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The Causes and Consequences of Compassion Fatigue from the Perspective of Faculty Members in Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia

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Abstract

The decreasing overall wellbeing of faculty members in higher education was exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is a scarcity of research exploring the causes of compassion fatigue in the higher education sector. Therefore, a main goal of this study was to explore the causes of compassion fatigue among faculty members from Malaysia's private higher education institutions. In addition, the resemblance symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout often complicate these two issues in the workplace. While there are very limited empirical studies and literature on the impact of compassion fatigue in the higher education context, this study also aims to gain knowledge about the consequences of compassion fatigue among faculty members. Finally, this study has gained insightful primary evidence from 9 semi structured interviews that has provided a detailed understanding and reforms needed to reduce and prevent compassion fatigue among faculty members in the higher education context. The contributions of knowledge, limitations of this study and future work are discussed in the conclusion. It is believed that this study sets out as a precedent study of compassion fatigue among faculty members in the higher education context and it reveals some insightful knowledge on this multifaceted issue which is little known for in Malaysia.

Keywords: Higher education policy, Job satisfaction, Prevention, Reforms, Wellbeing