement, which can lead to improved overall performance.

TABLE 4.9: SM → SE

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.4056	0.0387	10.4718	0.0000	0.3294	0.4817

Since $p < 0.01$, these results strongly support H8, confirming that effective stakeholder management fosters deeper stakeholder engagement.

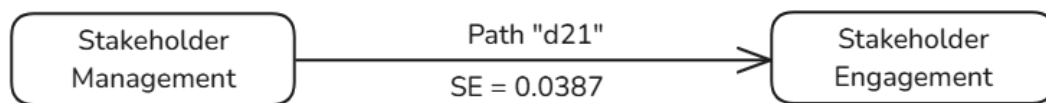


FIGURE 4.7: SM → SE

H₉: Interpretation: Stakeholder Engagement Mediates EM → TP

The mediation results confirm that Stakeholder Engagement partially mediates the EM → TP relationship, confirming the indirect impact of empathy management on team performance through engagement.

TABLE 4.10: SE Mediation

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
0.1173	0.0457	0.0182	0.1970

With BootLLCI and BootULCI not crossing zero, the mediation effect is significant, supporting H9.



FIGURE 4.8: SE Mediation

H₁₀: Interpretation: Empathy Management → Stakeholder Engagement

Empathy Management is positively associated with Stakeholder Engagement. This suggests that fostering empathy within teams helps strengthen stakeholder engagement, reinforcing the value of interpersonal and relational strategies in effective team management.

TABLE 4.11: EM → SE

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.1539	0.0516	2.9847	0.0030	0.0525	0.2553

Since $p < 0.01$, these results confirm that Empathy Management positively affects Stakeholder Engagement, supporting H10.

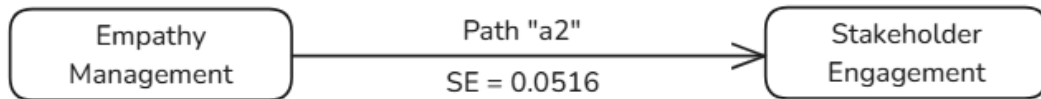


FIGURE 4.9: EM → SE

H₁₁: Interpretation: Sequential Mediation (EM → SM → SE → TP)

The sequential mediation analysis validates that the relationship between Empathy Management (MEM), Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Engagement, and Team Performance is mediated by both SM and SE, with moderation by Top Management Support. This means that top management support enhances the indirect effect of empathy management on team performance, emphasizing the importance of leadership support in optimizing team dynamics.

TABLE 4.12: SM & SE Mediation

TMS Level	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Low (3.0000)	-0.1505	0.0416	-0.2437	-0.0807
Medium (3.8333)	-0.0004	0.0233	-0.0489	0.0442
High (4.6667)	0.1497	0.0258	0.1069	0.2087

Since BootLLCI and BootULCI do not cross zero at high TMS levels, the mediation effect is significant, supporting H11. This means that TMS enhances the indirect effects of empathy management on team performance.

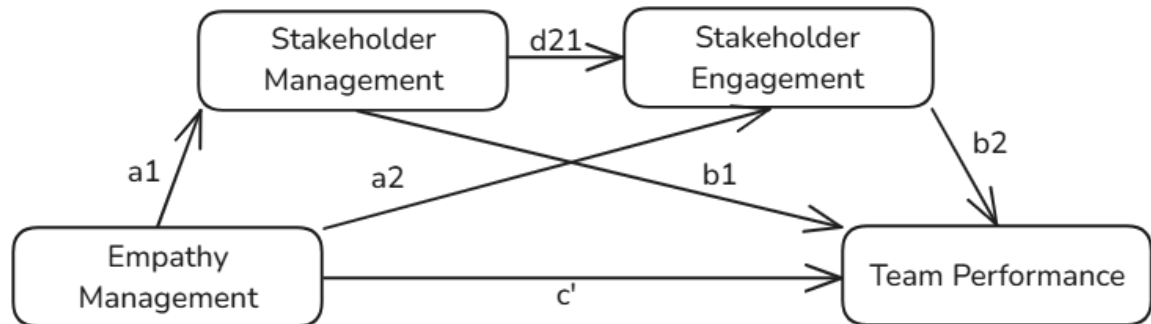


FIGURE 4.10: SM & SE Mediation

4.5.3 Moderation Analysis

H₄: Interpretation: Top Management Support Moderates the Relationship Between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management

The interaction effect of Top Management Support on the relationship between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management is significant.

This indicates that higher levels of TMS strengthen the positive impact of EM on SM. When top management support is high, the effect of empathy management on stakeholder management is more pronounced, reinforcing the importance of leadership backing in stakeholder management strategies.

TABLE 4.13: TMS Moderation

Predictor	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
EM	-2.2350	0.2597	-8.6048	0.0000	-2.7457	-1.7243
TMS	-1.3262	0.1907	-6.9562	0.0000	-1.7011	-0.9514
EM x TMS	0.5827	0.0608	9.5821	0.0000	0.4632	0.7023

The positive interaction coefficient (0.5827, $p < 0.01$) suggests that at higher levels of TMS, the effect of EM on SM is significantly amplified.

H₅: Interpretation: Moderated Mediation - Top Management Support Moderates the Mediated Relationship Between Empathy Management and Team Performance via Stakeholder Management

The results confirm that Top Management Support moderates the mediated relationship between Empathy Management and Team Performance through Stakeholder Management. This means that the indirect effect of EM on TP through SM is stronger when TMS is high.

TABLE 4.14: EM x TMS Moderated Mediation

TMS Level	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Low (3.0000)	-0.1104	0.0383	-0.1990	-0.0503
Medium (3.8333)	-0.0003	0.0174	-0.0381	0.0307
High (4.6667)	0.1099	0.0235	0.0699	0.1627

At high levels of TMS (4.6667), the effect of EM on TP through SM is strongest (0.1099, $p < 0.01$). This highlights the importance of top management support in strengthening the mediation pathway, emphasizing the role of leadership in optimizing stakeholder management for better team performance.

4.5.4 Hypothesis Testing Summary

TABLE 4.15: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H ₁	Empathy management is positively associated with team performance.	Not Supported
H ₂	Stakeholder management is positively associated with team performance.	Supported
H ₃	Stakeholder management mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.	Supported

Continued on next page...

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H ₄	Top management support moderates the relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management, such that the relationship is stronger when top management support is high.	Supported
H ₅	Top management support moderates the mediated relationship between empathy management and team performance via stakeholder management, such that the indirect effect of empathy management on team performance through stakeholder management is stronger when top management support is high.	Supported
H ₆	Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder management.	Supported
H ₇	Stakeholder engagement is positively associated with team performance.	Supported
H ₈	Stakeholder management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.	Supported
H ₉	Stakeholder engagement mediates the relationship between empathy management and team performance.	Supported
H ₁₀	Empathy management is positively associated with stakeholder engagement.	Supported
H ₁₁	The sequential relationship between empathy management, stakeholder management, stakeholder engagement, and team performance is mediated by both stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement.	Supported

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This chapter provides a full discussion of the research findings, theoretical contributions, practical implications, and future research opportunities. The study looked at how Empathy Management can improve Team Performance with the mediating effects of Stakeholder Engagement and Stakeholder Management and the moderating influence of Top Management Support.

The findings confirm most of the predictions by demonstrating that stakeholder management and involvement significantly moderate the link between empathy management and team effectiveness. Additionally, the support of upper management moderates the relationship between empathy management and stakeholder management and strengthens the indirect road to team success.

5.1.1 Relationship Between Empathy Management and Team Performance

In a first hypothesis (H1), the study supposed that Empathy Management (EM) positively impacts Team Performance (TP). In this case, the results indicated that there was no direct effect of empathy in improving team performance. Instead, the mediating factors of Stakeholder Management (SM) and Stakeholder Engagement (SE) are necessary for bridging the relationship. It does so by enabling interpersonal

trust and communication [Goleman \(2020\)](#), but this is only influential in the performances if it brings about the interaction with stakeholders or structured team process [Rezvani et al. \(2018\)](#).

A previous study based on [Miao et al. \(2018\)](#) showed that empathetic leadership promotes collaboration; therefore, collaborative performance indicators can be improved. However, our findings indicate that although empathy generates a supportive and psychologically safe working environment, it does not translate into efficiency and productivity. Its effectiveness is rather dependent on the structured stakeholder engagement and oversight mechanisms. [Druskat and Wolff \(2001\)](#) further propose that team emotional intelligence, when moderated by empathy, leads to higher team cohesion but does not directly result in improved performance without stakeholder integration mechanisms.

A plausible explanation for our lack of findings having a significant direct effect could be due to cultural influences that exist within the Pakistani organizational context. [Hofstede \(2011\)](#) through research indicates the fact that a high score reflects power distance along with collectivism in Pakistan indicates that hierarchical relations dominate team management. This further indicates that people are oriented through a culture by which empathy works in interpersonal realms, but rather formal authority forms the primary catalyst for performance achievement. Employees in such organizations may be more dependent on managerial instructions and hierarchical expectations than on team-driven collaboration, which can reduce the direct effect of empathy management on performance. Moreover, collectivist cultures like Pakistan, group harmony, and respect for authority might override individual emotional intelligence as the determinant of team effectiveness.

In addition, the overemphasized trait of empathy may prove to have undesirable negative consequences unless balanced by objective decision-making. Although empathy is crucial in building trust and cooperation, too much empathy might bring emotional exhaustion to the leaders, blurring their reasoning capabilities and hindering their effectiveness as managers. If not managed strategically, empathy may lead to decision fatigue, favoritism, and reduced objectivity. An overly emotional leader may have trouble setting firm boundaries that may lead to

inefficiency in decisions or allocation of resources. The study's findings indicate that empathy management should be structured within a well-defined leadership approach that maintains a balance between compassionate leadership and strategic decision-making.

The findings of this study emphasize that though empathy is a key leadership attribute, it must be managed strategically in order to have a balance between emotional intelligence and performance-driven leadership. Organizations must train managers on structured stakeholder engagement and the use of empathetic leadership styles. This way, leaders will be able to use empathy properly without sacrificing objectivity, decisions, and outcomes of long-term team performance.

Therefore, although Empathy Management does not directly enhance performance, when practiced within a more structured stakeholder management framework and supported by the involvement of top management, it can act as a catalyst to better collaboration, decision-making, and project outcomes.

5.1.2 Relationship Between Stakeholder Management and Team Performance

Findings confirmed the beneficial effect of Stakeholder Management on Team Performance (H2). As stated by [Freeman \(2010\)](#), this supports the assertion that effective stakeholder management cultivates clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations, thereby improving teamwork and performance. [Mitchell et al. \(1997\)](#) reveal that it makes the argument go further how systematic stakeholder interaction leads towards generating a productive collaboration environment enhancing the efficiency process.

Managing stakeholders encourages teamwork to share their knowledge, and it enhances their abilities to solve problems and develop effective decision-making skills [Harrison et al. \(2010\)](#). The study expands previous findings by proving that managing stakeholders helps improve communication and alignment within a team, reduce project uncertainty and conflict, and eventually contribute to better performance. Moreover, as indicated by the research of [Bourne and Walker](#)

(2005), managing stakeholders cultivates a feeling of ownership and responsibility within team members, ensuring that performance benchmarks are met. Our research backs up these findings by demonstrating how project managers can foster an environment that promotes creativity and productivity through effective interactions with stakeholders.

The results corroborate the findings of [Achterkamp and Vos \(2008\)](#). They found that companies with operational stakeholder management procedures are effective in the long run because of the lower levels of disruption to the business. It is contended that by involving stakeholders in decision making and goal setting participation, the resistance to change would be lowered, and the speed of completing the project work will be increased, thus improving the performance.

Organizations are required to invest in organized stakeholder management plans which comprise of frequent consultation, open lines of communication, and proactive procedures that resolve disputes. The result is that teams will function effectively, become flexible, and in line with company goals.

5.1.3 Mediating Role of Stakeholder Management

The research established that Stakeholder Management serves as a mediator between Empathy Management and Team Performance (H3). This indicates that leadership focused on empathy enhances team performance mainly by promoting strong stakeholder management practices [Aga et al. \(2016\)](#). Project leaders with high levels of empathy are more capable of handling stakeholder expectations, resolving conflicts, and aligning project objectives with team strengths, which ultimately improves team performance [Bourne and Walker \(2005\)](#).

This discovery corresponds with studies by [Eskerod et al. \(2015\)](#), highlighting that stakeholder management serves as an essential intermediary that guarantees coherence between leadership principles and team operational efficiency. Stakeholder management guarantees that leaders' empathy results in quantifiable performance improvements via organized engagements with project participants and decision-makers.

Additionally, a study by [Pinto et al. \(2009\)](#) backs this mediated connection, asserting that managing stakeholders is among the key elements affecting project success. Teams that skillfully manage stakeholder relationships generally achieve superior outcomes, as they actively address challenges and cultivate a culture of trust and collaboration.

Our research emphasizes the significance of organized stakeholder engagement methods, guaranteeing that empathy-based leadership is successfully directed towards fruitful results. Managers ought to combine stakeholder management tactics with empathy programs to develop high-performance workplaces.

5.1.4 Moderation by Top Management Support in the Relationship Between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management

The results strongly support H4, which stated that Top Management Support moderates the relationship between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Management. This means that the effect of empathy-based leadership on stakeholder management is enhanced when top management offers adequate resources, strategic direction, and authority [Lloyd-Walker and Walker](#). Without such support, even empathetic leaders may find it difficult to implement effective stakeholder management strategies [Müller and Turner \(2010\)](#).

Past research has revealed that top management support increases the quality of decisions and develops stakeholder inclusivity as an organizational culture [Zwikael \(2008\)](#). The study supports the generalization of findings that when an empathetic leader lacks top management support, stakeholder-inclusive initiatives will suffer from organizational impediments. Once top management support is established and stakeholder engagement is encouraged by top management, empathetic leaders can effectively better address the stakeholders' needs as well as develop better project alignments.

[Chiocchio et al. \(2012\)](#) also recommend that when the top leadership is clear in giving strategic support, stakeholder engagement efforts are likely to be more

successful because teams are likely to get the resources and institutional support they need. This is proof that the top management role of enforcing empathy-driven leadership has a great impact on the organization's ability to sustain positive stakeholder relationships and performance improvements.

From a practical point of view, organizations should integrate empathy-driven stakeholder strategies into corporate governance policies and ensure top management visibly supports them. Leadership training programs, stakeholder engagement frameworks, and resource allocation models can be established to emphasize decision-making based on empathy.

5.1.5 Moderated Mediation: The Role of Top Management Support

The study also moderated the mediation of Top Management Support (H5), which reveals that the indirect effect of Empathy Management on Team Performance is more significant at high levels of Top Management Support [Chiocchio et al. \(2012\)](#). Prior research has long underscored that top management, in particular, facilitates collaboration and resource allocation by providing decision-making autonomy, all of which supports the mediating role of stakeholder management, as [Zwikael \(2008\)](#) contended.

Findings by [Müller and Turner \(2010\)](#) suggest that project teams have more ability to better navigate the very complex landscapes of stakeholders if the top management team is active to support the kind of empathy-based stakeholder engagement strategies. Again, this statement reinforces the conclusion that the impacts of leadership empathy on organizational performance are amplified instead of merely shaping direct managerial decisions.

Furthermore, the research by [Eskerod et al. \(2015\)](#) reveals that firms with better leadership alignment in stakeholder policies are likely to face less resistance to change and therefore better cooperation from stakeholders, which in turn results in better team performance. This study expands on this by demonstrating that when the top management supports the empathy-based leadership initiatives, the

teams are more likely to be cohesive, motivated and effective, which in turn results in improved performance.

In a practical sense, organizations should implement empathy-driven stakeholder policies as part of their culture at the executive level. Leaders have to design mentor and coach programs, performance management systems, and strategic plans that incorporate empathy into the decision-making process of everyday operational decisions so that the top management's influence is felt by the frontline leaders.

5.1.6 Relationship Between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Engagement

It emerged that H6 is supported, and Empathy Management indeed correlates positively with Stakeholder Engagement. This gives support to the view that empathy-based leadership improves the stakeholders whom managers interact with and manage and therefore creates an even more cohesive and collaborative stakeholder relationship [Akgün et al. \(2015\)](#).

According to [Davis \(2017\)](#), research shows that empathy leads to emotional bonding between leaders and stakeholders, which creates trust, open communication, and long-term relationship building. The findings of this study are similar, as empathy-oriented leaders tend to be better at encouraging proactive stakeholder participation and aligning project goals with stakeholder expectations. Moreover, the study by [Karlsen \(2008\)](#) pointed out that more the leaders show that they hear their stakeholders, give them respect and care, there is the greatest stakeholder commitment and cooperation to reduce resistance to the successful completion of projects. By integrating these elements, our research strengthens the case for embedding empathy-driven stakeholder engagement strategies at all organizational levels.

Developing an empathy-training course for leaders and project managers by businesses would not only be essential but also benefit them in relating to stakeholders to the best effect. Institutionalized empathy-driven engagement frameworks, through regular feedback loops and transparent means of communication can lead to far better project delivery and organizational performance.

5.1.7 Relationship Between Stakeholder Engagement and Team Performance

Findings confirmed H7, which says that Stakeholder Engagement is positively related to Team Performance [Silvius and Schipper \(2019\)](#). Active engagement of stakeholders will encourage the team members to collaborate, align their objectives, and execute tasks effectively [Greenwood \(2007\)](#).

Previous literature by [Bourne and Walker \(2005\)](#) states that there is greater transparency, fewer issues related to conflicts, and shared ownership in the success of a project if one engages with the stakeholders. In this respect, our research was in good alignment with this, as the better team results came out due to effective stakeholder engagement through improved communication, resource allocation, and task execution.

The evidence from [Conallin et al. \(2017\)](#) suggests that stakeholder engagement is what forms a culture of knowledge sharing, and hence teams can make use of different perspectives and expertise available. Our conclusion that active stakeholders contribute to decision-making processes positively is further supported by enhancing overall team performance and productivity.

Practitioners would adopt structured stakeholder engagement policies—such as participatory decision-making models, stakeholder advisory committees, and co-creation initiatives—whereby adopting such would go a long way in increasing team productivity by very many folds. Organizations must invest in stakeholder engagement skill training programs for leaders to become proficient at harnessing stakeholder contributions to improve outcomes.

5.1.8 Relationship Between Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement

The study is in support of H8 in that Stakeholder Management significantly impacts Stakeholder Engagement [Conallin et al. \(2017\)](#). It points to structured stakeholder management practices as enhancing the effective participation of stakeholders during decision-making and the execution of a project [Eskerod et al. \(2015\)](#).

As stated by [Freeman \(2010\)](#), organizations that have a clearly defined stakeholder management strategy achieve a higher degree of engagement that eventually leads to better project outcome results. The same study here suggests that stakeholder engagement cannot be an independent activity but the result of deliberate and systematic effort for stakeholder management.

Besides, a related study by [Bourne and Walker \(2005\)](#) indicates that the organizations that probably prioritize structured stakeholder management efforts tend to foster long-term engagement, trust, and co-operation. This study extends their argument by showing that stakeholder engagement is in itself the bridge between project leadership and effective team performance, thus ensuring that it is aligned toward stakeholder expectations.

In practice, organizations should ensure that stakeholder management strategies involve continuous communication, mechanisms of transparent decision-making, and participation mechanisms. Establishing a feedback mechanism and a participatory governance model can strengthen the stakeholder relationship hence arousing engagement mainly toward sustaining organizational success.

5.1.9 Mediating Role of Stakeholder Engagement

Findings confirmed H9, indicating that Stakeholder Engagement fully mediates the relationship between Empathy Management and Team Performance [Miao et al. \(2018\)](#). This would indicate that leadership driven by empathy improves team performance if there is active engagement with stakeholders in effective and meaningful ways ([Bendoly et al., 2012](#)).

Literature has already expressed by ([Freeman et al., 2010](#)) and ([Bourne and Walker, 2005](#)) that involved stakeholders help in strategic formation, reduction of resistance, and improvement of collaboration. Our study would further proceed to demonstrate that engaged leaders through empathetic methods of engagement drive higher-performing teams.

In addition, research from Silvius ([Silvius and Schipper, 2019](#)) posit stakeholder engagement as a dynamic process, fostering knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and

innovation-all being directly central to the improvement of team effectiveness. The findings herein strengthen this understanding by ascertaining stakeholder engagement as one of the enablers to such performance improvement based on empathetic leadership. Organizations should embrace the adoption of structured stakeholder engagement strategies through regular meetings with the stakeholders, good communication channels, and participatory decision-making frameworks to enable the effective translation of engagement efforts into improving team performance.

5.1.10 Relationship Between Empathy Management and Stakeholder Engagement

The results confirm H10, as Empathy Management is associated with Stakeholder Engagement ([Druskat and Wolff, 2001](#)). Effective empathetic leaders better evoke stakeholder engagement and enhance the level of stakeholder cooperation and alignment with projects ([Sergey et al.](#)).

([Karlsen, 2008](#)) argued that engagement was higher in the hands of the leaders who listen to stakeholders actively and show interest in the needs that are set before them. This makes the resistance reduce and, hence, project execution is better. In this study, the findings have been extended and proven that empathy-driven stakeholder engagement is key in fostering long-term relationships that positively influence outcomes for teams.

In addition, the study by ([Greenwood, 2007](#)) indicates that empathy-based leadership develops effective relationships with stakeholders as it provides an environment of trust and cooperation. The study proved this by indicating the fact that empathetic leadership strengthens participation of stakeholders in better coherence with organizational goals.

Organizations should integrate empathy-driven engagement practices into their structures of stakeholder management by creation of stakeholder advisory panels, initiating feedback systems, and encouraging an inclusive manner of decision-making to reap high benefits from engagements.

5.1.11 Sequential Mediated Relationship

The study confirmed H11, implying that Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement mediate the relation between Empathy Management and Team Performance sequentially as indicated by (Müller and Turner, 2010). Such an interaction is complex because empathetic people engage in good stakeholder management and subsequently better engagement of stakeholders will lead to effective team performance.

According to (Pinto et al., 2009), stakeholder management is a critical first step in aligning stakeholder expectations with organizational objectives, while stakeholder engagement assures that these expectations are met and maintained throughout the project lifecycle. Our study, therefore, elaborates on these mechanisms by revealing that both play a crucial role in maximizing empathy-driven leadership in team performance.

In addition, research by (Achterkamp and Vos, 2008) indicates that the organizations that successfully manage and involve stakeholders have fewer conflicts, greater stakeholder support, and better performance results. This study expands on these findings by establishing that leaders who implement stakeholder management and engagement practices in their leadership styles attain higher levels of team performance.

From a practical perspective, organizations should design stakeholder management and engagement frameworks that are integrated with leadership development programs to ensure that empathy-driven strategies effectively translate into performance gains.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several contributions to existing literature on leadership, stakeholder engagement, and organizational performance.

5.2.1 Advancing the Understanding of Empathy Management

The present research extends the existing body of work on empathy management by empirically showing that it contributes to the enhancement of stakeholder relations and team performance. Although previous studies ([Goleman, 2020](#)); ([Druskat and Wolff, 2001](#)) highlight psychological benefits of empathetic leadership, this study demonstrates a more general organizational effect since it connects empathy to structured stakeholder processes.

From here, our result is in full agreement with most theories of emotional intelligence ([Mayer et al., 2008](#)), indicating that empathy actually is a required leadership competency: it increases stakeholders' cooperation levels and efficiency with which projects execute. Situating the management of empathy within structured stakeholder engagement frameworks, research contributes to discourses on this evolving topic leadership effectiveness.

5.2.2 Contribution to Stakeholder Theory

This study contributes to stakeholder theory ([Freeman, 2010](#)) by underlining the sequential mediation of stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement in improving team performance. Prior research has been on transactional stakeholder management ([Mitchell et al., 1997](#)), but this study emphasizes the role of empathy in long-term stakeholder relationships.

The findings would support the ([Bourne and Walker, 2005](#)) argument that stakeholder engagement is not a part of stakeholder management but rather a critical factor that makes a difference to organizational performance. Empirical testing of these relationships by this research reinforces stakeholder theory's emphasis on active participation, engagement, and collaboration.

5.2.3 Moderation by Top Management Support

It advances knowledge about TMS as a moderator in showing that leadership backing strengthens the effects of empathy-based stakeholder strategies. Management support has been known to be necessary for stakeholder initiatives from the earlier research conducted by (Chiocchio et al., 2012) and (Müller and Turner, 2010), yet it has rarely been empirically explored in relation to its moderation effects on the empathy-stakeholder management link.

This study thereby adds new theoretical insights into how leadership support relates to stakeholder processes by affirming that high levels of top management support do amplify the effectiveness of empathy management.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings from this study have several practical implications for organizational leaders, project managers, and policymakers.

5.3.1 Enhancing Leadership Training and Development

Organizations should facilitate empathy training within leadership development programs to ensure that managers can meaningfully interact with stakeholders. The fact that empathy management improves the performance of teams through systematic stakeholder interactions calls for the development of leadership styles which promote emotional intelligence and active listening within organizations.

5.3.2 Strengthening Stakeholder Management Strategies

The study suggests that structured stakeholder engagement models lead to better project outcomes. Organizations should implement systematic stakeholder management frameworks, including: Regular stakeholder consultations, Transparent decision-making processes, Participatory governance structures. These approaches will help minimize conflicts and align stakeholder expectations with organizational goals.

5.3.3 Role of Top Management in Driving Stakeholder Initiatives

Top management should actively support empathy-driven stakeholder strategies by: Allocating necessary resources for stakeholder engagement initiatives, embedding empathy-driven leadership practices into corporate governance policies, ensuring managers receive formal training in emotional intelligence and stakeholder relationship management.

This study reinforces the argument that top management support is a crucial determinant of successful stakeholder engagement, emphasizing the need for institutional backing in driving empathy-led performance improvements.

5.4 Future Research Directions

While the study offers significant insights, future research could further refine and expand upon its findings.

5.4.1 Longitudinal Studies on Empathy Management

Future studies should consider longitudinal studies to be able to explore the long-term effects of empathetic leadership on stakeholder engagement and team performance. Inasmuch as this research established an encouraging relationship, its influence cannot be appropriately understood except over these extended periods, where causal mechanisms and sustainability of stakeholders' strategies may come under scrutiny.

5.4.2 Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Since the stakeholder interaction is increasingly global, comparisons should be conducted between the empathy management effects under different cultural environments. Leadership practices are culture-based and determining the differences

of empathy-driven stakeholder strategies within Western and Eastern management practices may further enhance generalizability to a greater population.

5.4.3 Industry-Specific Analysis

This research is based on general organizational contexts, and the sectoral implications of empathy management can be researched further. For example, the analysis of stakeholder engagement on the basis of empathy in organizations like technology, health care, or public sector can help in giving industry-specific recommendations for leadership training and stakeholder governance.

5.5 Limitations

While this study provides valuable contributions, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. **Self-Reported Data:** The study relied on self-reported responses, which may introduce social desirability bias. Future studies should incorporate multi-source data collection methods, such as managerial assessments and stakeholder feedback. **Geographical Scope:** The research was conducted within a specific geographic and organizational context, limiting its external validity. Future studies should test these findings in diverse industries and regions. **Unaccounted Confounding Variables:** While the study controlled for key variables, factors such as organizational culture, industry-specific constraints, and external market conditions were not explicitly accounted for. Future research should integrate additional control variables to refine causal interpretations.

5.5.1 Conclusion

The study provides useful insights on the association of Empathy Management, Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Engagement, and Team Performance considering the moderating role of Top Management Support. Findings shown reflect that, though Empathy Management cannot directly impact team performance on its own, it definitely impacts when the very same is managed and delivered

through proper mechanisms of stakeholder management and engagement. Further, it amplifies these effects by giving the appropriate strategic support and resources through Top Management Support.

The study contributes to the literature in leadership, stakeholders, and performance management by empirically validating the importance of stakeholder-oriented leadership strategies. By demonstrating that Stakeholder Management and Stakeholder Engagement fulfill this mediating role, the research reinforces the argument that efficient stakeholder practices enhance team efficiency and alignment with organizational goals.

Taking a practical view, there is a need to emphasize empathy-driven leadership programs, structured stakeholder engagement frameworks, and toil of top management to support stakeholder initiatives. If such corporate governance models are developed and included in the businesses' systems, they will be able to enhance better team performance and stakeholder relations.

The limitations acknowledged within this study range from self-report data to its geography scope as well as omitted confounding variables, thus necessitating future work toward exploring effects on longitudinal axes, cross-cultural comparisons, and even industry-level-specificity.

In conclusion, the study suggests the significance of empathetic stakeholder strategies in the performance of a team. Strategic combinations that would lead to the achievement of an inclusive, high-performing, and sustainable work environment for all could be proved by leadership empathy, structured stakeholder engagement, and proactive involvement by top management.

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Appendix



CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISLAMABAD

Department of Management Sciences

Dear Respondent,

I am Ghulam Jaffar (MPM 223031), a student of MS (Project Management) at Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad. My research focuses on "*The Role of Empathy Management in Enhancing Team Performance,*" with *Stakeholder Engagement and Stakeholder Management as mediating factors and Top Management Support as a moderating factor*".

Your insights will be invaluable in understanding these relationships in real-world contexts. I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire, which should be engaging and thought-provoking. Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you very much for your valuable participation.

Yours sincerely,

Ghulam Jaffar

MS Research Scholar

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad

Section I: (Demographics)

Section 3: Supervisors Information

Please select the appropriate option.

1. Gender:

A. Male B. Female

2. Education:

1. Matric 2. Bachelor 3. Master 4. MS/M.Phil.
5. PhD

3. Age (years):

1. 18-25 2. 26-33 3. 34-41 4. 42-49 5. 50 or
above

4. Experience (years):

1. 5 and less 2. 6-13 3. 14-21 4. 22-29 5. 30
or above

For following set of questions. Please read the statement and tick mark the box of your choice against each statement. To indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. **Strongly Disagree**

2. **Disagree**

3. **Neutral**

4. **Agree**

5. **Strongly Agree**

Section II: (Empathy Management)

For the following questions, please tick in appropriate boxes your strength of agreement with the following statements:

1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree and 5) Strongly Agree

Sr No:	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1	People's negative emotions are so easily passed on to me that they affect me as if they were my own.					
2	When I am next to someone who is upset, I end up feeling the same way.					
3	When I am next to someone who is upset, their emotions do not transfer to me.					
4	When I know I will be exposed to an emotionally negative and intense situation, I prepare to distance myself from the situation.					
5	Before a difficult situation, I use some techniques to face the emotions to come, such as relaxation.					
6	I avoid situations involving negative emotions because I don't know how to get rid of them.					
7	I know how to separate myself from others' feelings.					
8	It is difficult for me to identify which negatives emotions are my own and which are the other person's.					
9	I am able to determine if the emotions I experience are my own or the other person's.					
10	When I am with someone, I can identify which part of what I am feeling is caused by that person.					

11	When it comes to positive emotions, I can easily identify which have been passed on to me by the other person and which are my own.					
12	When someone explains to me how they feel, it is difficult for me to understand it.					
13	I struggle to understand how another person is feeling.					
14	I tend not to understand how someone is feeling by their non-verbal communication.					
15	I know how to appease someone.					
16	If someone is feeling sad, I pass my joy on to him/her.					
17	When someone near me is feeling anxious, I don't know how but I am able to calm him/her.					
18	It is difficult for me to create positive emotions in a difficult situation.					

Section III: (Top Management Support)

Sr No:	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1	Top managers of the company are aware of the methodology used for managing projects.					
2	Top managers of the company decide the projects that have to be developed.					
3	Top managers of the company have an active role when defining success criteria of projects.					
4	Top managers of the company are responsible for establishing the project management methodology.					
5	Top managers of the company are frequently informed about the progress of projects.					
6	Top managers of the company are involved in the monitoring and controlling phase of programs and portfolios.					

Section IV: (Stakeholder Management)

S.No	Team Performance	1	2	3	4	5
1	Project stakeholders were formally identified.					
2	Stakeholders were classified by their level of influence, power, and interest in the project.					
3	Stakeholders of the project, especially those with high power and influence, had their needs deployed in actions and activities throughout the life of the project.					
4	Stakeholders were mapped by the level of urgency and legitimacy in the project.					
5	The Stakeholders of the project had their objectives open in actions and activities					
6	During the execution of the project, inclusions and/or changes in activities were planned to adapt the identified needs of the Stakeholders.					
7	There has been frequent communication with the main Stakeholders regarding the project.					
8	Project team monitored and reassessed the situation					
9	There were actions to engage Stakeholders throughout the life of the project.					
10	There were actions to strengthen relationships with Stakeholders throughout the life of the project.					
11	I believe that Stakeholders were engaged in the project.					

Section V: (Stakeholder Engagement)

Sr NO	Stakeholder Engagement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The focus is on problems important to the stakeholders.					
2	All stakeholders look at the data to determine the issues the stakeholders think are important.					
3	The effort incorporates factors (for example—organizational priorities, market conditions, resource availability, regulatory requirements, stakeholder goals) that influence success.					
4	The focus is on cultural factors that influence stakeholder behaviors.					
5	All stakeholders have the opportunity to share ideas, input, and leadership responsibilities and to share in the determination of the project structure.					
6	Plans are developed and adjusted to meet the needs and concerns of the stakeholders.					
7	All stakeholders agree to take on specific tasks according to their comfort, ability, and expertise.					
8	All stakeholders assist in establishing roles and responsibilities for the engagement					
9	All stakeholders share updates, progress, strategies, and new ideas regularly.					
10	A plan is in place for ongoing problem-solving.					
11	All stakeholders are involved in determining next steps.					
12	Stakeholder-engaged activities are continued until the goals (as agreed upon by all stakeholders) are achieved.					

13	All stakeholders continue stakeholder-engaged activities beyond an initial project, activity, or initiative.					
14	All stakeholders have a variety of opportunities to gain new skills or knowledge from their involvement.					
15	All stakeholders are encouraged to learn from each other.					
16	The engagement adds value to the work of all stakeholders.					
17	All stakeholders share resources to increase the ability to address the issue of interest.					
18	The team builds on strengths and resources within the stakeholder groups.					
19	The team works with existing stakeholder networks and organizations.					
20	The team includes representation from the relevant stakeholder groups.					
21	Fair processes have been established to manage conflict or disagreements.					
22	All stakeholders' ideas are treated with openness and respect.					
23	All stakeholders agree on the timeline for making shared decisions about the project.					
24	All stakeholders agree on ownership of data for publications and presentations.					
25	All stakeholders can use knowledge generated from the engagement.					
26	All interested partners are involved in activities related to sharing results.					

27	All stakeholders have the opportunity to be coauthors when the work is published.					
28	The engagement's processes support trust among all stakeholders.					
29	All stakeholders are confident that they will receive credit for their contributions to the engagement. the partnership.					
30	Mutual respect exists among all stakeholders.					
31	All stakeholders respect the stakeholders being served.					
32	All stakeholders understand the culture of the organizations and stakeholder groups involved in the engagement.					

Section VI: (Team Performance)

Sr NO	Team Performance	1	2	3	4	5
1	The team leader directed the project team members to do what was required in project					
2	Project team leader had a broad viewpoint.					
3	Project team members communicated well.					
4	Project team members cooperated to do the tasks in a timely manner					
5	Project team maintained calm and control.					
6	Project team morale was positive					
7	Project team adapted to changing situations					
8	Project team monitored and reassessed the situation					
9	Project team anticipated potential actions					
10	Project team prioritized tasks					
11	The team followed approved standards and guidelines					