

OVERVIEW OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TEACHERS' COMPASSION FATIGUE AND ITS CORRELATION WITH EMPATHY IN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SERVICE

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Abstract

Empathy is an essential quality for counselors when delivering counseling services, as it allows them to connect with their clients on a deeper level. However, it's recognized that empathy levels can fluctuate, with one potential factor being the onset of compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue refers to the exhaustion experienced by individuals providing care and attention to those they're assisting, a phenomenon commonly observed among social workers like counselors. This research seeks to examine the impact of compassion fatigue on empathy within the context of counseling services. This research employed a correlational methodology, utilizing the Pearson Correlation formula. The study population comprised guidance and counseling teachers from secondary schools in Pekanbaru city. This research used a random sampling technique and convenience sampling technique for a total of 36 people from 90 populations. The instrument used was a Likert scale with 5 closed model answer choices. The fatigue level among guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools of Pekanbaru City falls within the medium category at 66.66%, with the remaining 33.33% categorized as low. The empathy level among guidance and counseling teachers is predominantly in the very high category, accounting for 47.22%, while the remaining 52.77% falls within the high category. The correlation analysis indicates a significant inverse relationship between compassion fatigue and the empathy levels of guidance and counseling teachers in Pekanbaru City secondary schools. This is substantiated by a correlation coefficient of -0.604 . At a significance level of 0.01, the statistical analysis confirms the significance of this relationship, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.00, which is below the threshold of 0.05. This has shown that guidance and counselling teachers can still carry out their role well in counselling services, even though they have experienced compassion fatigue on average in the moderate category.

Keywords: Empathy; Compassion Fatigue; Individual Counselling; Counsellor

1. Introduction

Empathy is an absolute requirement for social workers. This relates to the task of serving fellow humans, which cannot be treated like a machine, that is, operated without feeling. Empathy is needed by social workers to build closeness, a feeling of mutual understanding of other people's needs, goals, and tendencies, and to encourage change. Empathy is awareness that someone is feeling a certain way (Slote, 2020), experiencing thoughts, emotions, thoughts, understanding and supporting others with compassion (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2007). If we examine the definition of empathy, we can see its importance for social workers who work in the realm of helping people change for the better. However, empathy is an ability that can change and is rarely seen clearly; it can only be felt by the person who experiences it.

Empathy can wane over time. One of the factors suspected to be the cause is compassion fatigue or boredom in giving love. Supported by research that makes compassion fatigue and empathy interrelated variables (Drahansky et al., 2016; Evli, 2023; Hansen et al., 2018; Intonato, 2020; Sahin et al., 2023). Compassion fatigue refers to the adverse impact stemming from prolonged exposure to others' suffering, which can impair an individual's capacity to empathize

and feel compassion towards others. (Bentley, 2022). In the role of a social worker, individuals often confront and address issues tied to the enduring suffering of others over extended periods, making it inevitable to encounter fatigue in offering compassion or experiencing compassion fatigue. (Cartagena, 2022), This is supported by several studies that link compassion fatigue to social workers, including teachers, nurses, doctors and counsellors (Adams et al., 2006; Bourassa & Clements, 2010; Cartagena, 2022; Jalan, 2023; Kapoulitsas & Corcoran, 2015; Raudhoh & Krisnawati, 2019; Robino, 2019; Stanley & Sebastine, 2024; Theses et al., 2021)

Counsellors, especially those who work in schools, are called guidance and counselling teachers (BK), who are really needed to help students achieve their potential and solve their problems. Just like social workers, counselors are susceptible to compassion fatigue, which could be linked to the varying degrees of empathy demanded during individual counseling sessions. As is known, the individual counselling process is very closely linked to the interaction between the counsellor and the client. If the counsellor, who plays an important role, is not in a healthy condition, then it is certain that counselling will not run well, especially in the early teens.

Early adolescence is a vulnerable age and is also known as an age full of conflict. They are vulnerable to experiencing psychological problems in an effort to achieve their development. Often, teenagers feel hopeless when facing problems because they think that adults do not understand their world. So they take it out on negative things such as getting involved in brawls (Primantoro, 2023), smoking, alcohol, and even illegal drugs (Nurjan, 2019). This causes teenagers, especially generation Z, to experience serious mental illness. At least 1 in 3 teenagers in Indonesia experience mental health problems, and 6.1% are aged 15 years and over (Fadhilah et al., 2024). They need a guidance and counselling teacher who should be able to empathize with the problems they are experiencing and help them get through their teenage years well.

Given the significance of guidance and counseling teachers in students' lives, it is crucial to investigate how compassion fatigue is defined and how it relates to counselors' empathetic skills when delivering counseling services, particularly in one-on-one settings. This is related to the position of individual counselling as a strategic service in responding to students' needs for support, such as direct empathy. This study seeks to offer an insight into compassion fatigue and its connection with the empathetic capacities of guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools in Pekanbaru City, specifically in the context of conducting individual counseling sessions. The objective is for the study's discoveries to provide valuable insights to guidance and counseling teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers alike. These insights can inform strategic measures to enhance individual counseling proficiency and implement broader improvements in guidance and counseling services within secondary school settings.

2. Method

This study was carried out using a quantitative approach via correlational methods (Pratama et al., 2023). This study aims to elucidate the potential correlation between compassion fatigue and the empathetic capabilities of counseling teachers during individual counseling sessions. The study was conducted in Pekanbaru City. The study population comprised 90 secondary guidance and counseling teachers in Pekanbaru City, all of whom were affiliated with the guidance and counseling teacher deliberation group. Determining the level of education is adjusted to the characteristics of the students who will be the research sample, namely early adolescents aged 13–17 years (Mahesha, Anggraeni, & Adriansyah, 2024). The research sample

was taken using simple random sampling technique (Tajik & Golzar, 2022) with convenience sampling method (Etikan, 2016). Total sample in this study was 36 persons.

The research instrument used to collect data for this study was a closed Likert-model questionnaire. (Rahima & Herlinda, 2017). The questionnaire was developed based on indicators of compassion fatigue and empathy through 28 items and 5 response options. Below are the response options along with their respective scores:

Tabel 1. Optional and Score

Optional	Score	
	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>
Very suitable	5	1
Suitable	4	2
Enough	3	3
Not Suitable	2	4
Not accordance with	1	5

Indicators of empathy developed into a questionnaire include tolerance, compassion, understanding other people's needs, willingness to help others, understanding, caring, and being able to control anger. (Saroinsong et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the compassion fatigue indicators developed into a questionnaire are: fatigue, irritability, negative stress coping behaviour, reduced desire to help others, reduced frequency of coming to work, reduced job satisfaction, and reduced ability to intervene in client problems (Cocker & Joss, 2016).

The research data is then described in two ways, there are categorization (Agus Irianto, 2010) with the following interval formula:

$$I = \frac{ST-SR}{K}$$

Information:

ST : High Score

SR : Low Score

K : Classes

The second set of data is the result of hypothesis testing using Pearson correlation using SPSS. The following is the categorization used:

Tabel 2. Compassion Fatigue and dan Empathy Categorized

Score	Categorized
62-73	Very High
50-61	High
38-49	Enough
26-37	Moderated
14-25	Low

2.1. Data on compassion fatigue and empathy for counselling teachers in Pekanbaru City

Data from the results of the compassion fatigue questionnaire for counselling teachers in Pekanbaru are presented as follows:

Tabel 3. Level of Compassion Fatigue and Empathy of Counselling Teachers in Pekanbaru

Score	Categorized	F <i>Compassion Fatigue</i>	%	F Empathy	%
62-73	Very High	0	0	17	47,22
50-61	High	0	0	19	52,77
38-49	Enough	0	0	0	0
26-37	Moderated	24	66,66	0	0
14-25	Low	12	33,33	0	0
Total		36	100	36	100

Data from processing the empathy questionnaire for guidance and counselling teachers in Pekanbaru City is presented as follows

2.2 Results of the relationship between compassion fatigue and the empathy abilities of counselling teachers in Pekanbaru City

The research hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation, and it was found that the compassion fatigue variable was negatively related to the empathy variable. can be seen in the following test results:

Table 4. Correlations

Correlations			
		EMPATH Y	COMPASSION FATIGUE
EMPATHY	Pearson	1	-.604**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	36	36
COMPASSION FATIGUE	Pearson	-.604**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	36	36

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

The correlation coefficient is -.604, indicating a robust negative correlation. The significance value, being less than 0.05, suggests that variable X is significantly correlated at the 0.01 acceptance level. Hence, the hypothesis asserting "a significant relationship exists between compassion fatigue and empathy among guidance and counseling teachers in individual counseling services" is confirmed.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *Description of the Compassion Fatigue Level of Counselling Teachers of Senior High School in Pekanbaru*

The study's results reveal that a majority of guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools within Pekanbaru City are experiencing moderate levels of compassion fatigue, accounting for 66.66%, whereas 33.33% are encountering low levels of compassion fatigue. Meanwhile, the level of empathy for guidance and counselling teachers, on the other hand, is in the very high category at 47.22% and high at 52.77%. Can be seen in the following diagram:

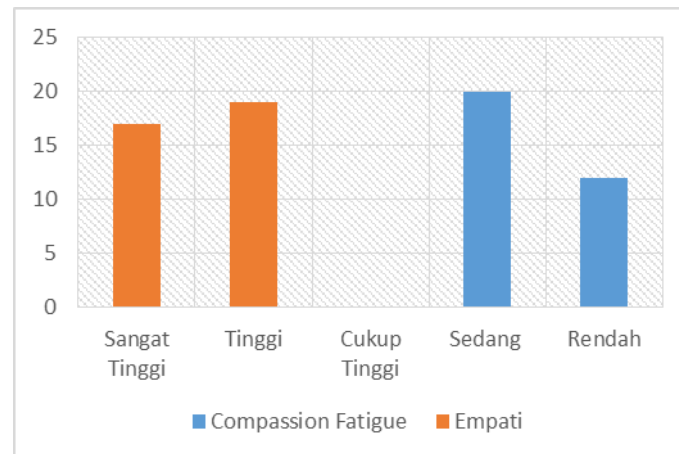


Figure 1. Compassion Fatigue Level of Counselling Teachers of Senior High School in Pekanbaru

Based on the data presented in Table 2 and Figure 1, it is evident that guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools of Pekanbaru City are experiencing compassion fatigue. This is in accordance with the theory, which states that compassion fatigue is a side effect that will be felt by social workers (Cartagena, 2022). This is caused by fatigue in providing attention and sympathy for the problems and suffering experienced by clients (Bentley, 2022) and chronic exposure to clients' traumatic stories (Can & Watson, 2019). However, the author assesses that the length of time with clients is not related to the guidance and counselling teacher's age or length of service.

In this study, the research sample had a variety of working periods ranging from < 5 years to > 15 years. Of the 37 people in the sample, 9 had less than 5 years of service, 11 had 6–10 years of work, 8 had 11–15 years, 7 had 16–20 years, and 1 person had more than 20 years of work. In this study, it was found that guidance and counselling teachers who worked <5 years and those who worked >10 years had almost the same scores. Therefore, it can be inferred that the duration of service may not be correlated with the compassion fatigue experienced by guidance and counseling teachers. The vulnerability of guidance and counseling teachers to compassion fatigue could be attributed to inadequate self-care practices and a deficiency in knowledge and skills pertaining to assisting clients. (Can & Watson, 2019). It was explained that social workers must be able to take care of themselves to avoid anxiety, distress, and fatigue when facing stories about clients' suffering. This is supported by a lack of knowledge and skills that cause mental burden on clients. It was further explained that because guidance and counselling teachers can feel the same emotions and suffering as clients, they need to train themselves to put aside personal feelings when providing assistance to clients. (Can & Watson, 2019).

The study findings indicate that the compassion fatigue encountered by guidance and counseling teachers indeed influences counseling services. Statement items such as "Counsellors feel tired in dealing with clients' attitudes during counselling, counsellors feel tired in dealing with

clients who find it difficult to open up, and counsellors find it difficult to hold back thoughts about clients' problems" received the highest score compared to other items. The study results reveal that guidance and counseling teachers not only experience exhaustion in managing clients' attitudes but also struggle to disengage from their thoughts, making it difficult for them to avoid becoming directly entangled in clients' problems. If the compassion fatigue situation is not handled well, it will have an impact on the psychology of the guidance and counselling teachers and the counselling services provided.

This research data also indicates that despite experiencing compassion fatigue, guidance and counseling teachers exhibit high levels of empathy towards their clients. This demonstrates that despite experiencing compassion fatigue, guidance and counseling teachers are capable of effectively fulfilling their roles in providing counseling services. If you look at the diagram comparison, it is in accordance with the theory that compassion fatigue and empathy are in opposite places. This needs to be explained by analyzing the results of the following hypothesis test.

3.2. Result of Hypothesis

The results of the analysis using Pearson correlation show that compassion fatigue is negatively correlated with empathy. This relationship shows the opposite direction, namely that if variable X is high, then variable Y is low (Li, Liu, & Zeng, 2010; Saputra, Barmawi, Ermawati, & Sa'diyah, 2017). Based on the research findings, compassion fatigue among guidance and counseling teachers falls within the medium and low categories, whereas empathy levels are categorized as very high and high. Even though guidance and counselling teachers in Pekanbaru City secondary schools experience compassion fatigue, they are still able to empathize in the very high category. The factors that cause BK teachers' empathy to be in the high category need to be explained in future research with a focus on maintaining empathic abilities in social workers who experience compassion fatigue.

4. Conclusion

The degree of compassion fatigue among guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools located in Pekanbaru City is recorded as 66.66% in the medium category and 33.33% in the low category. The empathy level among guidance and counseling teachers is predominantly categorized as very high, accounting for 47.22%, while 52.77% falls within the high category. Compassion fatigue exhibits a notable negative correlation with the empathy levels of guidance and counseling teachers in Pekanbaru City secondary schools, as indicated by a correlation test result of -0.604 . This relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level, given the p-value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05

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