

# CULTIVATING A COMPASSION-CENTRIC ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SAUDI ARABIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Employee engagement in any business environment is of pivotal importance of, towards improving productivity, profitability, and customer loyalty. An organization's high expectation from its employee to perform efficiently and be highly productive puts tremendous pressure that causes collateral damages like stress, anxiety, and casual approach. Creating a compassionate business environment and cultivate healthy work culture will produce a highly motivated and productive workforce. In this background, the present research aimed to create awareness, build and identify active variables of compassion at the College of Business Administration, Al Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The college has undertaken such initiative to create a compassionate environment and to shift from competition and competency fatigue to a culture of compassion. The study is based on a primary survey administered among faculty members, students, and administrative staff. It primarily aimed to measure the impact of recently created compassionate environment. The data was evaluated by applying the basic statistical tools. Moreover, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out to evaluate the factors of compassion among the sample observed. Thus observed results indicate a significant compassion practices with a scope and opportunity of elevation to much stronger ethos of compassionate culture. The findings of research could be concluded in threefold (i) compassion is proved to be one of the core factor in increased student involvement (ii) one of the source of motivation among faculty members (iii) cause of morale boosting among administrative staff.*

*The study will be an impetus to compassion research which would help in combating the repercussions of unprecedented events like COVID 19. Which would help in readiness of humans to be more compassionate and empathetic. This study is a pilot research for other workplaces to initiate collaborate by cultivating compassion.*

**Keywords:** Altruism, Compassion, Education, Empathy, Engagement.

## INTRODUCTION

Post-cold war, the US Army war college students coined an acronym VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) (Millar et al., 2018; Minciu et al., 2020; Canzittu, 2020). This concept has the propensity to lean towards intensity, sensitivity, risk, and uncertainty are likely attempting to climb the ladder. Which is challenging yet offers opportunities that may be unsettling (Williams, 2014). As per Hargadon (2012) mitigating risk can be possible with

upgrading against various hurdles and obstacles faced by the firm. This leads to self-interested behavior and coherence. The work environment can be either positive or negative which likely to generate a sense of uncertainty and unsettling. This become a colossal task for leaders to strike a balance between being proactive and dealing in a day to normal affairs. While dealing with these conditions that impact their decision-making capabilities. If institutions do not pace up with the dynamically rapidly changing environment, they may end up being extinct from distinct (Ungureanu et al., 2018). Building cohesively structured communities will enable them to deal with uncertainties and difficult times with the least stress and anxiety (Lechler et al., 2019; Bello & Campbell, 2019; Chadha, 2017). VUCA ambiance paves a way for positive psychological sympathy, empathy, compassion, and mindfulness.

An individual is directly or indirectly affected when exposed to deplorable situations coupled with anguish and negativity which can potentially resonate contagion in the surroundings in which he functions. An unpleasant affliction to one person is likely to impact both involved who are emotionally bonded together. This implies a positive flow of vibes and energy is experienced by another person if the other one is exultant and vice versa. The concern and feeling for others impact more or less the same way as the sufferer. Thus to deal with negatively emotional scenarios, one such compassion skills act as the “*oxygen mask*” analogy of “*help yourself before you intend to help others*”. It has been proven scientifically that compassion and empathy interact in the brain through different networks. When humans experience pain, distress, and suffering, it directly affects peers as the brain functions on the anterior insula and anterior medial cingulate cortex. It is the main critical neural network related to suffering and sadness. The peers may not directly experience the anguish but still amidst the “*shared network*”. As per Park et al. (2018) Students working in team may get victim of conflicts and negativity between team members this may result in a term called intragroup conflict. Compassion is indeed an antidote to solving this intragroup conflict.

This is quite contagious since peer’s initial empathetic mode may switch themselves into a victim of empathetic distress that is likely to spread across. So over stressed patient also triggers responses on the others. It may universally impact others by raising their cortisol level higher. Stress and anxiety produce a toxic environment that hampers productivity and efficiency. As per Grigoropoulos et al. (2020) Morfosis is an educational paradigm shift based on three fundamental principles for students with the ability of be holistic thinker, meaningfulness, and harmony.

However, the Gallup survey (2018) in the USA reported 53% of workers are in the category of “*not engaged*”, the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged employee is 2.6 to 1 which infers improving efficiency is an arduous endeavor. As per Duncan (2014) congenial work environment creation will reflect a positive impact on the marketplace with actively engaged employees. Doug Conant, CEO of Campbell’s Soup, said, “*To win the marketplace you must first win in the workplace.*” The driving force is the power of compassion, which is the “*intense desire to alleviate the distress experienced by the other*” (Cowan, 2019) In other words, a strong genuine feel for others to overcome their suffering.

The Vision 2030 of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) emphasized in the text numbered, “*The values of giving, compassion, cooperation, and empathy are firmly entrenched in our society*” and “*we will formalize and strengthen the feel for the organization with our social and compassionate work so that our efforts have the maximum results and impact*”

All institutions of KSA are striving to align the Vision 2030 of KSA. The same is true about Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU), the sampled institution for current study. Which potentially seems to be embarking the journey of compassionate workplace. This mission could be achieved primarily at the regional level and secondarily at the global level.

The current study is considered as an endeavor to investigate to measure the level of awareness about compassion in one of the institutions of PSAU called College of Business Administration, Al Kharj (CBAK). More over the study will identify the active variables of compassion in CBAK specifically and in PSAU generally.

## **Power of Compassion**

Compassion can be defined as a feeling of intense empathy of caring for others, especially those who is grief-stricken by any calamity type. The ability to cope and bounce back to rejuvenate the victim so that he leads a normal life.

Two key terms: sympathy and empathy are supposed to be understood to comprehend compassion. Sympathy is the perception or feel pity or anguish, being considerate and responsive to the distress or need of someone else's adversity. Empathy is the ability to apprehend or feel what another person is experiencing from their frame of reference, and the capacity to comprehend and share the feelings of another by placing oneself in another's position. An individual mirror reflects the sufferer's misery while the sympathizer imitates the feeling of the person's feeling of misfortune.

In academia when a learner emerges from any angst state begins to receive positive vibes of compassion plays a crucial role which impacts the learner's performance ability. This ramps up and inculcates self-confidence, respites, and enable to deal with the situation. This phenomenon is called compassion satisfaction. It is imperative in an academic environment that the essence of elevating learning and development is due to compassion satisfaction. As per Cameron et al. (2011) compassionate supports are helping and caring for each other with kindness and compassion while they are suffering and struggling.

There is a saying "*You cannot teach the mind until you reach the heart*" or "*You cannot make the mind learn unless and until you do not treat the heart well*". Creating a compassionate academic environment is not a plan, policy, or strategy, but it is a robustic process of integrating teaching, learning, growth, and development of students, faculty, and administration. In academia, some specific compassion strategies can be applied to deal with traumatized students who need a specific and cautious approach to demonstrate compassion.

## **Compassion in Academia**

A classroom habitat should be resilient and free of toxicity, negativity, bullying, and violence. Conversely, there is a need for a flow of compassion, positivity, connectedness, and subtleness. Faculty need to exercise extreme caution and care while dealing with traumatized students who could pose a threat to the safety of others. Professional handling of traumatized students with compassion and interconnectedness can give respite to their ordeal and offer them a chance to bounce back. Stimulus factor monitoring and configuration may align with the encounters of complex student behaviors that may likely to further contaminate the environment and spreads acrimony. Can compassion be cultivated and nurtured?

Humans are naturally inherited with compassion. However, this component of inheritance in society is losing its existence when exposed to virulent situations leading to anguish, stress, animosity, and beyond. Compassion can be reaped into fruit a bearing tree like a seed germinates into a tree through a cyclic process that blossoms care, support, appropriate tools to deliver to the patient.

According to Davis (2006), empathy itself reflects kindness and feels for others in other words "*put ourselves into another's shoes*". It allows one to feel other's pain and suffering and makes the victim feel empathized. However, one's constant exposure to martyr's long term support and sharing lets others obliviously slip into empathetic distress and gruesome state. In other words, being an empathetic healer acting as a balm on a chapped skin of the martyr inflicts burns on the healer itself during the course. Stellar & Keltner (2014) add clarity to the definition of compassion by describing it as "*feeling sorrow or concern for the suffering of another person, coupled with the desire to alleviate that suffering*". Compassion differentiates itself from empathy, which impacts a positive response. Adkins (2015) emphasis that even professional organizations are facing challenges and struggling to engage their employees

It is a given fact that workplace pressures exist in every college that produces stress, anxiety, and generates conflicts. Hence creating a compassionate environment at the university workplace requires a positive attitude to diminish stressful situations.

### **Creating a Compassionate Learning and Teaching Environments**

Compassion is more appropriately suitable to give meaningful results in a student-centric environment. Students need to be empowered to be successful. Students distrust and betrayed without honoring their "*choices and promises*". This sends negative signals among students and proves to be a catastrophic moment when caught in this plummeting position. This negatively impacts teaching and learning. Dealing with these situations, the faculty can play a pivotal role with resilient skills to round off and bounce back. Students do realize post- recovery while leading a healthy life about "*Long ago they must have forgotten what they had been taught*". The treatment of their condition exists in their memories, hence three C's Compassion, Caring, and Coping is so essential.

Six principles which can boost and elevate compassion in the academic environment are:

- Resilience
- Problem-solving skills
- Effective Leadership
- Listening skills
- Coaching skills
- Guiding skills

The curriculum should reflect the skill sets required to cultivate compassion amongst all. Curriculum designing should have a flavor of intense feeling, caring building relationship, and supportive while imparting knowledge to the students. Compassionate curriculum truly elevates the caring relationship, instills emotions, behavior aspects with taking into active consideration well-being, safety, and physical health.

As per Cameron et al. (2011) Compassionate environment can be built by spreading positivity, encouraging comments and messages, compassionate support, the forgiveness of the

mistakes, express gratitude, build confidence, appreciate the contribution done, deal with integrity, and respect. These factors structure a positive practice and policy which stand as strong determinants of yielding the most potent impact.

### **Creating a Compassionate University and Community Partnership**

Working in an academic setting like a university is exposed to inconsistent student behavior due to a variety of reasons. The performance pressures, meeting assignment deadlines, inappropriate and hostile behavior of their colleagues' causes fatigue and stress. Incessant misfortunes, classroom and study pressures blemish students with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and personality disorder. Such factors let the students show signs of erratic behavior, impaired learning, anxiety, emotional outrages, impulsivity, hyperactivity, and unpredictable mood switch.

As per Wolpow & Hertel (2016) Compassionate environment address this issue as mental health diagnoses and developmental disabilities. Some of the initiatives to value mental wellness as follows

- To create an environment of happiness
- Encouraging social/emotional intervention
- Solving issues including family problems
- Opportunity to have health specialist and workers for rescue all times
- Imparting regular training program for students, staff, and workers to avoid burnout and compassion fatigue

Each college should have a compassionate coordinator who should report to the head at the university level parallel with the compassionate/medical superintendent. The Compassionate coordinator(CC) role is different from the psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Their central role is to provide resources and connect students with their respective families. CC can be an active student too, who can take the initiative. Regularly city, the medical hospital should organize a campaign to bring awareness and camps to reduce toxicity, stress, and anxiety, especially among the students so that their productivity and efficiency are improved. The triparty of entities that are university, family, and community should work together.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The compassionate environment in education is very prevalent in the Medical stream, Nursing (Health) and, Social Care education institutes in the US. As per Cameron et al. (2011) In 2010's compassion was more focused on health care and human service. This reinforces the researcher to move forward in building a compassionate environment, especially in our Business College. "*Compassion Circle*" is one of the power tools which connects and reconnects humans, starting from self-compassion to "*WE*" compassion (Bradley, 2014). To cultivate a compassionate centric environment, it is essential to understand the meaning of the following words: concern, sympathy, empathy, and compassion.

The International Center for Compassionate Organization, USA. Manifesting feelings with someone and empathizing with his ordeal and relating to one's own such experience in the past is showing concern (Irons & Beaumont, 2017). A Sympathy is an act of concern, backed by

care and sorrow, and a gesture to reflect the care and feeling for the ill-fated. Empathy is one step above sympathy, but also mirrors the co-worker's experience "*being in his shoes*". The act of intent and action is almost the same as the person who has pain and suffering.

Compassion is the mix of concern, sympathy, empathy together with the "*intense desire to alleviate the distress experienced by the other*". Compassion coaching is an educable skill that anyone can acquire and cultivate. One such prevalent method is through loving-kindness-meditation (LKM). This Loving-kindness concept focuses on evoking feelings of friendliness, benevolence, friendship, goodwill, sympathy, and active interest in others. This concept differs from compassion in the sense that it exists in all sorts of situations varying to joy to grief whereas compassion comes into play during the times of anguish and misfortunes only. Loving-kindness works around one's positive feelings that combine all categories of individuals of varied nature to being perceptive ones. This is a nostalgia that one another find happiness and be a reason to be happy for others suggested by Singer & Bolz (2013). The benefits of LKM over compassion are a wide range of positive emotions, including love, joy, gratitude, contentment, hope, pride, interest, amusement, and awe. More satisfaction with life and fewer symptoms of depression can also be added to the list highlighted by Shapiro, et al. (2012).

This is a relatively newly adopted area in business although this concept is and value is not from the modern era. Every organization focuses on "*employee engagement*". Compassion in higher education is a much novel concept, but the philosophy of altruism and empathy is older.

The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) under Stanford School of Medicine was founded in 2008 with an explicit goal for promoting, supporting, and conducting rigorous scientific studies of compassion and altruistic behavior. CCARE in collaboration with various disciplines like economics, psychology, neuroscience, etc. supports various research initiatives. It has also taken initiatives in conducting compassion programs for teachers, conferences, workshops, and eLearning.

"*The International Centre for Compassionate Organization (ICCO) (n.d.)*" at Louisville, Kentucky, USA is another such leading center. It is formed of a global mix of people dedicated to bringing compassion to government, business, schools, faith groups, colleges and universities, health care systems, the arts, service agency, and other organizations. It was founded in 2012.

"*Compassionate action is taking responsibility for preventing and alleviating suffering*" (ICCO) Waibel (2020) a certified compassion instructor based in the US started "*compassion Education*" conducts compassion cultivation training for personal and professional development. It develops compassion qualities, empathy, and kindness for all. A healthy society built upon a strong foundation of education, compassion, and able citizenship gives a "*feel value and add value*" (Hofmann et al., 2011). Focus is on "*employees' engagement*".

Organizations take several initiatives to up the performance levels of employees and spread a culture of compassion to yield a high level of commitment. Creating a "*less toxic*" and more compassionate organization is one of the core components identified (Karamally, 2013).

As per Shebuski et al. (2020) there is a strong correlation between self-compassion and trait resilience. Compassion build the courage of eliminating hopelessness and negativity syndrome. Woods (2020) argues curriculum should have the reflection of both logic and compassion while developing 21 st century English and Learning Arts (ELA) classroom.

The research has explored a new dimension into compassion as an avenue for human flourishing. Gallup survey suggested that organizations that are focused on care and compassion

are more productive, profitable, and have higher customer loyalty (Rynes-Weller, 2013). Getting the most from the employee in productivity, creativity, and excellence depends upon the relationship. The relationship is built on trust, which impacts the degree of success (Karamally, 2013). A research done by Jonathan Haidt at New York University shows that seeing someone help another person creates a heightened state of well-being that is called “*alleviation*” So in a business context when leaders show compassion, they naturally get elevated and are self-compassionate (Seppala, 2013).

Compassion comprises three main elements; kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. They all are related to empathy (Neff, 2003). Kindness is commonly present between compassion and sympathy. Sympathy has a feel of concern, whereas compassion has a feel of kindness, but both constructs reflect positive emotions. Altruism is an action or depiction of specific behavior. It blends between compassion and sympathy. Thus compassion is a drive backed by motivation in alleviating the suffering of others to act and to act altruistically (Pommier, 2011).

Compassion facilitates forgiveness. Forgiveness requires a certain level of mindfulness (Gilbert, 2005). Forgiveness creates compassion, which gets rooted in the workplace. From a university perspective, forgiveness rejects negative thoughts or feelings. Compassion also has an active link in bringing happiness. Feeling to heal the sufferer by being concerned and showing love brings a feeling of well-being and happiness (Pommier, 2011). Some countries in the Middle East region have already started a Ministry of Happiness, for example, the National Program for Happiness & Well-being formed in United Arab Emirates (UAE) As per Park et al. (2018) emotions which are positive were predicted only by self-compassion, whereas negative emotions were predicted by intragroup conflict. Keyte (2020) highlights self-compassion even contributes in mindful eating which improves the students’ quality work life.

Compassion will get stronger with a collaborative approach, connecting with the purpose of good deeds. The social and emotional need is met with classroom behavior among the students and faculties improve (Charter for Compassion, 2008). The college vision is “*To Become a Prominent Regional College in Business Education, and Community Partnership*” can be achieved by fostering a compassionate relationship with the community and stakeholders as a large. Help, create, build, and sustain compassionate communities in your community and worldwide communities.

Simpson & Berti (2020) highlighted by integrating positive and critical perspectives on compassion and approaches by which paradoxical tensions can be transcended. Çevik & Tanhan (2020) argues the fear of compassion may be the cause of trauma and violent among children. Draper-Clarke (2020) argues in the relationship between teachers and students, compassion backed by mindfulness profoundly impacted by being more empathetic, self-compassion, and compassionate for others with demonstrating altruistic behavior.

From academia perspective leaders need to be compassionate in order to create student centric teaching and learning environment. As per Grigoropoulos et al. (2020) leadership skills are embedded with compassion ethics and empathy in the Morfosis Learning Philosophy and opportunity of facilitating, mentoring and coaching more likely students demonstrate desirable leadership roles, not only in the journey of learning but also in their current and future lives. Compassion should not be underestimated or perhaps be a tool of brand image building. Egan et al. (2019) argues compassion need to be authentic in order to yield organic outcomes.

Avramchuk & Carpino (2020) suggests during the COVID 19, social distancing is a new norm connect and communicate proactively with the employees and understand their level of miseries. Avoid assumption and presumption at this critical junction. Supportive and caring ingredient should be embedded in decisions.

These studies we done globally but very few could be cited in Saudi context, e.g. Alabdulaziz et al. (2020) conducted self-compassion ingredient among Saudi nursing students. Which indicates that compassion has created a halo effect of positivity coping well with various emotional and other personal outcomes. However, research has explored the literature but none other than this could be found in Saudi context. Therefore, there is gap available in Saudi context for compassion study at the work place. Poots & Cassidy (2020) highlights self-compassion intervenes between academic expectation stress, fatigue, and wellbeing. Draper-Clarke (2020) argues training on cultivating Compassion based mindfulness which has the power of improving resilience with enriching social engagement based activities

## Objectives

On the basis of discussion made in the above section and to fill the gap available in the Saudi context, the following objectives can be stated for the study:

1. How to initiate, build, and cultivate a compassionate centric College of Business Administration, Al Kharj.
2. To understand and be aware of the present status of the degree (Strong, moderate, weak) of compassion exists.
3. To identify and analyze various variables and factors which will contribute and support in cultivating a passionate centric environment at the College of Business Administration, Al Kharj.

## Research Significance

Today's world is focusing on "*Customer-centric organization*" or "*People-centric organization*". However, from the education perspective, it is a "*Student-centric University*", which is possible only when customers or students are actively engaged. Compassion, altruism, empathy, sense of caring, happiness is some of the critical tools which affect an impact on a happy positive environment. This initiative will resonate in other colleges of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU), Al Kharj relating compassion with Islamic Religion Turner (2014).

With organization and university adopting a mere casual approach in achieving their targets which are quantitative but qualitatively, they are "*cosmetic*" and "*artificial*". Authenticity, emotional quotient is possible when a compassionate centric environment is created.

## Issues and Outcomes of Study

1. The college workplace is a stressful environment that causes a surge in stress, conflicts, wastage, errors, etc. creates a competitive and hostile atmosphere among top management, administration, students, and faculties.
2. Natural causes like physical, emotional, and psychological issues raise stress levels; while long term illness, personal and family issues, demise, and victim of abuse, etc. cause problems. Now the big question is how to combat these sufferings jointly through the physical, emotional, spiritual,

- psychological, social, economic, etc. support with compassion upheave the sufferer to bounce back to a normal healthy life.
3. Create, cultivate, and build a compassionate habitat in alignment with the feelings and sufferings to deal with the sufferings of others.
  4. The habitat of compassion surely yields a high level of student engagement, highly motivated faculty, lift the morale of administration, infuse compassionate leadership, etc. will be embedded in the College.
  5. Long term impact will be a sound relationship among top management, administration, faculty, and students.
  6. The academics workplace is the temple of learning. Compassionate culture will boost productivity, authentically socially connect people, will bring active engagement by all parties than being just mere involved, responsibilities, dedication at the workplace will be by heart, improve the intended learning outcome, and improve the teaching-learning milieu.

## **METHODS**

This research is an exploratory study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. This questionnaire has been validated by Pommier (2011). Written permission was taken and granted by the authors to administer it in this research. The questionnaire was used for three segments of respondents that are the student, faculty, and non-teaching staff at the College of Business Administration (n.d.) Al Kharj. A random sampling of the respondents was done with the researcher's convenience. The sample size drawn from the population of College of Business Administration Al Kharj at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) from all campuses (males and females) was approximately 225, which includes top management, faculty members, administrative staff, non-teaching staff, and students to be rational and realistic. Data analysis was done by using various statistical tools. Like using appropriate scaling techniques, percentage analysis will be done to determine the trend. The observational technique was used to get first-hand information about the practices conducted on compassion. Secondary data will be conducted through various resources available from center or institute websites dealing with compassion. Journals, magazines, books, e-resources mainly from Saudi Digital Library is used. With the appropriate statistical tools possibility of factor analysis and grouping them into various factors loading was made with compassion as epicenter through three main parties consisting of the college. i.e. Faculty, student, and administrative staff.

## **RESULTS**

An Exploratory factor analysis was done to check the validity of the compassionate scale in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Initially, the data was cleaned by locating the missing data. The outliers were identified and removed. Further, the Mahalanobis distance was applied to make the data ready for final analysis. Finally, 204 responses were left for the final analysis. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Axis Factoring and Non-orthogonal Promax rotation with Kaiser Normalization (eigenvalues  $> 1$ ) was conducted. Four factors were initially extracted with an eigenvalue greater than or equal to 1.00. In this way, a neat pattern matrix with four factors loading above 0.5 has emerged, kindly refer to Table 1.

With this unique situation, we can define compassion based on four factors from the Saudi context. The relationship is based on different indicators of self-compassion among Saudi and Non-Saudi employees at PSAU, and they are:

- Kindness
- Indifference
- Common Humanity
- Separation
- Mindfulness
- Disengagement

Step 1: Validity of self-compassion scale

Step 2: Relationship between latent variables impacting self-compassion among multicultural nationals in higher education

| <b>Table 1</b>                                     |               |          |          |          |
|--|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>PATTERN MATRIX*</b>                             |               |          |          |          |
|  | <b>Factor</b> |          |          |          |
|  | <b>1</b>      | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Q01  |               |          | 0.737    |          |
| Q02  |               |          | 0.86     |          |
| Q04  | 0.708         |          |          |          |
| Q06  | 0.751         |          |          |          |
| Q07  |               |          |          | 0.687    |
| Q08  | 0.784         |          |          |          |
| Q09  | 0.714         |          |          |          |
| Q11  | 0.552         |          |          |          |
| Q15  | 0.831         |          |          |          |
| Q16  | 0.741         |          |          |          |
| Q17  | 0.802         |          |          |          |
| Q19  |               | 0.506    |          |          |
| Q20  | 0.755         |          |          |          |
| Q21  | 0.798         |          |          |          |
| Q22  |               | 0.677    |          |          |
| Q23  |               | 0.685    |          |          |
| Q24  | 0.837         |          |          |          |
| Q03  |               |          | 0.625    |          |
| Q10  |               |          |          |          |
| Q05  |               |          |          | 0.498    |
| Q12  |               |          |          | 0.575    |
| Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.       |               |          |          |          |
| Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. |               |          |          |          |
| *Rotation converged in 6 iterations.               |               |          |          |          |

## Factor Analysis

Factor-1 for the following questions taken from the questionnaire

- I pay careful attention when other people talk to me.
- If someone goes through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person.
- I like to be there for others in times of difficulty

- Despite my differences with others, I know that everyone feels pain just like me.

The following are the keywords derived from the opinion of mostly faculties members which most appropriately describe factor number 1, they are empathetic, compassionate, courteous, good listener, etc. Factor-2 for the following questions taken from the questionnaire

- I do not think much about the concerns of others.
- I cannot connect with other people when they are suffering.
- I try to avoid people who are experiencing much pain

The following are the keywords derived from the opinion of mostly faculties members which most appropriately describe factor number 2, they are distant, removed, disinterested, aloof, indifferent, insensitive, self-centered, etc. Factor-3 for the following questions taken from the questionnaire.

- When people cry in front of me, I often do not feel anything at all.
- Sometimes when people talk about their problems, I feel like I do not care.
- I do not feel emotionally connected to people in pain.

The following are the keywords derived from the opinion of mostly faculties members which most appropriately describe factor number 3, they are apathetic, cold, heartless, indifferent, etc. Factor-4 for the following questions taken from the questionnaire.

- I feel detached from others when they tell me their tales of woe.
- I often tune out when people tell me about their troubles.
- Sometimes I am cold to others when they are down and out.

The following are the keywords derived from the opinion of mostly faculties members which most appropriately describe factor number 4, they are detached, insensitive, uncaring, apathy, careless, etc.

## DISCUSSION

When compassion spreads, it activates the brain with the medial orbital prefrontal cortex, putamen, pallidum, and Ventral Tegmental Areas (VTA), which boost in maintaining a harmonious connection with a positive mind frame. Compassion has the power to release neurotransmitters oxytocin, and dopamine and they produce a high spirit of positive zeal and enthusiasm.

The act of empathy to share stress and pain of others, saying "*I feel with you*" with connectedness but unnoticeably turns towards the negative side of empathetic distress. That is why compassion takes the role of "*I feel for you*" which like empathy shares the suffering of others but more importantly helps in spreading love, kindness, wellness, mindfulness, and connectedness. Compassion can change the neuroplasticity of the brain to well-being and prosocial behavior.

Compassion is more of a practice than preaching. It can be inculcated by cultivating through the formal and informal approach and converting learning into practice with a positive attitude of kindness and mindfulness. Compassion acts as a catalyst in reinforcing the healthy and connective bond between the sufferer and the healer by an empathetic touch of love and

benevolence. Social refinement develops compassionate balancing relationships amongst the healers, the sufferers, and peers around. Compassion is a powerful tool used for a deep understanding of anguish that offers solutions for the community living in a vast congenial environment. It enhances the healer's ability to rejuvenate and smooth handling of the situation. The act of filling the emotional gap in the life of the anguished individual during difficult moments unleashes the potential for a compassionate environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

PSAU is encouraged to emphasis on the following to intensify compassionate centric environment

- To have a strategic plan embedded with compassion, emphatic policies, and procedures to cultivate compassion.
- To create compassion circles within departments, colleges at various in and off campuses with one core circle at the main campus as the role of coordination purpose.
- Compassion should be embedded into the curriculum so that not just preaching but practicing by faculty; students are prominent in the learning and development.
- Islam promotes compassion so that it increases a feeling of brotherhood, improves the relationship, reduces stress and anxiety on a person who is suffering or in grief.
- Regular workshops and training programs on compassion, mindfulness to be conducted
- Compassion workplace policies and procedures should be aligned with the Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- To have a supporting staff in the capacity of a compassionate coordinator in each college at all locations reporting to the Vice-Rector of Quality and Development.
- Compassion cannot be taught but can be demonstrated or cited with examples that can be set. It is universally everyone's participation and involvement are required.
- Compassion will reduce the dropout rate of students, increase the engagement process, improve the performance of learners, and motivate faculty members.
- An encouraging university-community partnership with a compassion exchange program will be a proper initiation into the social responsibility of the university.
- Compassion spreading campaign will improve the mental wellness of all, thus reduction in mental ailments and lowering of government expenditure on the health care budget.
- Regular climatic surveys should be done to enhance compassion at the campus.

## CONCLUSION

There are different schools of thought at a broader level, the eastern and the western. Arab region or the so-called Middle East region is yet to be explored though it has an enormous potential of preaching and practice of compassion from the perspective of Islam. It spells kindness and churns compassion into various forms. As per the Islamicity website, more often, words like compassion, benevolence, justice, and wisdom are being stressed. God's name has been denoted as "*Rahman*" & "*Rahim*" means compassion and mercy, respectively. A Muslim always recites "*Bi Ism-i- Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*" (i.e. Begin in the name of Allah Who is most Compassionate and Merciful) at every step it is compassion and merciful. Compassion is an inevitable act like an ointment (soothing touch) for the sufferer. It has the power to amplify happiness and mindfulness. Most of the previous studies on compassion have correlated with Buddhism. As per Hidden (2014) There is tremendous opportunity to do studies interlinking Islam with compassion. Researchers are encouraged to explore possible potential and surface out

compassionate culture and environment, especially in the Arab region embedded with Islamic values. Not much research has been done in this field, especially in the Middle East region. Researchers are encouraged to take compassion research in other sectors or industries and explore opportunities of scope, significance, take advantage of compassion goodness especially where a toxic environment prevails.

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## APPENDIX

| <b>S.N.</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Questions</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 1           | Q01         | When people cry in front of me, I often don't feel anything at all.                              |
| 2           | Q02         | Sometimes when people talk about their problems, I feel like I don't care.                       |
| 3           | Q04         | I pay careful attention when other people talk to me.  |
| 4           | Q06         | If I see someone going through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person.          |
| 5           | Q07         | I often tune out when people tell me about their troubles.                                       |
| 6           | Q08         | I like to be there for others in times of difficulty.  |
| 7           | Q09         | I notice when people are upset, even if they don't say anything                                  |
| 8           | Q11         | Everyone feels down sometimes, it is part of being human.  |
| 9           | Q15         | It's important to recognize that all people have weaknesses and no one's perfect.                |
| 10          | Q16         | My heart goes out to people who are unhappy.   |
| 11          | Q17         | Despite my differences with others, I know that everyone feels pain just like me.                |
| 12          | Q19         | I don't think much about the concerns of others.   |
| 13          | Q20         | Suffering is just a part of the common human experience  |
| 14          | Q21         | When people tell me about their problems, I try to keep a balanced perspective on the situation. |
| 15          | Q22         | I can't really connect with other people when they're suffering                                  |
| 16          | Q23         | I try to avoid people who are experiencing a lot of pain.  |
| 17          | Q24         | When others feel sadness, I try to comfort them  |
| 18          | Q03         | I don't feel emotionally connected to people in pain.  |
| 19          | Q10         | When I see someone feeling down, I feel like I can't relate to them.                             |
| 20          | Q05         | I feel detached from others when they tell me their tales of woe.                                |
| 21          | Q12         | Sometimes I am cold to others when they are down and out.  |

Source: Pommier (2011).

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