

THE IMPACT OF COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP ON REDUCING DIGITAL FATIGUE

O IMPACTO DA LIDERANÇA COMPASSIVA NA REDUÇÃO DA FADIGA DIGITAL

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the role of compassionate leadership in reducing digital fatigue at Al-Koot Private University by analyzing the nature of the relationship between the two variables and measuring the extent of their influence on one another. The research was based on a descriptive-analytical approach, using a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The sample consisted of 228 employees at the university under study, and the data were analyzed using the statistical package SPSS V.28, utilizing a number of descriptive and inferential statistical methods appropriate to the study's objectives. The results of the analysis showed that the university under study adopts a highly humanistic approach centered on valuing the feelings of subordinates and humility in interactions, which strengthens emotional bonds within the academic environment. Employees face moderate levels of psychological stress and mental fatigue as a result of technical demands, which has begun to negatively impact their sense of personal accomplishment.

Keywords: Compassionate Leadership. Digital Fatigue.

Resumo

Este estudo teve como objetivo investigar o papel da liderança compassiva na redução da fadiga digital na Universidade Privada Al-Koot, analisando a natureza da relação entre as duas variáveis e medindo o grau de influência mútua entre elas. A pesquisa baseou-se em uma abordagem descritivo-analítica, utilizando um questionário como principal ferramenta de coleta de dados. A amostra consistiu em 228 funcionários da universidade em estudo, e os dados foram analisados utilizando o pacote estatístico SPSS V.28, empregando diversos métodos estatísticos descritivos e inferenciais adequados aos objetivos do estudo. Os resultados da análise mostraram que a universidade em estudo adota uma abordagem altamente humanística, centrada na valorização dos sentimentos dos subordinados e na humildade nas interações, o que fortalece os laços emocionais no ambiente acadêmico. Os funcionários enfrentam níveis moderados de estresse psicológico e fadiga mental como resultado de exigências técnicas, o que começou a impactar negativamente seu senso de realização pessoal.

Palavras-chave: Liderança Compassiva. Fadiga Digital.



1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, business organizations, particularly educational institutions, have undergone rapid digital transformations to adapt to swiftly evolving conditions, driven by a new wave of technological advancements reliant on electronic platforms for their operations and institutional communication. Consequently, a current challenge faced by employees due to prolonged exposure to digital devices is a phenomenon known as digital fatigue. Leaders must also address the human pressures stemming from digitalization and the proliferation of smart devices, in light of these organizational challenges. The aim of this study was to examine the correlation between compassionate leadership and digital fatigue. The analysis of case-related information elucidates the essential regression that must be implemented within an organization, as these variables constitute critical pillars of organizational success.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Compassionate leadership: concept, dimensions

2.1.1 *The concept of compassionate leadership*

Was defined by Bagaskara (2024:13) as an important aspect of effective leadership that involves understanding and managing one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Harris (2023:186) explained that leadership is difficult, and to be effective, it often requires giving new instructions, providing firm feedback, and making tough decisions that disappoint people and, in some cases, even lead to their dismissal. Demonstrating empathy in leadership cannot come at the expense of wisdom and effectiveness, as both are necessary. Wise and compassionate leadership is the ability to accomplish difficult tasks in a humane way. Leaders achieve the best results through wise empathy, balancing concern for their employees with the need to move their organizations forward effectively and productively. When firm measures are required, they are taken with genuine consideration for people's feelings and well-being (Hougaard: 2020: 5).

2.1.2 *The importance of compassionate leadership*

Compassionate leadership is one of the leadership styles adopted by some leaders; it is essential and of great importance in organizations for several reasons: it enhances communication, builds strong relationships, resolves conflicts, inspires and motivates teams, is adaptable, and plays a crucial role in decision-making (Bagaskara, 2024, p. 20). The importance of compassionate leadership is highlighted in the following:

- The ability to connect with others and accept their flaws, which helps leaders understand why others need more than just positive words and good intentions (Chaiprasit & Rinthaisong:2022:2).
- Empathy and compassion connect us to others through the language of emotions and shared experiences, heart to heart, beyond words, beyond appearances and gestures. Through feelings of empathy and compassion, we help ourselves learn and grow, and we also enable others to feel safe enough to talk about what is going on in their lives and tell their stories without fear of being judged, criticized, or abandoned (Deliu:2019:284).
- Practicing compassionate leadership with employees contributes to fostering a spirit of cooperation within the team, raising levels of trust, and strengthening organizational loyalty. Empathy is also becoming increasingly important in rapidly changing work environments, particularly with the rise of remote work and the growing ambiguity and uncertainty during global crises and transformations (Hougaard & Carter, 2022, p. 3).
- Compassionate leadership facilitates the expansion of organizational empathy, resulting in positive benefits for both individuals and the organization, such as enhanced trust, engagement, commitment, positive influence, and performance (Simpson *et al.*, 2022:339).

2.1.3 *Dimensions of compassionate leadership*

Our current research adopts the scale of (Eunsoo Choi, 2014), which was also mentioned by (Chaiprasit & Rinthaisong, 2022), as it is the closest to this study according

to what the researcher concluded. compassionate leadership in this scale consists of three dimensions: (altruistic cooperation, empathy and humility, and mutual trust), as follows:

- **Altruistic Cooperation:** Altruistic cooperation refers to voluntary actions that help colleagues avoid or solve problems at work. It is considered an important indicator in promoting group cohesion and harmony among people, which ultimately leads to improved service quality (Shen, *et al.*, 2023:2). Research has shown the importance of altruistic cooperation in leadership practices because it promotes better communication, reduces conflicts, and raises levels of participation within teams. When employees see their leaders as empathetic and altruistic, they are more likely to show higher levels of commitment, participation, and satisfaction (Safa & Shah, 2025:118-122).
- **Empathy and Humility:** Empathetic leaders possess the ability to create a positive and supportive work environment, build strong relationships with their followers, and motivate them to achieve their goals (Masubelele, 2024:1). Eerola, 2025:14-19, stated that empathy in leadership has multiple benefits and effects, as it contributes to enhancing motivation, well-being, happiness, commitment, performance, emotional regulation, psychological resilience, and communication in the workplace, leading to sustainable positive organizational outcomes. A leader's humility is defined as "a personality trait that appears in social contexts and indicates (a) a willingness to accurately assess oneself, (b) an appreciation that demonstrates the strengths and contributions of others, and (c) a willingness to learn" (Silard, *et al.*, 2025:2). Humble leaders tend to adopt an egalitarian attitude rather than one of superiority or subservience in their interactions with others. This creates a context in which subordinates feel psychologically secure and are motivated to adopt behaviors that improve workflow and promote better well-being (Chintakananda, *et al.*, 2024:3).

Mutual Trust: Trust can be defined as the acceptance of doubt and risk associated with the expectation that the other party will act to their best and in good faith (Bedenik *et al.*, 2024:38). Trust is a fundamental, dynamic, and relational construct that forms the basis of all forms of organizational interaction. This trust manifests itself across multiple dimensions: affective (based on emotional bonds), cognitive (based on reliability and competence), behavioral (based on actions), and institutional (based on systems and

fairness) (Votto, 2025:6). A study conducted by Nilervall (Elmefur, 2024:48) addressed the importance of mutual trust between leaders and subordinates in the workplace. Leaders emphasized that trust in employees' ability to perform their tasks effectively is fundamental to effective leadership and adapting to new work methods, and that it allows leaders to focus on long-term goals instead of traditional control and monitoring methods.

2.2 Digital fatigue: concept, dimensions

2.2.1 The concept of digital fatigue

(Ibrahim, *et al.*, 2025:2) defined digital fatigue as a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and a decreased sense of professional competence. Hidayati *et al.* (2025:4) defined it as the exhaustion resulting from spending excessive time on digital devices, whether for work or leisure. This condition can lead to stress, fatigue, desensitization, and a loss of focus. Digital fatigue can occur when high work demands (workload, emotional work, and constant digital connectivity) exceed available resources (training, managerial support, and emotional coping mechanisms) (Boison & Burke, 2025:17).

2.2.2 The importance of digital fatigue

A thorough and practical examination of the phenomenon of digital fatigue can improve the use of technology in the workplace while taking into account the psychological impact of digital interactions among employees. Future research in this area will be useful in developing more effective and responsive strategies (Dharma & Mahaardhika, 2025:82). Once fatigue is identified, employers can take a number of steps to assist the individual employee. These may range from providing additional support, such as coaching or counseling, to helping the employee manage their workload more efficiently, implementing tailored strategies to reduce fatigue, or assisting the employee in managing the situation by creating healthier and more productive workplaces, which in turn help them remain engaged in their work and maintain high productivity (Jayabharathi, 2023:189). With growing concerns about workers' mental health and

burnout since the global pandemic, and the rise of hybrid work models—which mean more workers are relying on digital workplaces to get their work done—there is an urgent and significant need to understand the impact of digital work demands on their well-being (Marsh *et al.*, 2024:2).

2.2.3 Dimensions of digital fatigue

The current research adopts the scale developed by Maslach (1981), also cited by de Lima (2025:2), because it provides a comprehensive view of digital fatigue and is suitable for the study variables. Digital fatigue consists of three dimensions: emotional Exhaustion, which focuses on negative feelings or psychological stress experienced by individuals, Depersonalization (Derealization), which focuses on the loss of a sense of self and identity; and Reduced personal accomplishment, which focuses on reduced employee efficiency and their diminished ability to achieve job goals.

- **Emotional Exhaustion:** Emotional Exhaustion, or the feeling of depleted personal resources, is a key component of fatigue and can result from high work demands (Marsh *et al.*, 2024:3). Emotional Exhaustion is defined as "the negative feeling experienced by individuals when they are exposed to a trauma at work" (Cvington, 2025:10-11). These stressors are often caused by daily encounters with suffering, the traumas of others, and work-related pressures. This constant exposure, combined with stress and acute fatigue, puts them at increased risk of fatigue and/or emotional exhaustion, impacting their mental health and job performance, and reducing their satisfaction and productivity.
- **Depersonalization (Derealization):** Depersonalization involves a feeling of detachment from one's own thoughts or feelings, or observing oneself from the outside, as if one were a robot, or a loss of the sense of being a unified and embodied self (Pons *et al.*, 2025:2). Fino *et al.* (2024:1) defined depersonalization disorder as a dissociative disorder, indicating a breakdown and fragmentation of vital psychological functions that normally operate harmoniously. The symptoms of depersonalization disorder consist of two main components: detachment and emotional numbness (emotional blunting or apathy). The individual may feel as if in a dream or a game and may feel alienated from their own reflection in a mirror.

At a conscious level, the person recognizes themselves ("I know it's me") but lacks emotional attachment to their image ("I don't feel it's me"), leading to a profound sense of alienation (Fortuna & Golonka, 2024:2).

- **Reduced personal accomplishment:** Achievement is a positive feeling that generates feelings of personal appreciation, motivation, and satisfaction. However, balancing tasks is often difficult and can be exacerbated by inherent pressures in the work environment. (Fitzsimons, *et al.*, 2025:724). Digital tools and technologies contribute significantly to the sense of professional achievement through the ability to generate greater creative output, accomplish tasks efficiently, and the satisfaction resulting from the use of digital technologies (Kobiela, *et al.*, 2024:11-16). However, professional achievement sometimes decreases among employees. A systematic study conducted by Agyapong, *et al.*, 2024:2 reported that the prevalence of severe emotional burnout was 28.6%, depersonalization 14.5%, and decreased professional achievement 29.5%. Participants in the same study who suffered from symptoms of severe burnout were about twice as likely to experience decreased professional achievement compared to those with low fatigue.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research problem

With the accelerating pace of technological change, organizations in Iraq have become increasingly reliant on digital tools to manage their daily operations, whether in communication, information exchange, or task completion. Despite the many benefits of these transformations, they have given rise to a growing phenomenon known as digital burnout, which manifests as a sense of emotional exhaustion among employees resulting from daily encounters with the suffering and trauma of others, the pressures of digital work, and a state of mental detachment caused by the work and its tools. Conversely, compassionate leadership serves as a crucial solution, as its emphasis on altruistic collaboration, humility, empathy, and trust can alleviate the digital strain on employees. Moreover, the majority of Iraqi institutions, including the one examined in this study, are

unaware of the interrelations among their variables. The research problem is articulated by the central inquiry, "Can compassionate leadership effectively mitigate digital fatigue?"

3.2 Importance of the study

This study has significant implications for various reasons. Al-Kut Private University is a prominent private educational institution in Wasit Governorate, dedicated to fulfilling the community's demand for specialized academic talent that aligns with local labor market requirements. This study enhances the management literature by establishing connections among the variables analyzed, a framework inadequately addressed in prior research. The study offers a theoretical and practical framework to aid Iraqi organizations in adopting contemporary leadership practices that improve employees' mental health and mitigate digital stress. The study's societal significance arises from its examination of digital fatigue.

3.3 Research objectives

1. The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the study variables (Compassionate leadership and digital fatigue).
2. To formulate a set of practical recommendations that decision-makers can use to improve the digital work environment in Iraq.

3.4 Research hypotheses

- Main hypothesis 1 (There is a statistically significant relationship between empathic leadership and its dimensions on digital burnout)
- Main hypothesis 2 (There is a statistically significant effect of empathic leadership and its dimensions on digital burnout)

3.5 Study population and sample

The careful selection of the study field and population is a fundamental pillar for ensuring the accuracy of the results and the validity of the hypothesis testing. Hence, the field of application was selected to be employees using digital technologies and devices at Al-Kut Private University. Because of the kind of variables and objectives involved, this makes for a group that is directly engaged in digital interaction.

It was a sample size of 500 employees from the entire population. The sample size was calculated using the following formula, adapted from a suggestion made by Steven K. Thompson (2012:59).

By applying statistical determining criteria for sample size, it is determined that at least 218 will be a suitable size of studied population in order to rightly reflect. The researcher divided 240 questionnaires by drawing a random sample from among the workers who work with digital devices to avoid bias. A total of 235 completed questionnaires were received. A total of 228 questionnaires were verified to be valid for statistical analysis after verification and sorting. This value exceeds the necessary threshold and guarantees an appropriate representation of the population, which improves scientific findings reliability (Table (1)).

Table 1

Responses of the Study Sample

Status	Distributed	Non-refundable	Invalid	Suitable for analysis
Number	240	8	4	228
Percentage	100%	3%	2%	95%

The study sample exhibited diverse characteristics, including demographic characteristics such as the number of training courses and workshops attended, educational attainment, and years of service, as detailed in the following table:

Table 2*Statistical Description of the Study Sample*

Demographic Variable	Categories	repetition	%
Number of Training Courses and Workshops	One training course only	54	23.7%
	Two training courses	78	34.2%
	Three to four training courses	62	27.2%
	Five or more training courses	34	14.9%
Educational Attainment	Diploma	18	7.9%
	Bachelor's degree	104	45.6%
	Higher Diploma	12	5.3%
	Master's degree	46	20.2%
Length of Employment	Doctorate	48	21.0%
	Five years or less	42	18.4%
	Six to ten years	88	38.6%
	Eleven to fifteen years	56	24.6%
	Sixteen to twenty years	27	11.8%
Total	Twenty years or more	15	6.6%
		228	100%

“ Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V.28.”

“The table previous to this one does display a relative texture in experiences and qualifications for the study sample of 228 individuals. The maximum proportion (34.2%) for the variable "two training courses" and the minimum (14.9%) for "five or more courses". For education level, the highest number of those having a bachelor's degree (45.6%) while only have low and high diplomas had the lowest number of cases (5.3%). 6-10 years work experience was the most common (38.6%), and 20+ years at the least common (6.6%) This statistical grouping consists of a sample of young and mid-career professionals, with legitimate academic qualifications, including an appropriate set for measuring the positive effects of “empathetic leadership” on “digital burnout,” in a university-oriented fashion ”.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Questionnaire reliability or scale reliability tests

When discussing reliability, it is important to consider the consistency of obtaining the same results when the instrument is applied to the same sample at different times. This concept encompasses the breadth of the research and the stability of the

results. Scale reliability is measured on a scale from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate greater reliability. To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is often used, with values greater than 70% being considered acceptable in managerial and behavioral research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). After testing, it was found that all measurements achieved satisfactory results both individually and collectively, as shown in the table below.

Table 3

Reliability and Validity Coefficients

The Variable	Dimensions	The Value Of (Cronbach's Alpha)	(Cronbach's Alpha) For The Variable
Empathetic Leadership	Altruistic Cooperation	0.812	0.825
	Empathy And Humility	0.824	
	Mutual Trust	0.839	
Digital Burnout	Emotional Exhaustion	0.841	0.854
	Mental Distance	0.867	
	Decreased Professional Achievement	0.854	

“Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V.28.”

The table above shows that the study instrument's reliability indicators are high and excellent (Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.812 to 0.867 for dimensions and =0.700). High results indicated a closely relative internal integrity between questionnaire pieces and its ability to render the measured variable in both accuracy and reliability when the study population is re-applied, giving scientific objectivity to the data collected and confirming its complete adequacy for advanced statistical tests to investigate study hypotheses and reach its goals.

4.2 Results of the descriptive analysis of the study variables

4.2.1 Empathic leadership variable

“The statistical results for the “empathetic leadership” variable at Al-Kut University indicated a general high level of agreement with an arithmetic mean value equal (3.53) and (70.6%) response rate, which reflects that leaders are capable of understanding feelings and meeting their needs. The “empathy and humility” dimension ranked the highest with a mean of (3.58), while the “mutual trust” dimension came in second place (3.51) on the other hand, which was found to have the lowest impact on creativity is "altruistic cooperation" which also ranked third with a mean of (3.50). This suggests that aspects of the voluntary initiative should be enhanced to improve integrated leadership performance as the levels across all dimensions were mostly positive”.

Table 4

Summarizes the descriptive indicators for the dimensions of the empathetic leadership variable.

	Dimensions of the Empathetic Leadership Variable	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Direction of the answer	Level of agreement	Answer level	Order of importance
1	Altruistic Cooperation	3.50	0.968	Agreed	70.0%	High	3
2	Empathy and Humility	3.58	0.881	Agreed	71.6%	High	1
3	Mutual Trust	3.51	0.850	Agreed	70.2%	High	2
	Empathic leadership variable	3.53	0.900	Agreed	70.6%	High	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V.28.”

4.2.2 2-Digital burnout variable

“The descriptive results of the sample study program showed a phenomenon of (digital burnout) in relation to Al-Kut University with an arithmetic mean of (3.27) and 65.4% agreement, which confirms that the employee is under an average state of pressure as a result of continuous technological interaction. The first ranked psychological challenges was “emotional burnout” that reported highest dimensions (Mean = (3.30)),

followed by decline in professional achievements which also indicated a relative decrease in job efficiency (Mean = (3.27)) and the third place was for mental detachment with mean of (3.24) expressed formal emotional virginity. What this almost in its entirety supports is a gap in the quality of digital work life requiring administrative intervention to avoid increasing psychological and professional distress”.

Table 5

Summarizes the descriptive indicators for the dimensions of the digital burnout variable.

ت	Dimensions of digital burnout:	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Direction of the answer	Level of agreement	Answer level	Order of importance
1	Emotional burnout	3.30	0.818	neutral	66.1%	middle	1
2	Mental detachment	3.24	0.814	neutral	64.7%	middle	3
3	Decreased professional achievement	3.27	0.895	neutral	65.3%	middle	2
	Digital burnout	3.27	0.842	neutral	65.4%	middle	

Source: Prepared By The Researcher Based On The Outputs Of Spss V.28.”

5 RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Testing and analyzing the impact between study variables

-1The First Main Hypothesis (H1): This hypothesis was based on the expectation of a statistically significant correlation between empathic leadership and digital burnout at the studied university. As shown in the table and figure below, there is a weak negative correlation of (-0.354), which is statistically significant because the significance level is within the acceptable region (less than 5%). The calculated t-value of (-4.582) is greater than the tabulated t-value of (-1.96), supporting the significance level. Based on these results, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the greater the attention given by the administration of the studied university to the components of empathic leadership, the more this automatically leads to a reduction in digital burnout, albeit at a weak level.

Figure 6*Correlation Values Between Empathic Leadership and Digital Burnout*

Empathic Leadership	Correlation coefficient value and significance level		Intense relationship	T-test calculated
Digital Burnout	R	-0.354	Weak	-4.582
	Sig.	0.000		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V.28.”

5.2 The second main hypothesis

States: "There is a statistically significant effect of empathic leadership on digital burnout." To prove this hypothesis, a structural model was developed to illustrate the nature of the relationship between empathic leadership and digital burnout. The table and figure below demonstrate the reliability and validity of the model, based on the quality of fit criteria, which exceeded the required indicators.

The GFI (Game of Fit Index) value is 1.00, all indices (IFI, CFI, TLI) are greater than 0.90, the chi-squared value of the ratio of freedoms is 2.738, and the root mean squared error of rounding (RMSEA) is 0.074. Furthermore, the factorial regression weights exceeded 0.40, indicating a high level of fit. The inferential statistical results regarding empathic leadership and digital burnout are also evident, with the standard regression value recorded. (S.R.W = -0.222), and the value of (R^2) indicates that empathic leadership was able to explain (13%) of the variables related to digital burnout. The remaining (87%) are attributed to factors outside the study model. The extracted (t) value for the (S.R.W) variable for empathic leadership was (-9.632), which is greater than the critical (t) value of (-1.96). This indicates the statistical significance of (S.R.W). It is clear from the (S.R.W) value that increasing empathic leadership by one unit will lead to a decrease in digital burnout by (22.2%). Based on the above, the hypothesis can be accepted: (There is a statistically significant effect between empathic leadership and digital burnout).

Table 7

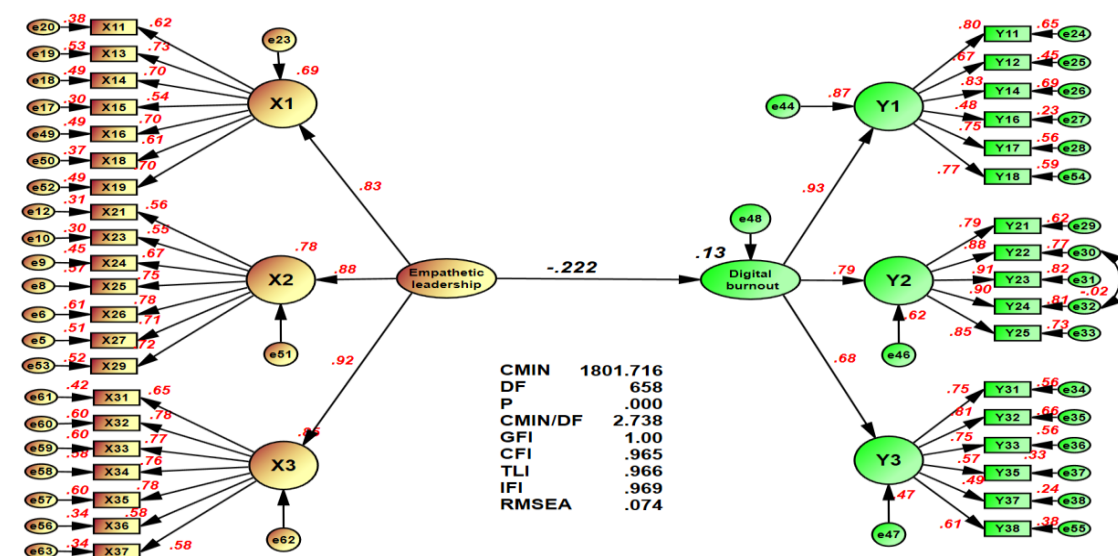
Regression Model between Empathetic Leadership and Digital Burnout

Digital Burnout	independent variable	Standardized regression value (S.R.W.)	(t)	R Square	Sig
	Empathetic leadership	-0.222	-9.632	0.13	0.000
	(t) scheduling		-1.96		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of AMOS.”

Figure 2

Impact analysis between empathetic leadership and digital burnout



“ Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of AMOS.”

6 DISCUSSION

The result of this study found a negative correlation between empathetic leadership and digital burnout. The results of the analyses showed that leaders who adopt behaviors based on empathy, humility, and mutual trust, have a direct contribution to reducing psychological stress and emotional exhaustion from the excessive use of digital technologies at Al-Kut University. The university is in a preferential humanistic environment with a relatively high mean score 3.53, while the presence of digital burnout levels in the middle range (3.27) also indicates an "anxious equilibrium" that requires proactive management intervention. This is especially significant now since emotional burnout was the most acute dimension among employees, indicating a possible decrease

in professional performance in the long run if practices of "altruistic collaboration," which ranked last, are not strengthened. The explanatory power of the effect model ($R^2 = 0.13$) confirmed that empathetic leadership is an important variable and moral brake against increasing "digital alienation" and mental distance. Even assuming all the weights of the regressions standard, this means that higher focus on human element and moral appreciation need to cut average dry, technical work input by from 3.7% to as much as 22.2%. That shows a need that leverage not just simple classical emotional support but rather making champion full managerial empowerment and link daily digital actions into the institutional strategic priorities. This infuses work with human meaning, reducing the alienation of the employee as another cog in a technological machine, and transforms the digital realm from one of stress into that of creativity and sustainable organizational loyalty.

7 CONCLUSIONS

A Scientific Relationship Between Empathetic Leadership and Burnout Digital Al-Kut University Encouraging positive psychological connections, emphasizing "consideration and humility" and also "mutual trust" at the university. However, the relatively low instance of "altruistic cooperation" compared with other dimensions indicates an apparent absence among practices and initiatives that can enable voluntary support outside job scopes. Employees had mild digital burnout, with "emotional burnout" being the most common dimension. A mental effect of excess manipulation over electronic tools, affecting "professional performance" and resulting in the only method to retain energy with extreme tech pressure being "hysteria," reasoning or even desiccation.

Empathetic leadership safeguards the workplace as a "moral buffer" (an abstract barricade toward stressors) and digital inhibitors, through inferential analysis. Humanistic leadership behaviour results in 22.2% less digital burnout as indicated by AMOS hypothesis testing, establishing that the human side of leadership is more than a simple moral luxury to augment performance but forms an important pillar of strategy for psychological well-being in an era characterised by rapid technological advances. Moderate burning indicator, if reliable, does not call for moral support but management should encourage "compassionate digital empowerment"—compliance of sound

technical performance in an integrated bundle with a reasonable psychological contract. This ensures mid-level stress does not develop into corrosive burnout that damages the university's competitiveness and education.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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