

Workplace Loneliness and Compassion Fatigue Among Primary School Teachers: The Role of Perceived Social Support

Do, Thi Nga¹, Tran, Ngoc Co¹, Do, Van Thang¹,
Vu, Xuan Huong^{2*}

¹*University of Social Sciences and Humanities - VNUHCM*

²*Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*

Workplace loneliness has become a 'relational risk' in today's workplace. Relatively little is known, however, about this phenomenon, especially among teachers in non-Western countries. This study investigated the relationship between workplace loneliness and two components of compassion fatigue, i.e., burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Furthermore, it was investigated whether teachers' perceived social support would moderate the relationships between workplace loneliness and both components of compassion fatigue. Vietnamese primary school teachers (N = 169) from public as well as from non-public schools in Ho Chi Minh City completed the Loneliness at Work Scale, the burnout and the secondary traumatic stress subscales of the Professional Quality of Life Scale, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The findings showed significant positive correlations between workplace loneliness and burnout ($r = .59, p < .001$) and between workplace loneliness and secondary traumatic stress ($r = .41, p < .001$). The results of the multiple regression analyses revealed that workplace loneliness was a significant positive predictor of both burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Teachers' perceived social support was an independent predictor of lower burnout but not of secondary traumatic stress after controlling for workplace loneliness. The results of the moderation analyses showed that teachers' perceived social support did not significantly moderate the relationships between workplace loneliness and both components of compassion fatigue. Implications of the study are that workplace loneliness is a direct occupational risk or a vulnerability to teachers' professional quality of life. Teachers' workplace loneliness can be dealt with through School-based relational support systems.

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Author info: Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Vu, Xuan Huong
Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam;
Email: vxhuong@ntt.edu.vn

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