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A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Full-Time  
and Adjunct Faculty Burnout in a  
Community College Setting

by

Margaret Leigh Loflin-Williams

January 13, 2021

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Full-Time  
and Adjunct Faculty Burnout in a  
Community College Setting

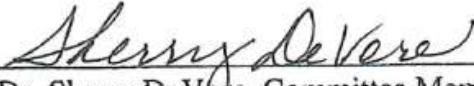
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Margaret Leigh Loflin-Williams

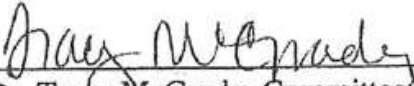
This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
Lindenwood University, School of Education

  
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Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Margaret Leigh Loflin-Williams

Signature: Margaret Leigh Loflin-Williams Date: 1/13/2021

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The most important aspect of this journey is for my children to understand that they can accomplish anything if they want it badly enough. Never doubt your educational decisions. Your education is something no one can take away from you.

## Abstract

Until recently, compassion fatigue and burnout were primarily associated with the profession of healthcare, not education (Jurado et al., 2019). Research on compassion fatigue and burnout in education has been focused on elementary and secondary schools with little attention given to the higher education sector (Kaiser et al., 2017; Kelly & Lefton, 2017). This mixed-methods study was focused on compassion fatigue and burnout in both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty members at a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college. For the quantitative portion of the study, a Likert-type survey was sent to 250 adjunct faculty members and 150 full-time faculty members of a southwest Missouri community college. Seventy-three adjunct faculty and 65 full-time faculty members responded to the survey. The qualitative results were obtained from two separate focus groups. The Mann-Whitney *U* test was utilized to evaluate differences between the two groups. Four adjunct faculty members comprised one focus group, and four full-time faculty members comprised the second focus group. Eight open-ended questions were asked of each group, and their responses were transcribed. The research uncovered significant differences between perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding factors that contributed to compassion fatigue; however, there were no significant differences between their perceptions regarding factors that contribute to burnout. Some differences included adjunct faculty felt more satisfied with their work and proud of what they could do in their position compared to full-time faculty members.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Figures .....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Background of the Study .....	2
Theoretical Framework .....	3
Statement of the Problem .....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	6
Significance of the Study .....	7
Definition of Key Terms .....	8
Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions .....	10
Summary .....	11
Chapter Two: Review of Literature .....	13
Theoretical Framework .....	14
Observational Learning Theory .....	14
Compassion Fatigue .....	21
Contributing Factors to Compassion Fatigue .....	22
Burnout .....	23
Contributing Factors to Burnout .....	25
Emotional Exhaustion .....	25
Depersonalization .....	26

Low Personal Accomplishment .....	27
Coping Methods for Educator Compassion Fatigue and Burnout .....	28
Mindfulness.....	28
Compassion Satisfaction.....	29
Prayer .....	29
Prevention of Compassion Fatigue and Burnout .....	30
Self-Educate .....	30
Self-Care .....	31
Set Emotional Boundaries.....	32
Outside Activities.....	33
Therapy .....	34
Summary .....	36
Chapter Three: Methodology .....	37
Problem and Purpose Overview.....	37
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	37
Research Design.....	38
Bracketing .....	38
Population and Sample .....	39
Instrumentation .....	40
Reliability.....	43
Validity .....	43
Data Collection .....	44
Data Analysis .....	45



Ethical Considerations .....	46
Summary .....	46
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data .....	48
Demographics .....	49
Data Analysis .....	50
Compassion Fatigue.....	50
Burnout .....	60
Mann Whitney <i>U</i> .....	70
Focus Group Discussions.....	71
Summary .....	84
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications .....	85
Findings.....	87
Conclusions.....	92
Implications for Practice .....	95
Recommendations for Future Research .....	96
Summary .....	97
References .....	102
Appendix A.....	122
Appendix B .....	124
Appendix C .....	125
Appendix D.....	126
Appendix E .....	127
Appendix F.....	128

Appendix G.....	129
Appendix H.....	130
Appendix I .....	131
Vita.....	132

**List of Tables**

Table 1. *Likert-Type Scale Responses for Burnout and Compassion Fatigue* .....50

## List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Four Principles of Observational Learning</i> .....	17
Figure 2. <i>Diagram of Professional Quality of Life</i> .....	41
Figure 3. <i>Number of Adjunct Faculty and Full-Time Faculty Surveyed</i> .....	49
Figure 4. <i>I Get Satisfaction from Being Able to [Help] People</i> .....	51
Figure 5. <i>I Feel Invigorated After Working with Those I [Help]</i> .....	52
Figure 6. <i>I Like My Work as a [Helper]</i> .....	53
Figure 7. <i>I Am Pleased with How I Am Able to Keep Up with [Helping] Techniques and Protocols</i> .....	54
Figure 8. <i>My Work Makes Me Feel Satisfied</i> .....	55
Figure 9. <i>I Have Happy Thoughts and Feelings About Those I [Help] and How I Could Help Them</i> .....	56
Figure 10. <i>I Believe I Can Make a Difference Through My Work</i> .....	57
Figure 11. <i>I Am Proud of What I Can Do To [Help]</i> .....	58
Figure 12. <i>I Have Thoughts That I Am a “Success” as a [Helper]</i> .....	59
Figure 13. <i>I Am Happy That I Chose to Do This Work</i> .....	60
Figure 14. <i>I Am Happy</i> .....	61
Figure 15. <i>I Feel Connected to Others</i> .....	62
Figure 16. <i>I Am Not as Productive at Work Because I Am Losing Sleep Over Traumatic Experiences of a Person I [Help]</i> .....	63
Figure 17. <i>I Feel Trapped by My Job as a [Helper]</i> .....	64
Figure 18. <i>I Have Beliefs That Sustain Me</i> .....	65
Figure 19. <i>I Am the Person I Always Wanted to Be</i> .....	66

Figure 20. *I Feel Worn Out Because of My Work as a [Helper]* .....67

Figure 21. *I Feel Overwhelmed Because My Case [Work] Load Seems Endless* .....68

Figure 22. *I Feel “Bogged Down” by the System* .....69

Figure 23. *I Am a Very Caring Person* .....70

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Burnout and compassion fatigue play a significant role in the physical and mental health of educators (Jurado et al., 2019). During the last 20 years, more than 30% of educators have experienced a health problem, financial issue, or lack of job satisfaction (Jurado et al., 2019, p. 1). Stress associated with workforce conditions leads to the symptoms and problems associated with burnout, and eventually, to compassion fatigue (Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018).

Burnout and compassion fatigue are characterized by both physiological and psychological symptoms (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Physiologically, a factor associated with burnout is a steroid hormone known as cortisol (Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018). Cortisol is a hormone regulated by the adrenal glands, which control most organs of the human body (Almeida et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2020).

Cortisol follows an evident secretion pattern in the human body (Almeida et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2020). Typically, cortisol levels are higher during the day and drop as the day goes on (Almeida et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2020). Schmidt et al. (2020) found that when hair was tested to determine hair-cortisol concentration, results were more reliable and revealed higher stress levels among workers than cortisol levels determined through blood, urine, or saliva.

Furthermore, the cortisol-awakening response occurs the first half-hour of waking up (Almeida et al., 2018). Interestingly, researchers have discovered a correlation between age, socioeconomic status, chronic disease, and stress related to the cortisol-awakening response (Almeida et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2020). A person with a flat

cortisol-awakening response experiences a higher stress level (Almeida et al., 2018). High cortisol levels in employees are discovered on workdays but not on days off (Almeida et al., 2018; Bakker & Costa, 2014; Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018).

Work-family conflict is directly related to cortisol levels (Almeida et al., 2018). Work-family conflict is defined as “a type of stress, which occurs when obligations and responsibilities from the work and family domains are incompatible” (Almeida et al., 2018, p. 152). Furthermore, Almeida et al. (2018) and Bakker and Costa (2014) suggested work-family conflict directly and negatively affects work environments and employees’ health and overall wellness. Employees may suffer from sleep disorders, depression, physical symptoms such as high blood pressure and obesity, and even substance abuse (Almeida et al., 2018; Bakker & Costa, 2014).

Chapter One includes the background of the study and the theoretical framework. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions are presented. The significance of the study and key terms are provided. Finally, the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions are detailed.

### **Background of the Study**

Compassion fatigue and burnout have been associated with many different career fields, such as healthcare, secondary education, and social services, since the 1970s (Kaiser et al., 2017; Kelly & Lefton, 2017; Köksal et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Szempruch, 2018; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Compassion fatigue differs from burnout (Delaney, 2018). Delaney (2018) defined compassion fatigue “as a state of exhaustion and dysfunction as a consequence of prolonged exposure to suffering and stress” (p. 2). Compassion fatigue includes both burnout and traumatic stress as a result

of witnessing trauma through empathy (Bao & Taliaferro, 2015). Those who work with people suffering from trauma or exposure to past traumatic experiences generally experience compassion fatigue (Nance, 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Traumatic exposure does not necessarily have to be a personal result of trauma but can be related to any form of caregiving for other people (Delaney, 2018).

Burnout is how one responds to a recurring emotional burden when working extensively with other people, mainly when the issue is a recurring problem, and the individual suffers from reduced coping resources (Schneider-Levi et al., 2017). Bao and Taliaferro (2015) defined burnout as “a result of frustration, powerlessness, and inability to achieve work goals” (p. 35). Suh (2019) suggested burnout is higher among those who consider themselves perfectionists, have higher education levels, are older, and are male. Issues resulting from burnout include discipline problems among students, increased workload for educators, low achievement scores, violence in schools, and physical or verbal abuse toward educators (Herman et al., 2019; Köksal et al., 2018).

Educators believe they experience the same stress levels as doctors and lawyers (Farmer, 2017). One-third of educators leave the field over a five-year span due to symptoms of burnout (Farmer, 2017, p. 13). Furthermore, Szempruch (2018) discovered that out of every five educators, at least one experiences severe burnout, while every third educator experiences moderate burnout (pp. 225-226).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was framed by Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory. Bandura (1977) discussed why people, such as educators, suffer from burnout or compassion fatigue symptoms. The focus of Bandura’s (1977) theory was on social cognition, which



includes a person's social cognition as well as society's cognition (Köksal et al., 2018). In this study, barriers were examined to further explain the causes of burnout and compassion fatigue for higher education educators.

Psychological modifications were explained in Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Bandura (1977) asserted behavior theory is a learned theory based on paired experiences (Alessandri et al., 2018; Garwood et al., 2018). Learned theory is described when certain stimulations are connected automatically, and responses are induced by unrestricted stimulation (Bandura, 1977; Herman et al., 2019). Furthermore, Bandura (1977) stated, "The apparent divergence of theory and practice is reconciled by recognizing that change is mediated through cognitive processes, but the cognitive events are induced and altered most readily by experiences of mastery arising from successful performance" (p. 79). Surprisingly, people only learn from frequent paired occurrences if they recognize the events are interrelated (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy belief is specific to an individual's ability to accomplish a precise task and maintain control over demands considered challenging (Mullins, 2019; Shoji et al., 2016). Burnout among educators is negatively related to educators' self-efficacy beliefs (Jurado et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Additionally, an educator's subjective health and job satisfaction are also directly related to the educator's self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory presumes self-efficacy shapes diverse stress-related outcomes, such as burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Many researchers of compassion fatigue and burnout have reflected on the healthcare industry, but little is known about the effects of compassion fatigue and burnout on those working in higher education (Akdemir, 2019; Santoro, 2018). Workers in industries such as health care and education are affected by compassion fatigue and burnout and tend to report greater job dissatisfaction and turnover rates (Köksal et al., 2018; Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018; Rahmati, 2015). In addition, those working in high-stress situations suffer from personal health problems such as depression, anxiety, hostility, physical exhaustion, obesity, high blood pressure, and immunosuppression (Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018; Rahmati, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Burnout can also affect an educator's life outside the classroom regarding relationships with a spouse or other family members (Köksal et al., 2018). Workplace stress, depression, and anxiety are higher among educators more committed to their employers (Gooblar, 2018; Szempruch, 2018). When educators experience stress in the workplace, this affects their quality of health and negatively affects their teaching capability (Farmer, 2017; Gooblar, 2018; Herman et al., 2019).

When an educator suffers from compassion fatigue or burnout, the students' ability to learn is negatively affected (Köksal et al., 2018; Schnaider-Levi et al., 2017). Educators suffering symptoms of burnout have a negative effect on their students, leading to undesirable student behaviors both in and out of the classroom (Herman et al., 2019). Such behaviors include backtalking the educator, vandalism, and bullying other students (Herman et al., 2019). Furthermore, educator burnout leads to a poor quality of instruction delivered to students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). According to Skaalvik and

Skaalvik (2017), there is a direct correlation between educators experiencing burnout and their students' lack of academic ability, lower standardized test scores, and decreased involvement.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to understand how compassion fatigue and burnout affect both full-time and adjunct faculty at a southwest Missouri community college and how faculty members cope with compassion fatigue and burnout. Burnout is not a new term to the professional world (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). As early as 1970, professional burnout was recognized and defined as an issue affecting secondary education teachers (Freudenberg, 1971; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Szempruch, 2018). As of 2019, the World Health Organization declared burnout an occupational phenomenon but not a medical condition. Furthermore, burnout can lead to compassion fatigue if not adequately managed (Frey et al., 2018).

### ***Research Questions and Hypotheses***

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue?

*H1<sub>0</sub>*: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

*H1<sub>a</sub>*: There are significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

2. What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout?

*H2<sub>0</sub>*: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout.

*H2<sub>a</sub>*: There are significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout.

3. In what ways does compassion fatigue affect the health of full-time and adjunct faculty?

4. What coping methods do faculty members perceive as the most effective for dealing with stress?

### **Significance of the Study**

Current researchers of compassion fatigue and burnout have focused on healthcare workers, war veterans, and teachers in K-12 facilities or special education (Kaiser et al., 2017; Kelly & Lefton, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). This study is significant, because the findings provide insight into higher education faculty members' perceptions regarding factors that contribute to compassion fatigue and burnout. Furthermore, like burnout, compassion fatigue leads to adverse outcomes such as depression, anxiety, intensive dreaming, feelings of numbness, avoidance, and relationship problems (Cetrano et al., 2017).

Akdemir (2019) and Santoro (2018) suggested full-time and adjunct faculty have limited support systems to manage the symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue. This research resulted in the delineation of practical solutions higher education professionals can implement to combat compassion fatigue and burnout. Job satisfaction is one method used to positively decrease burnout and compassion fatigue among educators (Ineme & Ineme, 2016). Ineme and Ineme (2016) explained job satisfaction is

considered an emotional change related to a person's job that can determine outcomes such as achievements.

Finally, this study's findings are unique in the areas of compassion fatigue and burnout because data were collected from full-time faculty and adjunct faculty to determine if there are significant differences in how the two groups perceive the contributing factors of compassion fatigue and burnout. Currently, there is a lack of research regarding compassion fatigue and burnout in higher education (Akdemir, 2019; Santoro, 2018). Compassion fatigue and burnout have been studied related to the healthcare industry, secondary education with special education students, counseling, and the mental health industry (Brown et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018; Robino, 2019).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

#### ***Adjunct Faculty Member***

An adjunct faculty member is defined as a faculty member with an interim relationship with an institution of higher education while serving in a supporting position (Packer, 2019).

#### ***Community College***

A community college is a two-year school that provides students an affordable education with the opportunity to transfer to a four-year university to complete bachelor degrees (Xu & Ran, 2020). Furthermore, community colleges also provide associate degrees to students and offer non-credit, short-term, and workforce development training programs (Xu & Ran, 2020).

***Demoralization***

Demoralization is unhappiness that occurs when teachers encounter constant and persistent challenges to the values that encourage their work (Santoro, 2018).

***Depersonalization***

Depersonalization is described as avoiding any “physical or subconscious contact with those of specialized collaboration; a negative, heartless, or excessively apathetic reaction with students or colleagues; and a lack of interest in problems revealing repugnance” (Szempruch, 2018, p. 221).

***Emotional Exhaustion***

Emotional exhaustion results from any experienced stress by a student or educator (Szempruch, 2018). Emotional exhaustion is one of the first symptoms of burnout (Szempruch, 2018).

***Empathy***

Empathy is having the ability to put oneself in the place of others (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2019).

***Full-Time Faculty Member***

A full-time faculty member is defined as one who works at least a 40-hour workweek, teaches 12 class hours, is required to have open office hours for students, and participates in departmental meetings and other campus events such as graduation (Meier, 2019). Furthermore, full-time faculty members must maintain a certain number of professional development hours, help with curriculum development, and develop schedules for adjunct instructors (Meier, 2019).

### ***Self-Efficacy***

Self-efficacy relates to a person's confidence in exercising control over challenging demands (Shoji et al., 2016).

### ***Subjective Health***

Subjective health is a person's self-reported overall health status (Reynolds & Altman, 2018).

### **Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions**

The scope of the study was bounded by the following delimitations:

#### ***Time Frame***

Data were collected during the summer of 2020.

#### ***Location of the Study***

This study took place on the campus of a community college in southwest Missouri.

#### ***Sample***

Participants in this research project were both male and female and were between the ages of 18 and 65. Participants were either full-time faculty or adjunct faculty of the community college. Any faculty the researcher knew personally were eliminated to reduce bias.

#### ***Criteria***

Only faculty members who worked for the college and taught a minimum of six credit hours or 225 contact hours were considered when selecting the sample.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

### ***Sample Demographics***

The sample consisted of full-time and adjunct faculty from the main campus of a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college.

### ***Instrument***

The focus group discussion questions were created based on the theoretical framework and the review of literature. The Professional Quality of Life Measure: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (Stamm, 2010, p. 8) was the instrument used to gather quantitative data. The study was based on the effects of burnout on educators; faculty may have other reasons for burnout, which may not be job-related.

### ***Bias***

While a process was followed to minimize bias, there is not a guarantee that bias did not occur. The mixed-methods study included collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and qualitative data cannot be independently verified. Additionally, bias could have occurred in the form of selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration (Burkholder et al., 2020).

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. The responses of the participants were offered honestly and willingly.
2. The sample was representative of the general population of faculty employed as either full-time or adjunct faculty members.

### ***Summary***

Provided in the introduction to Chapter One was an examination of how burnout and compassion fatigue may affect the lifestyles and educational outcomes of the higher education community including full-time and adjunct faculty. This chapter also included



information on how the hormone cortisol can play an active part in an educator's ability to manage stressful situations (Almeida et al., 2018; Bakker & Costa, 2014; Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018). By examining the causes of burnout and compassion fatigue in the higher education community, this research was designed to lead to the discovery of coping mechanisms and to provide resources for faculty to manage stress in and out of the classroom setting.

Bandura's theoretical framework was applied to this study. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions were identified. The significance of the study and key definitions were explained. Finally, the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were presented to confirm the need for further research in the areas of burnout and compassion fatigue in the higher education community.

Chapter Two provides a review of current literature, which includes a connection between higher education faculty and stress levels in and out of the classroom that cause health concerns and decreased student performance. Also included in Chapter Two are the topics of compassion fatigue and its causes, ways educators can reduce compassion fatigue, and the prevention of compassion fatigue. Subsequently, the topics of burnout and its causes, ways educators can reduce burnout, and the prevention of burnout are outlined. Finally, the similarities and differences between compassion fatigue and burnout are identified.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Higher education has conventionally been considered a low-stress profession (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Opstrup & Pihl-Thingvad, 2016; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). Compared to many other professions, higher education instructors experience a high level of flexibility, autonomy, decision-making, and self-actualization (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). However, as more information is discovered, the public's idea of the "perfect job" is considered a personal nightmare among faculty (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). According to Akdemir (2019), the teaching profession has transitioned from a low-stress profession to one of the most stressful career options (Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018; Teles et al., 2020).

The instructor's job description has become more complicated due to increased demands and fewer resources (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). Instructors now face a larger student population, new and different funding opportunities, and varying managerial techniques (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). Instructors today work longer hours and are unsure if student needs are being met (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). When all these issues are combined, the work environment includes chronic workload and psychological strain, which can lead to job burnout (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020).

Included in Chapter Two is the theoretical framework, which was focused on Bandura's observational learning theory. This study included an examination of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation as viewed through the lens of the theory and the theory's relation to compassion fatigue and burnout. Chapter Two also includes a review

of literature on compassion fatigue and contributing factors to compassion fatigue. Furthermore, burnout and contributing factors to burnout in the higher education realm are examined. This chapter concludes with research on coping methods and how to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Behavior is not learned simply by hearing how to accomplish a particular task (Deaton, 2015; O’Kelley, 2019). Instead, one follows others’ behaviors and suffers the consequences of such behaviors (Deaton, 2015; O’Kelly, 2019). According to Bandura (1977), specific actions result in inevitable outcomes. Cherry (2019b) further stated this learning method explains many different behaviors among people, including behaviors that cannot be explained by any other learning theories.

Theories of compassion fatigue and burnout are related to Bandura’s (1977) observational learning theory. Bandura’s (1977) theory explains why people suffer from compassion fatigue and burnout in different ways and at different levels (Shoji et al., 2016). One mechanism associated with psychological changes is the common denominator of corrective learning and the social learning view (Bandura, 1977).

### ***Observational Learning Theory***

The term observational learning can be defined as shaping, modeling, or imitating to obtain new skills or knowledge by observing other people in their natural element (Cherry, 2019a; Ervin et al., 2018). According to Cherry (2019c), observational learning falls under the classification of social learning theory (Shrestha, 2017). Typically, this form of learning occurs when an individual observes someone considered to have

expertise in a particular area (Cherry, 2019c). Bandura (1977) asserted people are unsurprisingly motivated to participate in observational learning.

Cherry (2019b) determined observational learning theory is comprised of three main concepts. The first concept relates to the idea that individuals can acquire information through observation (Cherry, 2019b; Coker, 2019). Cherry (2019a) discovered children as young as 21 days old were documented using imitation with facial and mouth movements (Shrestha, 2017). Secondly, core emotional circumstances are a crucial part of learning progression (Cherry, 2019b; Coker, 2019). Finally, when a person acquires a new skill, that does not necessarily mean a behavioral change will also occur (Cherry, 2019b; Coker, 2019).

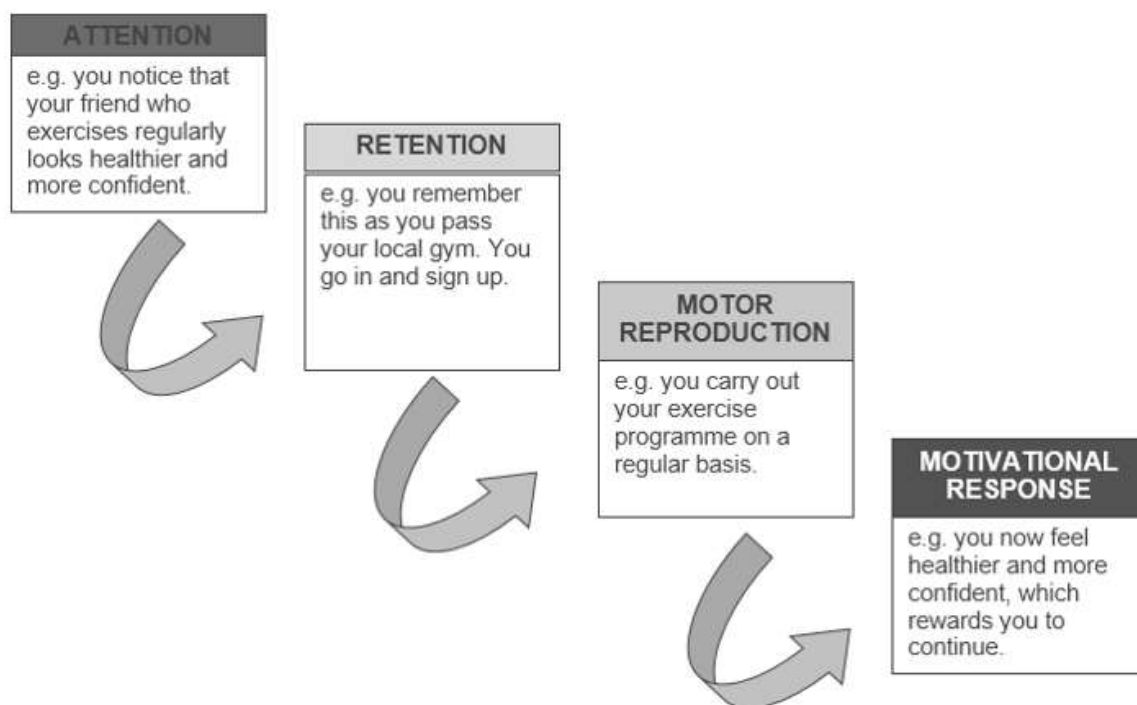
Bandura (1977) stated most behaviors are learned through observation in the form of modeling. Bandura (1977) defined three fundamental patterns of observational learning including the following: a live person exhibits the behavior; a live person gives a verbal direction and elaborates on descriptions and explanations of the said behavior; and finally, a figurative representation of behaviors in multiple platforms such as books, films, television programs, or online media (Bandura, 1977; Coker, 2019).

Educators who view other educators' behaviors, whether positive or negative, may repeat those behaviors (Cherry, 2019a). Bandura (1977) discovered that imitation of behaviors can be positive or negative and even violent in the right circumstances. Not only does learning take place through observation, but also a person must be in the right mental state in order to learn (Cherry, 2019b). Finally, Cherry (2019b) concluded that even though a person may learn through imitation, it may not change their actual behavior. In observational learning theory, learning takes the form of observation in a

social setting, which involves the cognitive processes, or social learning theory (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018).

Bandura (1977) also examined learning through social understanding and self-efficacy beliefs. When it comes to educators in the classroom, self-efficacy beliefs are closely related to classroom performance and student outcomes (Köksal et al., 2018). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is achieved through professional behaviors and the educator's competency level (Köksal et al., 2018).

It is a natural process for people to study others' activities and attempt to replicate those actions (Cherry, 2019c). Different cultures are formed using observational learning (Gaskins & Paradise, 2010; Odden & Rochat, 2004). According to Cherry (2019b) and Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018), there are four basic principles related to Bandura's observational learning theory. These four basic principles include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977; Shrestha, 2017) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1***Four Principles of Observational Learning*

*Note.* From “Models and theories of behaviour (8): Learning theories” by Associated Martial Arts Consultants, 2020 (<https://amactraining.co.uk/resources/handy-information/free-learning-material/models-and-theories-of-health-behaviour-change-index/models-and-theories-of-health-behaviour-8/>). Copyright 2020 by Amacsports Limited. Reprinted with permission.

**Attention.** For people to learn according to the observational learning theory, which is part of the social learning theory, they must pay attention to and transcribe appropriate information of modeled behavior (Bandura, 1977; Brewer & Wann, 1998; Cherry, 2019a; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Learners are more likely to give their full attention to an interesting topic (Cherry, 2019a; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Bandura

(1977) used television as an example of the attentional process of learning. Television holds the attention of those of all ages for long periods of time (Bandura, 1977).

In the classroom setting, it is up to the instructor to hold students' attention, which engages the learning process (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Given how students can draw an educator into their personal lives, burnout can occur early in the social learning process (Cetrano et al., 2017). Furthermore, educators learn from role models (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). If other educators are suffering from burnout or compassion fatigue, attention may be drawn to those educators who cannot separate their personal from professional lives (Cetrano et al., 2017).

**Retention.** The ability to retain information is another essential component of the learning process (Cherry, 2019b; Renkl, 2014). Retention of material, which involves the observational learning process, has been modeled at some point in the educator's career (Bandura, 1977; Cherry, 2019a). Individuals will reenact any information taught to them if they have retained the information provided (Brewer & Wann, 1998). Retention relies on both the verbal form of learning and the visual form of learning (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), some will be stronger in one than the other.

Furthermore, if learners rehearse the material obtained, they are less likely to forget what is learned (Bandura, 1977). To reenact a learned behavior, an individual must be able to perform the behavior (Brewer & Wann, 1998). In the educational setting, retaining what has been learned is difficult when one is not expected to retain everything (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Educators observe how burnout and compassion fatigue affect their coworkers and may repeat what is learned (Cetrano et al., 2017). Educators

may turn to their peers for assistance if information is not readily available (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018).

**Reproduction.** During the third state of observational learning, reproduction, the learner is expected to perform the actual behavior learned (Cherry, 2019a). During this stage, the learners practice what they learned through attention and retention (Cherry, 2019b). Bandura (1977) suggested when learners fail at the desired attempt, they are motivated to attempt the procedure again and are then rewarded when successful (Brewer & Wann, 1998). Educators exposed to burnout and compassion fatigue may experience these symptoms outwardly, evidenced as emotional and mental exhaustion (Cetrano et al., 2017; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017).

**Motivation.** According to Bandura (1977), one must be motivated to put all the pieces together that were learned utilizing observational learning theory (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; Renkl, 2014). In a case of compassion fatigue and burnout, motivation may be to avoid showing signs and symptoms, but rather to hide these emotions (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). Shoji et al. (2016) discovered significant relationships between some burnout components and self-efficacy.

Bandura (1977) and Shoji et al (2016) referred to self-efficacy as dependent upon opportunities through personal experiences. When a person achieves mastery, expectations rise, whereas multiple failures lower these expectations (Bandura, 1977; Shoji et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2017). Educators working with high-risk students are at risk of low self-efficacy due to the need to increase high-risk students' achievement (Wang et al., 2017). An individual's judgment of efficacy includes contemplating and incorporating four psychological foundations of information (Wang et al., 2017). When it



comes to educator efficacy beliefs, the four sources of efficacy have been disregarded by educators (Wang et al., 2017). The four efficacy sources include mastery expectations, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977; Renkl, 2014; Wang et al., 2017).

Mastery expectations have the most impact on self-efficacy and distinguish between what one believes is success and what one believes is the failure of previous experiences in his or her lifetime (Boudreau & Gibbons, 2019; Capa et al., 2018; Macaffee & Comeau, 2020; Wang et al., 2017; Webb-Williams, 2018). Since mastery expectations are based on a person's past experiences, these experiences will lead to success in the future (Webb-Williams, 2018). When a person experiences success, it promotes high self-efficacy (Snyder & Fisk, 2016).

When it comes to goal setting, verbal persuasion can be utilized (Boudreau & Gibbons, 2019). According to Bandura (1997), verbal persuasion demoralizes self-efficacy instead of developing self-efficacy (Boudreau & Gibbons, 2019; Wang et al., 2017; Webb-Williams, 2018). However, people who play a meaningful role in someone's life can increase self-efficacy through verbal encouragement (Capa et al., 2018; Snyder & Fisk, 2016). This positive feedback can decrease a person's negative thoughts (Capa et al., 2018; Webb-Williams, 2018).

When the individual modeling the behavior and learners share comparable personalities and aptitude levels, learning through vicarious experiences is most successful (Bandura, 1997). Capa et al. (2018) concluded people with less experience can form their self-efficacy through others' abilities (Snyder & Fisk, 2016; Wang et al., 2017). The closer the behavior of the person modeling is to the behavior of the person

observing, the greater the effect on self-efficacy (Capa et al., 2018; Synder & Fisk, 2016; Webb-Williams, 2018). Finally, affective states, which include physiological and emotional arousal, can affect a person's self-efficacy by creating a stressful or challenging situation (Boudreau & Gibbons, 2019; Snyder & Fisk, 2016).

### **Compassion Fatigue**

Compassion fatigue is a relatively new term, first coined by a nurse in 1992 (Merriman, 2015). Compassion fatigue was initially found to affect nurses working at the bedsides of patients; however, as more research was initiated, compassion fatigue applied to helping professions, such as counselors and educators (Merriman, 2015). Compassion fatigue is a combination of burnout and traumatic stress (Bao & Taliaferro, 2015).

Trauma is not as uncommon as many would think (Brown et al., 2017; Cetrano et al., 2017). Educators experience trauma from their students' experiences in the classroom (Brown et al., 2017; Cetrano et al., 2017). Unlike burnout, secondary traumatic stress occurs when compassion fatigue is directly related to a student's traumatic experience (Cetrano et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018).

Burnout and compassion fatigue are similar because they are both causes of psychological stress that affect educators' social and emotional encounters (Cetrano et al., 2017; Hills, 2019; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Burnout and compassion fatigue fall under the umbrella of inadequate mental health suffered by educators at all levels (Cetrano et al., 2017; Makhdoom et al., 2019; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Educators who experience psychological distress feel exhausted and sluggish (Cetrano et al., 2017; Makhdoom et al., 2019; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019).

Recognition also plays an integral part in an educator's performance and can provide positive fulfillment and encourage engagement among educational faculty (Faisal et al., 2019; Turner & Theilking, 2019). Lack of recognition or rewards can lead to stress for educators (Faisal et al., 2019). Recognition can be given multiple ways and allows educators to feel valued (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Faisal et al., 2019; Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018). Employees suffering from a lack of recognition may grieve the loss and develop higher stress levels (Faisal et al., 2019; Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018).

One form of recognition in the workplace is respect (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017). This form of recognition is expressed through respect given to individuals' specific rights (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017). Cranor (1975) referred to the belief that people, in general, should be respected. Cranor (1975) called this "respect for persons principles" (p. 309). These principles, found in the workplace, help ensure all individuals' rights and alleviate early signs of burnout (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Cranor, 1975).

### **Contributing Factors to Compassion Fatigue**

Examples of students' traumatic experiences include abuse, homelessness, and low socioeconomic status (Cetrano et al., 2017). Student traumatic situations are a contributing factor to the level of suffering educators endure (Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). When students unload their stresses and traumatic events onto their teachers, the educators then begin to suffer along with the students (Cetrano et al., 2017). Furthermore, burnout happens quickly to educators compared to compassion fatigue, which occurs at a slower rate (Cetrano et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014).

Causes of compassion fatigue among educators include conditions such as the instructor's age, marital status, previous history of trauma, workload, actual time working

in the career, and work environmental factors (Cetrano et al., 2017; Ineme & Ineme, 2016; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue include high levels of anxiety and impulsiveness and other psychological problems (Cetrano et al., 2017; Bao & Taliaferro, 2015). Holman et al. (2019), Leineweber et al. (2018), and Olson et al. (2018) discovered workers who feel they have little to no control over their work environment might tend to experience a form of compassion fatigue. For those suffering from compassion fatigue, the ability to provide professional care is missing from daily activities (Bao & Taliaferro, 2015). Compassion fatigue directly contributes to high job turnover and a lack of productivity (Bao & Taliaferro, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014).

According to Luzio et al. (2019), increased levels of belonging improve employee self-esteem. Steinbauer et al. (2018) discovered employees who feel left out of workplace activities tend to procrastinate, show psychological and physical pain, and exhibit behaviors that may seem unethical. Steinbauer et al. (2018) also found employers see an increased turnover among these employees. Fear of missing out on workplace situations further increases burnout among staff (Budnick et al., 2020).

## **Burnout**

Burnout includes demonstrations of “physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion” on the job, leading to decreased individual achievement (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Greaves et al., 2017; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017, p. 47). Risk factors associated with burnout include increased job requirements, lack of control of the workload, lack of recognition, and decreased job security (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Burnout is related to hostile working environments and high work demands (Bussing et al., 2017). Other elements that contribute to burnout include classroom size, population of the

classroom, school type, student discipline issues, outside assistance for the educator, and policy changes (Akdemir, 2019).

Burnout is not a condition that departs as quickly as it develops (Greaves et al., 2017). Cases of burnout sometimes linger for up to 15 years (Greaves et al., 2017). The first symptom related to burnout is emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Researchers have established that emotional exhaustion is common among caregivers (Greaves et al., 2017).

Emotional exhaustion is a feeling of constant fatigue, continually feeling mentally strained, and feeling depleted of emotional and energy reserves (David et al., 2020; Greaves et al., 2017). Emotional exhaustion has been labeled as one of the leading causes of burnout among employees (David et al., 2020; Greaves et al., 2017). In addition to detrimental health concerns, emotional exhaustion has contributed to increasing employer costs regarding employees' lack of efficiency (David et al., 2020). Leineweber et al. (2018) further discovered that more women suffer from emotional exhaustion than their male counterparts.

At times, employees tend to spend more time in the workplace than in their home environment (Sato et al., 2020). According to the National Education Association (2018), educators work well over seven hours a day, which means most educators take work home to complete after hours. Leineweber et al. (2018) determined a lack of control over hours spent at work is related to mental health.

Working long hours is a situation that can contribute to burnout or compassion fatigue (Rivera et al., 2020; Sato et al., 2020). Sato et al. (2020) suggested job stress, dissatisfaction in the workplace, and long hours initiate mental health disorders among

the workforce. Furthermore, Rivera et al. (2020) suggested strokes and depression were significant health threats associated with working more than 40 hours per week, with a 33% higher rate of stroke and a 14% higher rate of depression than for those who work 40 hours or fewer per week (p. 11).

### **Contributing Factors to Burnout**

Burnout can be classified as professional burnout (Szempruch, 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Professional burnout, first labeled in the 1970s, occurs within professions that require personal connections with other people and involvement in some form with the outcomes of their lives (Szempruch, 2018). Maslach and Jackson (1986) developed a model of professional burnout based upon three stages.

Indication of burnout includes a loss of self-confidence, unproductive self-soothing behaviors, a decreased ability to perform, and the loss of faith (Merriman, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Those affected by burnout suffer from continuing emotional drainage due to constant interaction with others, dealing with persistent problems, and lack of coping mechanisms (Schneider-Levi et al., 2017). The three stages of professional burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Bussing et al., 2017; Shoji et al., 2016; Szempruch, 2018).

#### ***Emotional Exhaustion***

Emotional exhaustion occurs when educators feel overburdened emotionally (Szempruch, 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Emotional exhaustion is a subjective feeling that develops when educators take on others' problems and blame themselves when they cannot provide the help they believe is needed (Szempruch, 2018). During this stage of

burnout, symptoms may include loss of energy, headaches, depression, fatigue, inability to sleep, and increased compassion toward others (Szempruch, 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). The number one factor contributing to burnout is stress (Akdemir, 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). According to Holman et al. (2019), Leineweber et al. (2018), and Olson et al. (2018), individuals experience forms of burnout when they feel they have lost control over their workplace environment.

When burnout leads to stress in the workplace, a worker's failure to meet excess work demands can result in "undesired and adverse physical and emotional response" (Faisal et al., 2019, p. 46). According to Opstrup and Pihl-Thingvad (2016) and Stiglbauer and Zuber (2018), being a teacher is one of the most stressful jobs. Furthermore, those working in education have the second-highest percentage of clinical depression (Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018, p. 707).

When an educator suffers burnout, there may be disturbing outcomes for both the educator and the level of instruction the educator can produce (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). When burnout is at full peak, educators tend to isolate themselves from coworkers, which leads to depersonalization (Suh, 2019). When educators isolate themselves from students, negative interactions result (Shoji et al., 2016; Szempruch, 2018).

### ***Depersonalization***

Depersonalization is defined as a disconnection of feelings that leads to separation from students, teachers, administrators, and peers (Herman et al., 2019; Schnaider-Levi et al., 2017; Suh, 2019). Depersonalization may be seen in higher education as educators begin to lose interest in student learning and abilities (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). High work stress is related to the inability to maintain psychological wellness, poor emotional

wellbeing, decreased satisfaction in daily life activities, job dissatisfaction, and lack of work quality, which all lead to increased thoughts of resigning from the job (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bussing et al., 2017).

Specific job requirements contribute to high levels of job stress, which may then lead to burnout (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Faisal et al., 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Some of the job requirements associated with burnout include multiple meetings and paperwork that lead to constant adjustment and reworking to meet administrative needs (Arvidsson et al., 2019). Furthermore, teaching requires much face-to-face communication; students may display behavioral issues, negative attitudes, lack of motivation, and lack of performance (Arvidsson et al., 2019).

Garwood et al. (2018) discovered teacher burnout is more prevalent in rural areas due to understaffing. Teachers were found to suffer depersonalization or become uninterested in their work (Garwood et al., 2018). According to Pedersen and Minnotte (2017), social isolation and lack of support are the most significant risk factors associated with burnout.

### ***Low Personal Accomplishment***

Another component of burnout includes a person's feeling of inadequate personal accomplishment (Garwood et al., 2018; Rahmati, 2015). Low personal accomplishment is related to feelings of decline at work with regard to competence level and productivity (Garwood et al., 2018; Rahmati, 2015). Pedersen and Minnotte (2017) found low personal accomplishment leads to higher burnout levels, which impacts the work environment. Finally, low personal accomplishment also decreases a person's self-efficacy, which is the final component of burnout (Garwood et al., 2018; Rahmati, 2015).



Self-efficacy refers to the belief one can control challenges related to stressful situations (Shoji et al., 2016). Researchers have discovered a correlation between student outcomes and a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs, teaching performance, and behaviors in the classroom setting (Köksal et al., 2018). Typically, those teachers who can increase excitement among the student population have higher self-efficacy beliefs than those who lack the ability to drive students in a positive direction (Herman et al., 2019; Köksal et al., 2018; Shoji et al., 2016). Self-efficacy is negatively related to teacher anxiety and burnout with mutual effects over time (Herman et al., 2019). Teacher burnout is related to increased defiance from students in the classroom (Herman et al., 2019).

### **Coping Methods for Educator Compassion Fatigue and Burnout**

Given that traumatic experiences are prevalent in the classroom today, the possibility of student trauma going away is limited (Brown et al., 2017). However, the use of coping methods among educators is vital in dealing with such tragic events (Brown et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018). Researchers have found many different approaches to coping with compassion fatigue and stress (Brown et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018; Merriman, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019).

#### ***Mindfulness***

One coping method that has shown promise in those suffering from compassion fatigue is mindfulness (Donahoo et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2020; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Mindfulness is a cognitive approach that helps those suffering from job dissatisfaction (Brown et al., 2017; Chesak et al., 2019; Iancu et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2020). An example of mindfulness is meditation, which reduces burnout and increases both employee retention and attentiveness (Donahoo et al., 2018; Iancu et al.,

2018). When educators practice mindfulness, quality of life increases, and anxiety levels decrease (Donahoo et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018).

Mindfulness is also an essential method for reducing day-to-day stress (Iancu et al., 2018; Lindsey et al., 2018). Individuals have experienced a high level of stress across the country, and stress continues to be an issue (Hills, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2018). These high levels of stress have been associated with inferior coping methods (Hills, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2018). Furthermore, stress does not just affect one aspect of the body (Hills, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2018). Instead, stress is a culprit that affects all parts of the body (Hills, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2018). Fortunately, mindfulness intercessions can reduce stress (Hills, 2019; Iancu et al., 2018; Lindsey et al., 2018).

### ***Compassion Satisfaction***

Another method used to battle compassion fatigue is compassion satisfaction (Merriman, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Compassion satisfaction occurs when an educator engages in positive work with a student, even though the student may be suffering in a hostile environment (Merriman, 2015; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Those benefiting from compassion satisfaction realize their efforts impact those they assist in a positive manner (Merriman, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019).

### ***Prayer***

Finally, some researchers have suggested prayer as another method to help educators reduce stress when dealing with high-risk students (Donahoo et al., 2018). Prayer is found within the umbrella term of spirituality (Chirico et al., 2020). Chirico et al. (2020) discovered some success from prayer in the realm of stress and burnout. Prayer

can increase spiritual, emotional, and mental health and offer the support needed from a higher power (Donahoo et al., 2018).

### **Prevention of Compassion Fatigue and Burnout**

Compassion fatigue and burnout can affect anyone working within a field focused on helping others (Merriman, 2015; Robino, 2019; Shoji et al., 2016; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Education is no different from mental health or healthcare when it comes to compassion fatigue and burnout effects (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2017; Cetrano et al., 2017). While many use the terms compassion fatigue and burnout interchangeably, there are differences between the two terms (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Robino, 2019). Compassion fatigue has a greater treatment opportunity than burnout; however, it is less predictable and may happen without warning (Coaston, 2017). Because of this, those in the helping profession need to protect themselves from the development of both conditions (Coaston, 2017; Donahoo et al., 2017).

### ***Self-Educate***

Most importantly, those at risk of compassion fatigue or burnout should educate themselves on the warning signs and symptoms (Merriman, 2015; Robino, 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Chronic emotional, physical, or mental exhaustion are early warning signs (Robino, 2019; Shoji et al., 2016; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Reduced empathy, dreading the job, and anger or anxiety may follow (Rahmati, 2015; Shoji et al., 2016). Some may find their work/life balance challenging to maintain, while others experience impaired decision-making skills, trouble sleeping, headaches, and weight loss (Brown et al., 2017; Teater & Ludgate, 2014; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg,

2019). Opstrup and Pihl-Thingvad (2016) suggested those who work in an educational setting tend to notice less stress when they have more control over their work.

Educators may feel as if they have been defeated in their careers due to burnout and compassion fatigue (O’Kelly, 2019). This may drive educators to leave the field of education, even after only a few years (Farmer, 2017; Szempruch, 2018). One may assume that compassion fatigue and burnout are the only risks of the job, when in fact, life conditions can make an impact as well (O’Kelly, 2019)

### *Self-Care*

Educators should practice self-care to protect themselves (Brown et al., 2017; Robino, 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Those who spend much time caring for others may forget to care for themselves (Robino, 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Educators should eat a balanced diet, exercise, maintain a good sleep schedule, and balance their work/life schedule in a positive way (Robino, 2019).

Another prevention method to reduce burnout or compassion fatigue is to remember the work’s meaning (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Understanding the meaning is one remedy to burnout and compassion fatigue (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Simonds and Sotile (2020) further suggested sitting in one’s car a few extra minutes before entering the office to allow time for reflection. The few minutes spent thinking about the job’s positive aspects can shift one’s mindset (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020).

Hills (2019) and Simonds and Sotile (2020) suggested becoming intentional in personal relationships. When educators suffer burnout, personal relationships are typically neglected (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Educators should not just talk

about relationship-building activities outside the office environment but should put these appointments on the calendar to ensure they occur (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020).

### ***Set Emotional Boundaries***

Educators should set emotional boundaries when working with students (Donahoo et al., 2018). According to Donahoo et al. (2018), educators can remain empathic and still keep a safe distance from involving themselves too deeply in students' personal lives.

Educators need to pay attention to their own lives and the standards they set for themselves (Köksal et al., 2018). Something as simple as breaks throughout the day can make a huge difference in how the day goes (Coaston, 2017; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Finally, educators should consider hobbies outside of the office, including friendships that provide support (Coaston, 2017).

Hills (2019) and Simonds and Sotile (2020) indicated it is also essential to resolve workplace conflict and stress in the office. If work conflict continues for an extended amount of time, burnout can be a problem for employees (Hills, 2019; Simonds and Sotile, 2020). Furthermore, Hills (2019) encouraged team-building exercises in the workplace. It is crucial to build positive morale in the office by scheduling group outings or other activities that increase bonding among employees (Hills, 2019).

Those who work in a human services career such as education may suffer from too much additional trauma, which can lead them to become overwhelmed (Good Therapy, 2020; Kolaski & Taylor, 2019). Just as people grieve differently, the feeling of being overwhelmed can express itself in different ways as well (Good Therapy, 2020; Kolaski & Taylor, 2019). For some, being overwhelmed can present itself as insomnia, eating too much, not eating at all, addictive behavior, isolation, depression, anxiety, or

anger (Good Therapy, 2020; Kolaski & Taylor, 2019). Those who are overwhelmed may be more augmentative toward family members (Good Therapy, 2020; Kolaski & Taylor, 2019).

### *Outside Activities*

Educators should take daily breaks (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). When educators feel the constant demands and anxiety associated with their work, taking short breaks to obtain fresh air, to think about the positive aspects of the job, to focus on the quiet, and to laugh will help them get through the day (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Finally, educators need to focus on personal health and goals (Simonds & Sotile, 2020). Hills (2019) and Simonds and Sotile (2020) suggested making small changes, one at a time, to improve overall health. Whether it is taking a 15-minute exercise break during the day, eating healthier snacks and meals, cutting down on sodas, or just getting to bed earlier during the week, small changes can make a healthy mental change in a daily routine (Hills, 2019; Simonds & Sotile, 2020).

One crucial way to protect educators from compassion fatigue or burnout is to preserve a solid foundation of work-life stability (Good Therapy, 2020; Noronha & Aithal, 2020; Pawlicka et al., 2020). Work-life balance is the collaboration between paid duties for work and unpaid duties required for family and self-care (Naseem et al., 2020; Noronha & Aithal, 2020; Pawlicka et al., 2020). Thinking about work or work activities can easily cause burnout in an individual (Naseem et al., 2020; O’Kelly, 2019). Stability within a work-life balance is important to employees in the workplace (Good Therapy, 2020; Naseem et al., 2020). When workers make plans or schedule relaxing activities

outside the workplace, stress tends to decrease and life begins to improve (Good Therapy, 2020; Naseem et al., 2020; Noronha & Aithal, 2020).

Journaling, or documenting thoughts and emotions, may help educators let go of emotions trapped inside (Cronin et al., 2020; O’Kelly, 2019). Cronin et al. (2020) suggested spending a short amount of time writing down one’s thoughts to promote self-awareness of bottled-up emotions, which could prevent an overload of compassion fatigue (Cronin et al., 2020; Good Therapy, 2020). Furthermore, creative writing, poetry, or fictional writing could help prevent burnout or compassion fatigue (Cronin et al., 2020).

### ***Therapy***

When it comes to work-life balance, continued exposure to stress can diminish one’s energy sources (Santoft et al., 2019). One treatment method for chronic burnout or compassion fatigue is cognitive behavioral therapy (Iancu et al., 2018; Santoft et al., 2019). Cognitive behavioral therapy is a type of psychotherapy that helps those who suffer from depression and anxiety (Anclair et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018). Cognitive behavioral therapy, either individually or in a group setting, can also benefit those suffering from stress-related illnesses (Anclair et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018).

Another therapy method to assist those suffering from burnout or compassion fatigue is the implementation of effective intervention methods such as acceptance and commitment therapy (Hofer et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). Intervention is an affordable and easy method to execute (Hofer et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). Effective interventions are designed to encourage “psychological flexibility” (Puolakanaho et al., 2020, p. 52). Six core processes make up

psychological flexibility (Hofer et al., 2018; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). They include existing in the moment and awareness of one's beliefs, feelings, sensations, and action possibilities; continuing sincere understanding of thoughts and feelings; explaining values, hopes, and goals; executing and encouraging achievements in accordance with recognized values and desired results; learning to accept any unwanted feelings when executing value-based actions; and recognizing ideas that hinder value actions while understanding these are just thoughts and not actual truths (Puolakanaho et al., 2020). Every psychological ability that helps with unsolicited or upsetting domestic occurrences and indications can be enriched using the above six core processes (Puolakanaho et al., 2020).

Other forms of therapy to cope with burnout or compassion fatigue include music, drama, dance, and general art therapy (Ifrach & Miller, 2016; Tjasink & Soosaipillai, 2019). Professional art therapy was developed in the mid-20th century as a healing method and allowed people to voice their feelings in a non-vocal way (Kaimal, 2020). Kaimal (2020) discovered art therapy was created with the idea that everyone has a creative side and is competent of self-expression. Parks-Stamm and Ferrell (2019) stated that to reduce anxiety and increase relaxation, the use of visual art is beneficial. Furthermore, creating or viewing art has been found to decrease burnout and compassion fatigue in healthcare staff (Tjasink & Soosaipillai, 2019).

Tjasink and Soosaipillai (2019) discovered music therapy restores patients and decreases burnout. Music therapy by a trained music therapist involves a methodical experience to gain healing objectives (Giordano et al., 2020). Music therapy has been



used to decrease pain in patients, increase sleep quality, and reduce anxiety and exhaustion without using medication (Giordano et al., 2020).

### **Summary**

Chapter Two included an investigation of Bandura's (1977) observational learning theory. The theory's four components include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). A review of current literature, including research on compassion fatigue, the contributing factors to compassion fatigue, burnout, and the contributing factors to burnout, was provided. Finally, coping methods for and prevention of compassion fatigue and burnout were detailed.

Chapter Three includes the research methodology for this study. The problem and purpose overview, the research questions, and the research design are provided. Chapter Three also includes a description of the population and sample and the instrumentation. The procedures used for data collection and data analysis are described. Finally, ethical considerations are detailed.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three includes an overview of the problem and purpose and a restatement of the research questions. The research design, population and sample, and instrumentation are described. Finally, Chapter Three includes the delineation of data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **Problem and Purpose Overview**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to understand how compassion fatigue and burnout affect both full-time and adjunct faculty and how faculty members cope with compassion fatigue and burnout at a Missouri community college. The term burnout was first used in the 1970s to describe stress-related health issues among those working in healthcare, social work, and education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Szempruch, 2018). Additionally, burnout has been defined as an occupational phenomenon, but not necessarily a medical condition (World Health Organization, 2019).

### ***Research Questions and Hypotheses***

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue?

*H1<sub>0</sub>*: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

*H1<sub>a</sub>*: There are significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

2. What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout?

*H2<sub>0</sub>*: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout.

*H2<sub>a</sub>*: There are significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout.

3. In what ways does compassion fatigue affect the health of full-time and adjunct faculty?
4. What coping methods do faculty members perceive as the most effective for dealing with stress?

### **Research Design**

A mixed-methods design was used for this study. Bergin (2018) described a mixed-methods study as combining both qualitative and quantitative data to find the overall results. Mixed-methodology is used based on the purpose of the research (Burkholder et al., 2020). Triangulation is a popular reason for utilizing a mixed-methods research design (Bergin, 2018). Bergin (2018) explained the purpose of triangulation is to bring greater truth to the obtained results of the study (Burkholder et al., 2020).

### **Bracketing**

Bracketing is a method used within qualitative research to lessen the potentially toxic effects of misunderstood biases related to the study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described the process of bracketing as one that allows the researcher to recognize premeditated bias and the ability to focus on understanding information from the view of the participants. The career history of the researcher included personal experience with burnout and compassion fatigue, although in a different career setting. The researcher's career began in healthcare, where burnout and

compassion fatigue are normally found (Akdemir, 2019; Santoro, 2018). Based on this knowledge, it was essential to participate in bracketing before the qualitative data were collected or analyzed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher's first career choice was that of a registered nurse (RN). Prior to obtaining the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing, the researcher worked in clerical roles in the acute hospital setting while attending college. The researcher has a total of 15 years of acute healthcare employment.

The researcher put in more than the standard 36-hour workweek as a registered nurse. The researcher worked primarily on the night shift, and many times, the researcher was found working late due to lack of time to chart patient assessments and changes throughout the shift. At other times, the researcher was pulling extra 12-hour shifts to cover the cost of daycare. The researcher frequently worked 60-hour weeks, sometimes several weeks in a row.

The researcher decided to move from acute care nursing to education to eliminate burnout and compassion fatigue. Based on this change, the researcher's interpretation of the current study differs dramatically from her career choice and experiences during her previous career. This allowed the researcher to view current issues from a unique perspective.

### **Population and Sample**

This study's population included 150 full-time faculty members and 250 adjunct faculty members from the main campus of a southwest Missouri community college. A census was utilized to gather survey data from the entire population (Fraenkel et al.,

2018). All full-time and adjunct faculty members were asked to participate in the quantitative portion of this study.

Focus group participants were randomly selected using the Excel random number generator. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), random sampling allows all population members an equal opportunity to participate in the research, therefore providing a representative sample of the population. One focus group consisted of four full-time faculty members, and the other consisted of four adjunct faculty members.

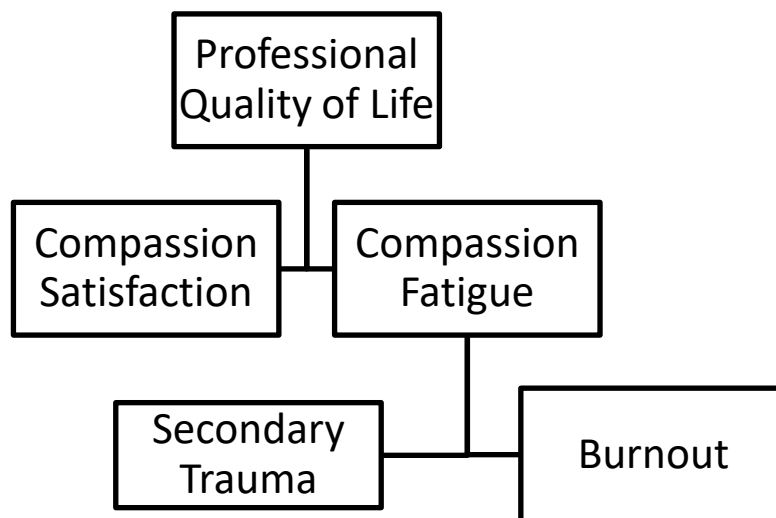
### **Instrumentation**

The Professional Quality of Life Measure (see Appendix A) was developed by Stamm (2010). As long as the instrument is not altered in any way or sold, it remains free to use (Stamm, 2010). To collect the quantitative data from the Professional Quality of Life Measure, each statement was entered into Qualtrics, and data were collected for each statement from each participant. All statements were on a Likert-type scale and were based on the faculty's experiences over the past 30 days (Stamm, 2010). There were 30 statements to be ranked on a scale of one to five (Stamm, 2010).

According to Stamm (2010), there are both negative and positive aspects of helping others. The positive aspects include compassion satisfaction, while the negative aspects include compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2010). Figure 2 depicts the process of professional quality of life with compassion fatigue and burnout.

**Figure 2**

*Diagram of Professional Quality of Life*



*Note.* Adapted from *The Concise ProQOL Manual* (2nd ed.) by B. H. Stamm, 2010, p. 8 (<https://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOLManual.pdf>). Copyright 2010 by proQOL.com.

Professional quality of life is defined as “the quality one feels in relation to their work as a helper” (Stamm, 2010, p. 8). Todaro-Franceschi (2013) explained Stamm’s beliefs and the purpose behind the Professional Quality of Life Measure as three modules: compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and burnout. The top-two most-discussed of the three include compassion fatigue and burnout (Todaro-Franceschi, 2013).

Qualitative data were gathered utilizing focus group discussions with open-ended questions (see Appendix B) presented to the groups. According to Merriam and Tisdell

(2016), “A primary difference between focus group research and other types of research, such as surveys, individual interviews and laboratory experiments is that data collection occurs in and is facilitated by, a group setting” (pp. 113-114). Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined a focus group as a method to obtain information from a group of experts on the situation.

Burkholder et al. (2020) described focus groups as groups of 6-10 people who understand the information being discussed and can discuss the information in a moderated discussion. Focus group discussion questions were created to answer research questions three and four. Bandura’s (Year) observational learning theory and the review of literature were used to develop the eight focus group discussion questions. These were open-ended questions meant to focus on the faculty’s current work experiences. The data discovered from the focus group transcription were used to enhance the quantitative information discovered (Burkholder et al., 2020).

Focus group questions one and two focused on the workload and work environment of faculty (Menezes et al., 2017; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Questions three and four examined the participants’ sense of belonging and sense of recognition (Jurado et al., 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Question five focused on the faculty members’ experiences with fairness and respect in the work setting (Jurado et al., 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Question six was posed so the faculty members could reflect on the professional values of the workplace (Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Finally, questions seven and eight asked participants to examine job fit and the idea of workload (Menezes et al., 2017; Teater & Ludgate, 2014).

### ***Reliability***

Reliability was defined by Burkholder et al. (2020) as a method to determine the theory of authenticity and consistency each time a tool is utilized in a study. To ensure the data collection tool's quality, participants were asked to complete a Likert-type survey called the Professional Quality of Life Measure: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5. Since this measure has been used in multiple research studies, the tool demonstrates consistency based upon cross-checking data received (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### ***Validity***

According to Bergin (2018), validity is a significant issue when it comes to qualitative research. Bergin (2018) further explained, "Even though multiple truths may exist, validity will be judged by the extent to which an account seems to fairly and accurately represent the data collected in a qualitative analysis" (pp. 144-145). To bring truthfulness to the forefront, the data from the quantitative research and the qualitative research were triangulated with the review of literature to reveal inconsistencies (Burkholder et al., 2020).

The focus group discussion questions were field-tested using the Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (VREP) (Simon & White, 2016). Simon and White (2016) described how pretesting of qualitative instruments is helpful, but these measures still may lack credibility. The use of a rubric is the best way to overcome any weaknesses in surveys and interviews (Simon & White, 2016). Triangulation is a method to increase validity "and augment the overall trustworthiness of data analysis findings" (Bergin, 2018, p. 29). Examining multiple sources of data, otherwise known as triangulation,



enhances a research study's reliability (Fusch et al., 2018). Fusch et al. (2018) stated, "Triangulation is one method by which the researcher analyzes data and then presents the results to others to understand the experience of a common phenomenon" (p. 20).

According to Fusch et al. (2018), triangulation contributes to the strength of the data collected.

### **Data Collection**

Once approval was granted from the Missouri comprehensive community college's Institutional Review Board and the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C), data collection commenced. The email addresses of all comprehensive community college full-time and adjunct faculty members were requested (see Appendix D) from the human resources department. The human resources department was asked to sort the emails into two groups: full-time faculty members and adjunct faculty members. All full-time and adjunct faculty members were sent a recruitment email (see Appendix E), including a copy of the research information sheet (see Appendix F) and a link to the survey. The Qualtrics survey link remained open for two weeks. After the survey link was closed, the data were analyzed.

The study's qualitative portion included two focus group discussions—one with full-time faculty members as participants and one with adjunct faculty member participants. Each group had four participants. The Excel random number generator was used to determine the participants in each focus group. A recruitment email (see Appendix G) was sent to selected participants requesting their participation in a focus group discussion. Included in the email was a copy of the research information sheet (see Appendices H & I) and a copy of the focus group discussion questions. If fewer than four

of the selected members of a group wished to participate, the next randomly selected member from the generated list was invited to participate. This process continued until there were at least four focus group participants for each focus group discussion.

Once the participants were selected, the focus group sessions were scheduled. Each focus group member was assigned an alphanumeric code. The focus group discussions were audio- and video-recorded to ensure accuracy of responses. After the focus group discussions were transcribed, the transcripts were sent to each participant for member checking.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the quantitative data were collected, the data were tested using the Mann-Whitney *U*. The results provided answers to research questions one and two. The Mann-Whitney *U* was selected, as it met all four criteria suggested by Laerd Statistics (2018) “to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed” (para. 1). The two groups for this study were the full-time and adjunct faculty members, and the responses to the survey were based on a five-point Likert-type scale.

Once the qualitative data were gathered, the data were transcribed and coded using open and axial coding, and significant themes were identified. According to Bergin (2018), open coding is the beginning of the coding process, where a long list of codes is generated. Axial coding is a continuation of the coding process and involves categorizing the open coding list into major themes (Bergin, 2018).

## **Ethical Considerations**

The participants' confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Risks and benefits were addressed during the research study (Burkholder et al., 2020). Given this project involved surveys and focus groups, the risks associated for the participants were minimal (Burkholder et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Burkholder et al. (2020) defined minimal risk as “when the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests” (p. 201). Data were not collected before approval from the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board. All participants were provided with a copy of the research information sheet. The purpose of the research information sheet was to provide the participants with the purpose of the study, what the participants would be asked to do during this study, the fact participation was voluntary, that withdrawal from the study was allowed at any given time, the amount of time expected to participate in the study, and how privacy was protected. All documents provided by the participants were locked in a file cabinet when not being used in the study. Informed consent was obtained from each participant.

## **Summary**

Chapter Three included the methodology and problem and purpose of the study. The research questions were restated. The population and sample were detailed. The instrumentation was outlined, which included both the reliability and validity of the instruments used. Finally, the data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations were detailed.

Included in Chapter Four are the demographics and data analysis explanations. Primarily, data collected were to examine burnout and compassion fatigue in the higher education sector. Chapter Four includes the results related to research question one, related to compassion fatigue, and question two, related to burnout. Questions three and four were answered based upon the focus groups, and the data gathered are presented in Chapter Four.

## Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This study included an examination of the health and coping measures of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding stress. Full-time and adjunct faculty can be burdened with issues from their students' personal lives when brought into the classroom (Faisal et al., 2019). For some faculty, this can bring additional stress into their lives and contribute to problems outside the classroom (Faisal et al., 2019).

Chapter Four includes demographics and data analysis. The survey included Likert-type statements, and descriptive statistics were used to share results. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  analysis was applied to each specific survey statement related to burnout and compassion fatigue. The focus group responses are also detailed in this chapter.

When the survey was completed, the specific statements related to compassion fatigue and burnout were distributed into two groups relating to the particular topic being evaluated. The survey had a total of 138 responses. However, once incomplete answers were removed and faculty not working on the main campus were also removed, the survey produced responses from 45 adjunct faculty and 46 full-time faculty relating to burnout and 45 adjunct faculty and 45 full-time faculty related to compassion fatigue.

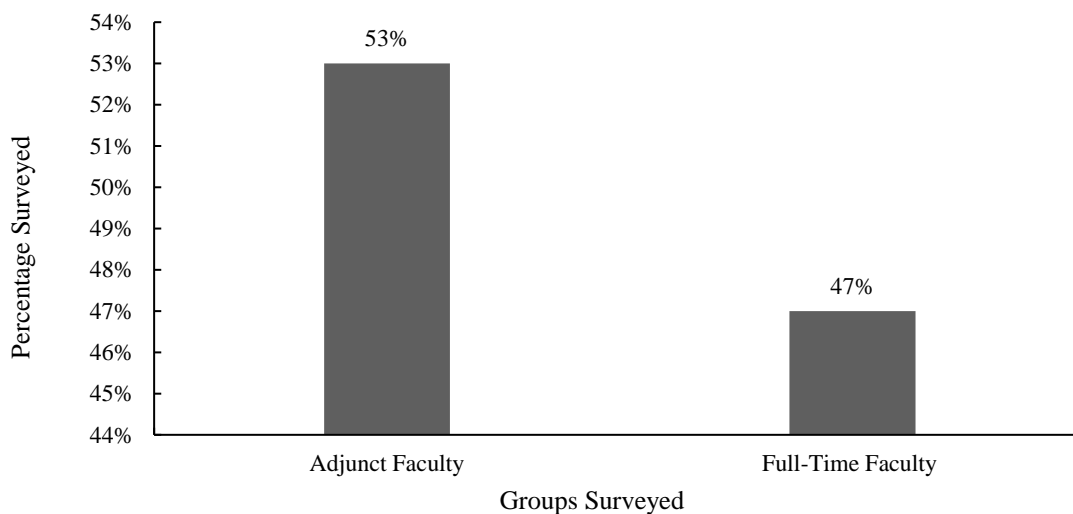
The instrument used covered three different topics—compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, and burnout. Since research questions one and two were related to compassion fatigue and burnout, only data from survey statements relating to research question one and research question one were analyzed from the survey. Thus, the number of questions was intermittent. In the following sections, after the quantitative data are presented, the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  are provided, and the qualitative data are detailed.

## Demographics

To understand the issues associated with burnout and compassion fatigue, a quantitative survey was administered to a total of 138 faculty members at a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college. Only faculty members who had taught for the college for a minimum of six credit hours or 225 contact hours were included in the survey. The survey was distributed to all six campuses related to the college; however, faculty who did not work on the main campus were eliminated from the study. A total of 13 faculty members failed to complete the survey in its entirety, so their information was not included in the results. Of the remaining participants, a total of 73 were adjunct faculty, and 65 were full-time faculty.

**Figure 3**

*Number of Adjunct Faculty and Full-Time Faculty Surveyed*



The quantitative instrument utilized was the Professional Quality of Life Measure consisting of 30 Likert-type style statements. Out of the 30 Likert-type style statements, 20 were analyzed for this study. Two focus groups were also used to obtain qualitative

data to support research questions three and four. One focus group consisted of four full-time faculty, and the other focus group was comprised of four adjunct faculty. Each group was asked the same eight questions.

### **Data Analysis**

Utilizing the Professional Quality of Life Measure, faculty members rated themselves on a Likert-type scale ranging from never to very often, with five possible responses. Qualtrics was used to survey both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty. The survey was open for two weeks. Once the survey was closed, the raw data were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet, and each value was assigned, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Likert-Type Scale Responses for Burnout and Compassion Fatigue*

Response	Assigned Score
Never	1
Rarely	2
Sometimes	3
Often	4
Very Often	5

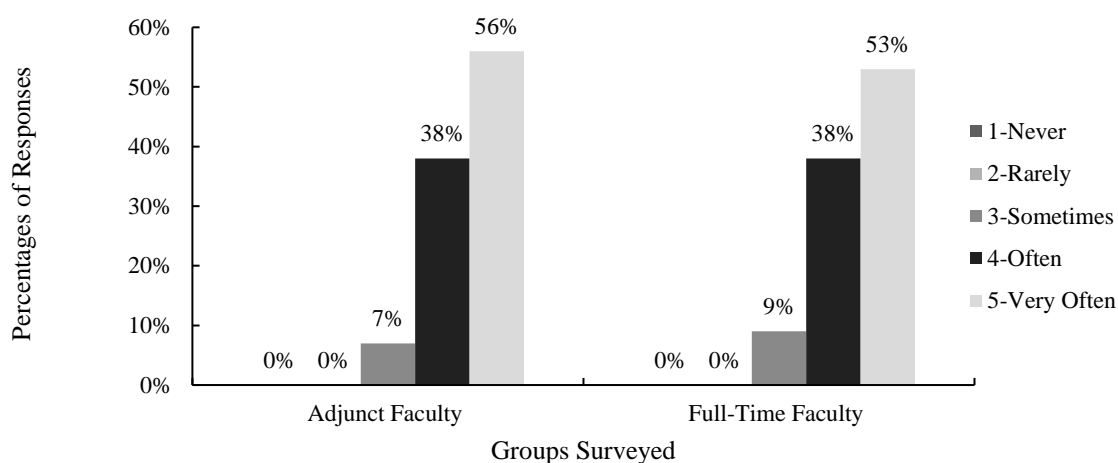
### **Compassion Fatigue**

On the Professional Quality of Life Measure: Compassion Fatigue Version 5 faculty were to consider their current work situations over the last 30 days before responding to the statements. The 10 statements associated with compassion fatigue are described as accounts that can impact the faculty member in positive or negative ways.

Both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty responded to statement three comparably. Of the two groups, 56% of the adjunct faculty and 53% of the full-time faculty responded they received satisfaction from being able to help people. Thirty-eight percent of both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty responded *often* they received satisfaction from helping others. Only 7% of adjunct faculty and 9% of full-time faculty responded *sometimes*, and no participants responded *rarely* or *never* (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*I Get Satisfaction from Being Able to [Help] People*



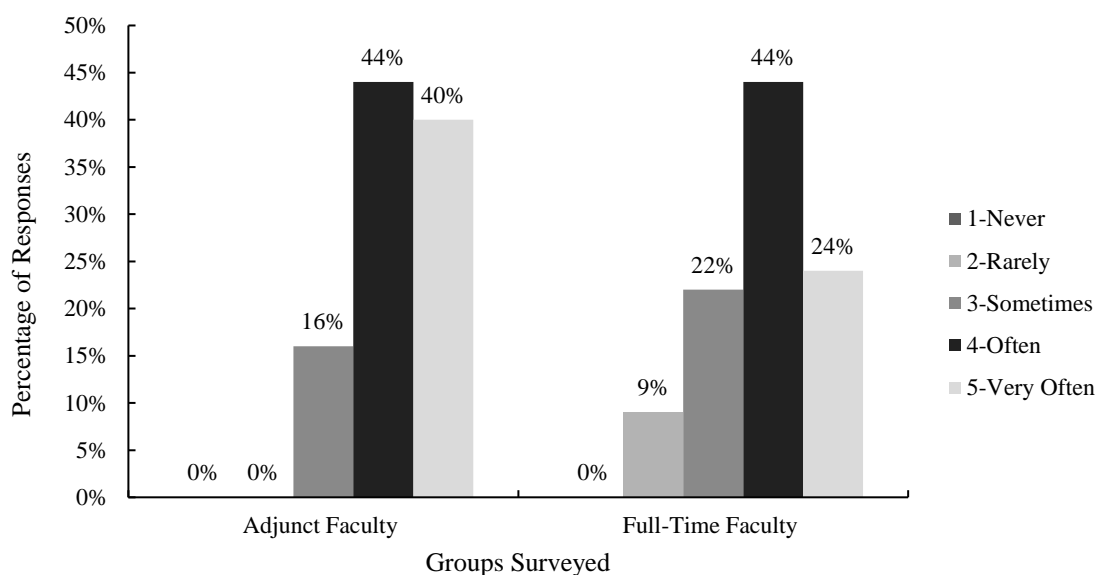
On the next statement respondents were to rate the following statement: *I feel invigorated after working with those I [help]*. The responses of the adjunct faculty and the full-time faculty were similar in certain areas. Forty percent of the adjunct faculty responded *very often*, and 44% responded *often* they feel invigorated after working with those they are able to help. Of the remaining adjunct faculty participants, 16% responded



*sometimes*, while no participants responded *rarely* or *never*. Twenty-four percent of the full-time faculty responded *very often*, and 44% responded *often* to feeling invigorated. Twenty-two percent of full-time faculty responded *sometimes*, while 9% responded *rarely*. No full-time faculty participants responded *never* (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

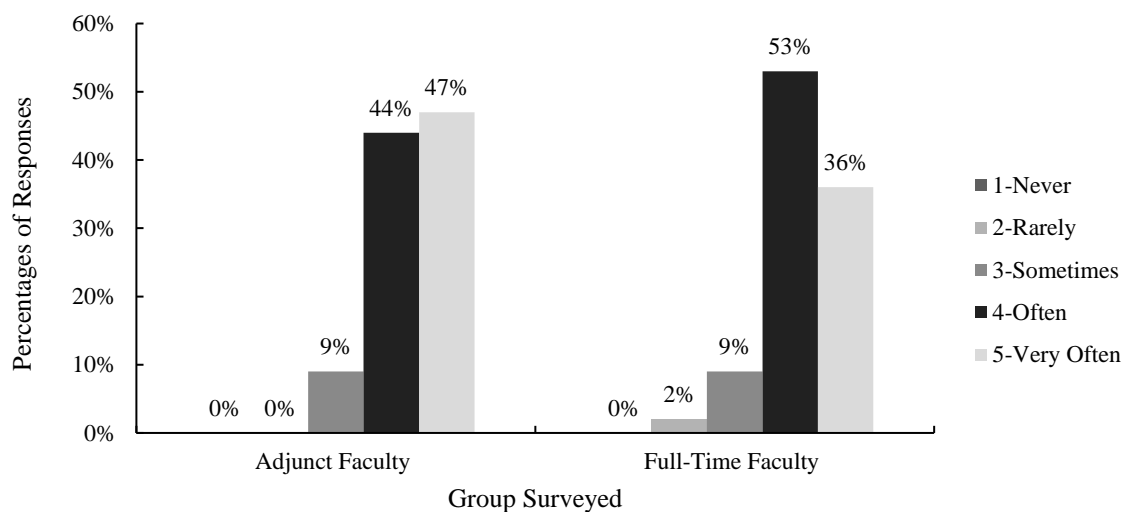
*I Feel Invigorated After Working with Those I [Help]*



For statement 12 participants were to rate how often they liked their work as helpers over the past 30 days. Fifty-three percent of full-time faculty responded they *often* like their work as a helper, while only 36% responded *very often*. Forty-seven percent of adjunct faculty responded *very often*, and 44% responded *often*. Nine percent of both full-time and adjunct faculty responded *sometimes* they like their work, while 2% of full-time faculty responded *rarely*, and no participants responded *never* (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

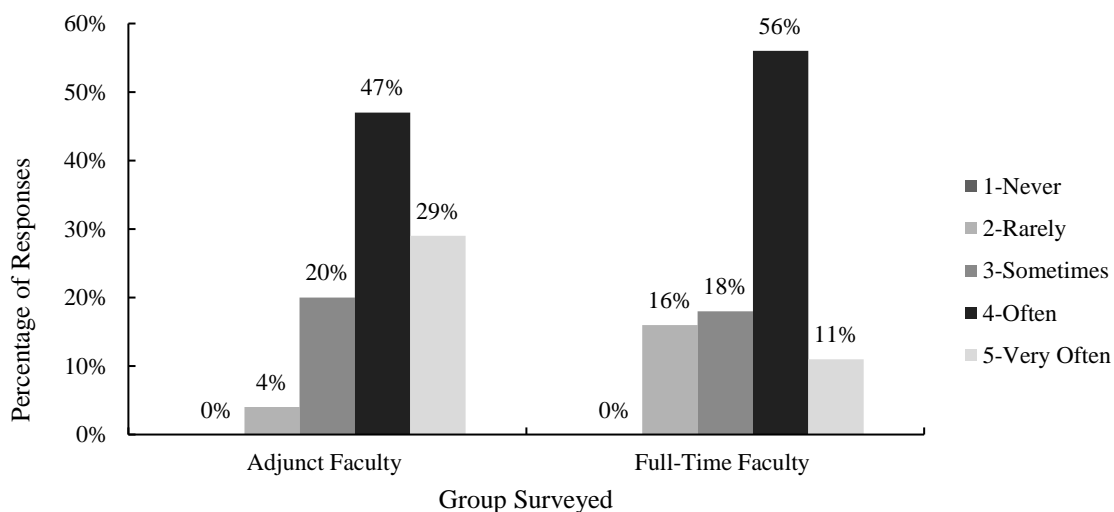
*I Like My Work As a [Helper]*



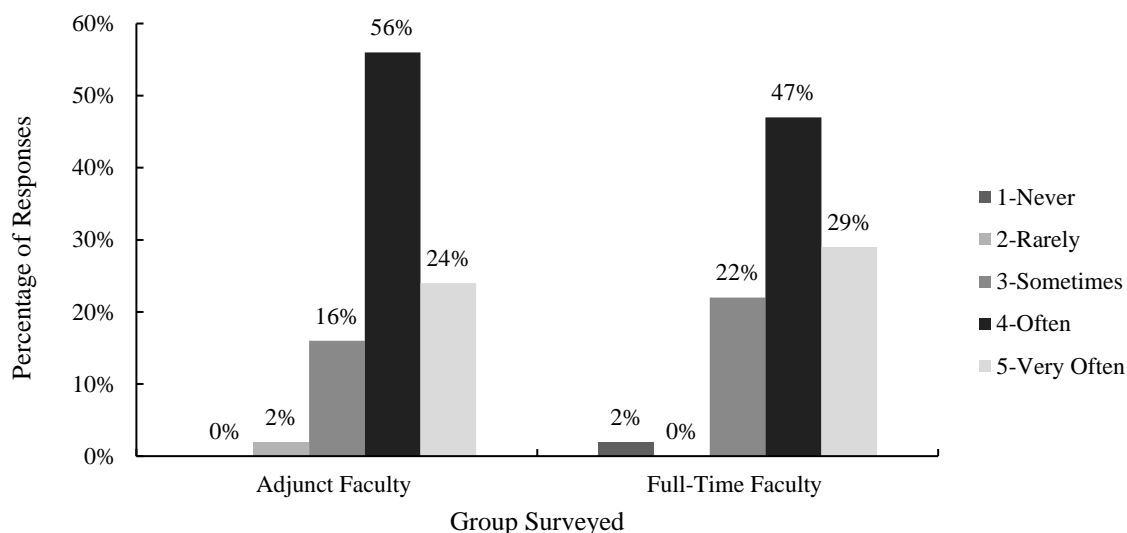
For statement 16 participants were to rate themselves on their ability to keep up with techniques and protocols. Fifty-six percent of full-time faculty responded they *often* are able to keep up with techniques and protocols. Furthermore, 11% of full-time faculty responded *very often*, 18% *sometimes*, 16% *rarely*, and 0% *never*. Forty-seven percent of adjunct faculty responded *often*, and 29% responded *very often*. Twenty percent of the adjunct faculty responded *sometimes*, and 4% responded *rarely*. No participants responded *never* (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

*I Am Pleased with How I Am Able to Keep Up With [Helping] Techniques and Protocols*



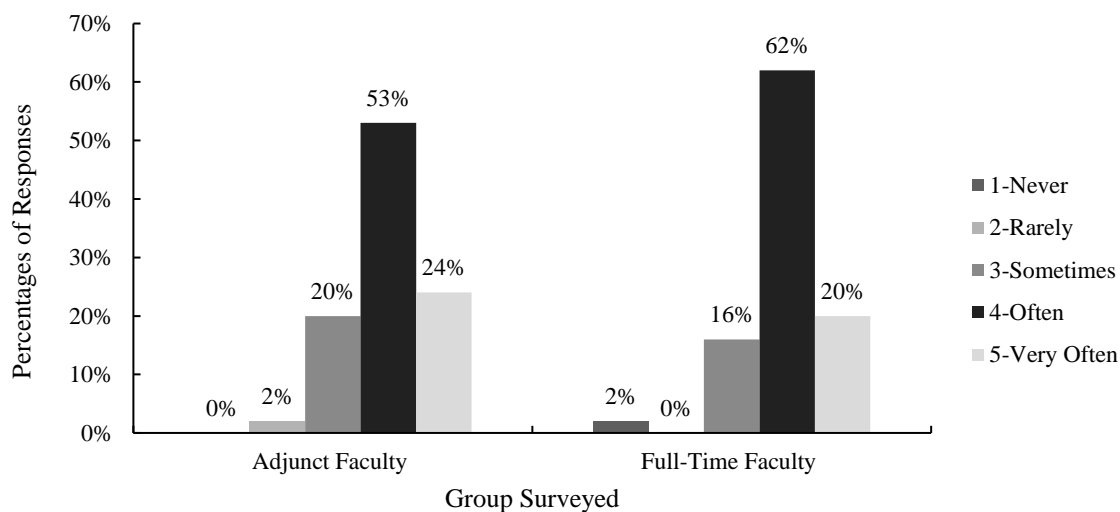
For statement 18 in the compassion fatigue category participants were to rate if their work made them feel satisfied. The results were similar between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty, with 56% of adjunct faculty and 47% of full-time faculty responding *often*. Twenty-four percent of the adjunct faculty and 29% of the full-time faculty responded *very often*. Twenty-two percent of full-time faculty and 16% of adjunct faculty responded *sometimes* (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8***My Work Makes Me Feel Satisfied*

When participants responded to statement 20, the full-time faculty group had a more positive response than the adjunct faculty group. Sixty-two percent of full-time faculty chose *often* when it came to having happy thoughts and feelings about those they helped and if they could help them. The adjunct faculty group responded, with only 53% of the participants choosing *often*. In the *very often* selection, adjunct faculty and full-time faculty members replied similarly, with adjunct faculty at 24% and full-time faculty members at 20%. Both faculty groups again replied with similar responses in the *sometimes* column, with adjunct faculty replying at 20% and full-time faculty at 16% (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

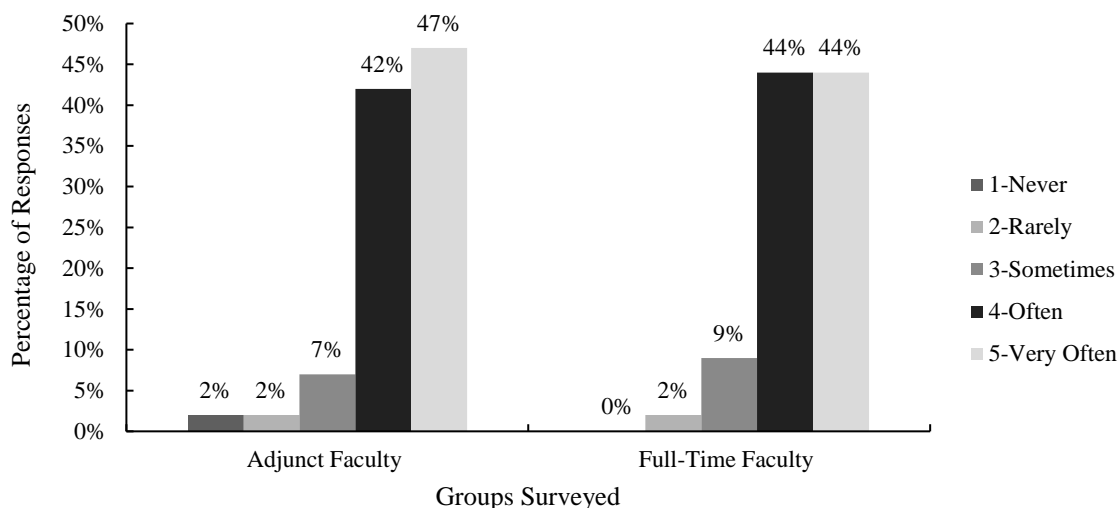
*I Have Happy Thoughts and Feelings About Those I [Help] and How I Could Help Them*



Participants from both groups responded in a similar fashion on statement 22 of the compassion fatigue scale. Full-time faculty responded with *very often* and *often* column at 44% each. Forty-seven percent of adjunct faculty selected *very often*, while 42% selected *often*. When both faculty groups responded to other options, the percentages were small. Nine percent of full-time faculty responded *sometimes*, while 7% of adjunct faculty chose *sometimes* (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10**

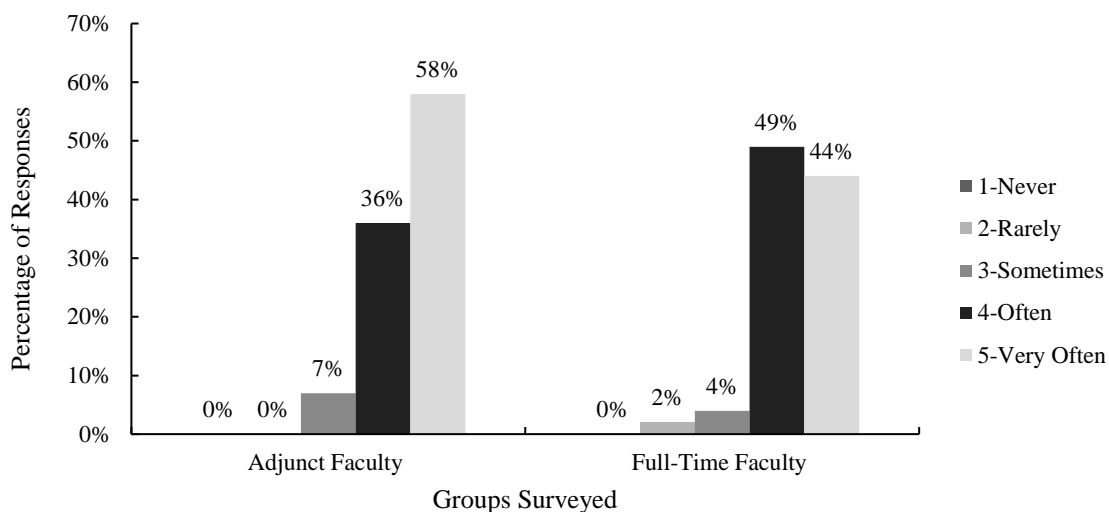
*I Believe I Can Make a Difference Through My Work*



Adjunct faculty and full-time faculty had considerable differences in responses to statement 24 of the compassion fatigue scale. Fifty-eight percent of adjunct faculty responded *very often* they are proud of what they can do to help. Only 44% of the full-time faculty group selected *very often*. Forty-nine percent of the full-time faculty group replied *often* they are proud of what they can do to help, whereas 36% of the adjunct faculty group replied *often*. The final few replies were similar across both groups. Seven percent of adjunct faculty chose *sometimes*, and 4% of full-time faculty chose the same (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11**

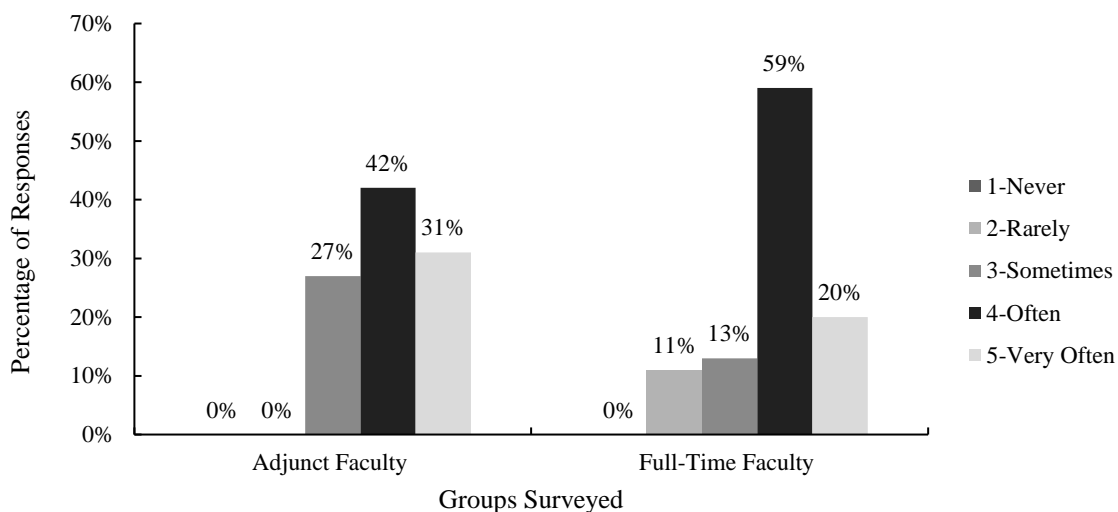
*I Am Proud of What I Can Do to [Help]*



When participants rated the statement, *I have thoughts that I am a success as a helper*, the responses of the two groups were obviously different. Fifty-nine percent of the full-time faculty group selected *often*, whereas only 42% of the adjunct faculty group responded they *often* have thoughts they are a successful helper. A total of 31% of adjunct faculty responded *very often*, whereas 20% of the full-time faculty group responded *very often*. Twenty-seven percent of the adjunct faculty group replied in the *sometimes* category, while only 13% of full-time faculty replied with the same option. Eleven percent of the full-time faculty group selected *rarely* (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12**

*I Have Thoughts That I Am a “Success” as a [Helper]*

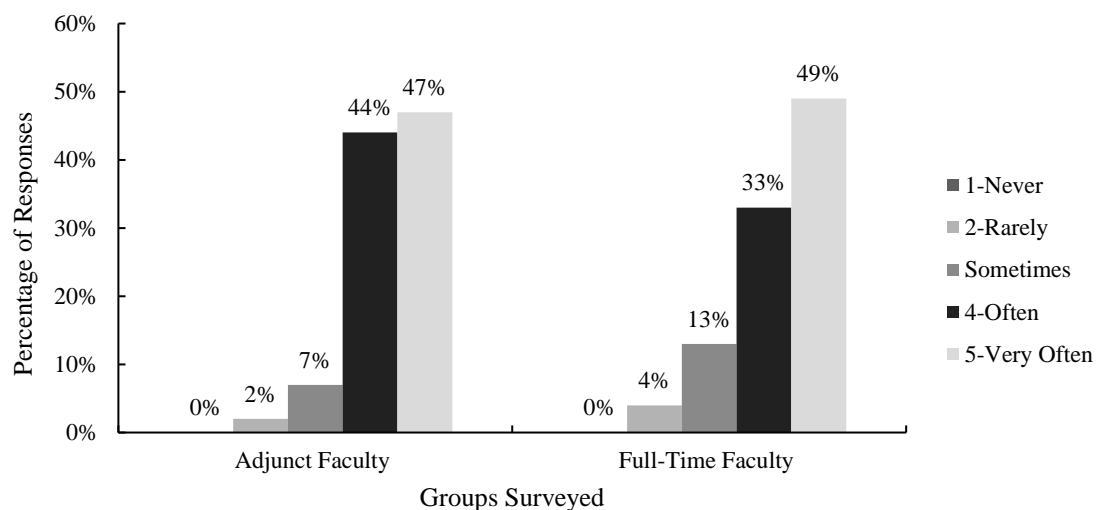


The final statement presented under the compassion fatigue category – *I am happy that I chose to do this work* – resulted in similar outcomes between the faculty groups. Forty-nine percent of the full-time faculty group selected *very often*, while 47% of the adjunct faculty group responded *very often*. Forty-four percent of adjunct faculty selected *often*, whereas 33% of full-time faculty selected the same. Under the *sometimes* category, full-time faculty replied at 13% and the adjunct faculty group at 7% (see Figure 13).



**Figure 13**

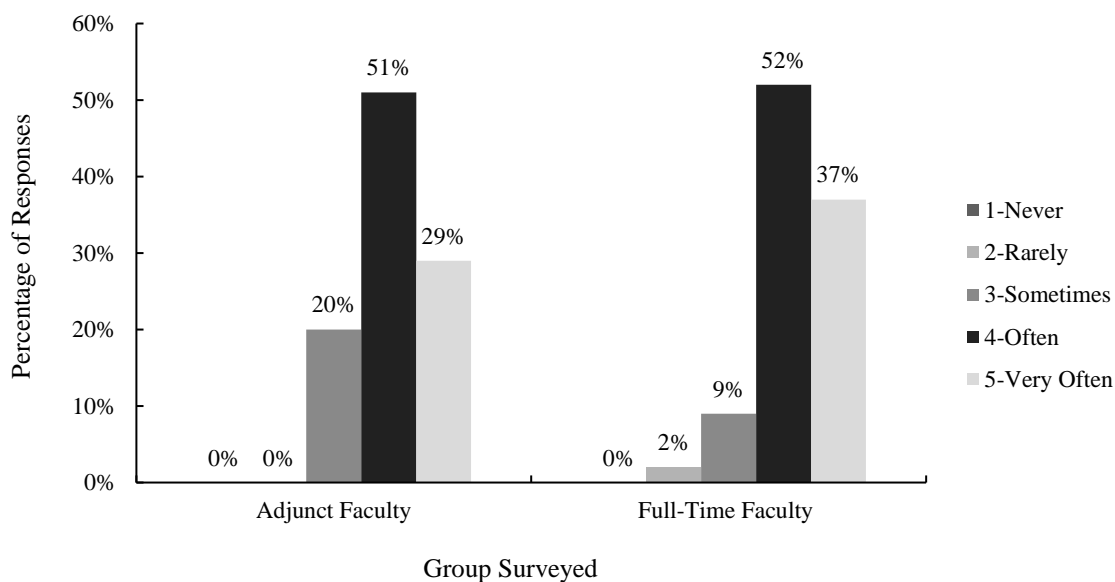
*I Am Happy That I Chose to Do This Work*



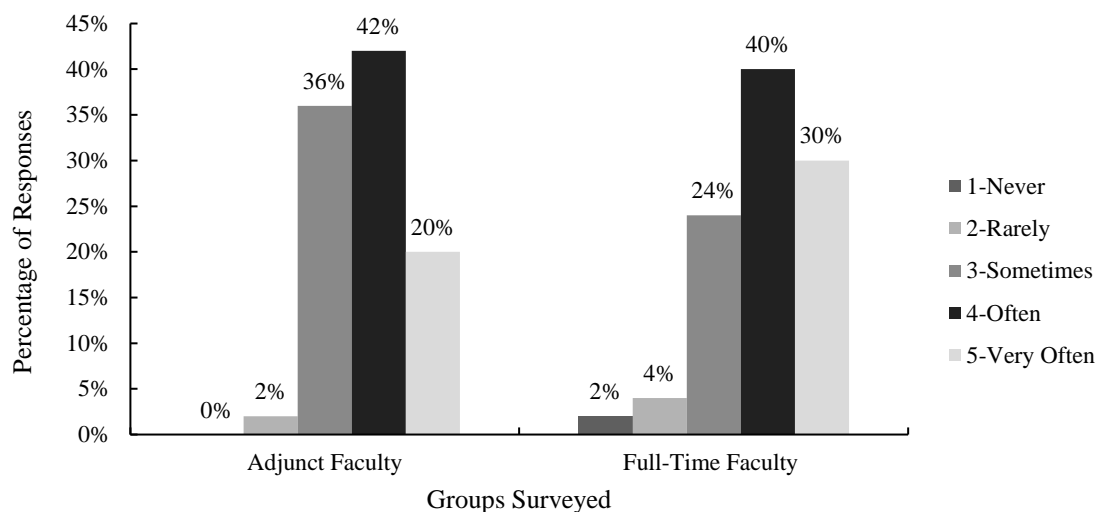
## Burnout

The Professional Quality of Life Measure: Compassion Fatigue Version 5 also evaluates the understanding of burnout among those who work in a helping capacity (Stamm, 2010). Just like in the compassion fatigue section, faculty were asked to consider their current work over the past 30 days when replying to the statements. The ten statements in the burnout section were aligned to the Likert scale outlined in Table 1.

When both faculty groups replied to the burnout statement, *I am happy*, the responses were comparable. Fifty-two percent of the full-time faculty group and 51% of the adjunct faculty selected *often*. Full-time faculty replied *very often* with 37%, while the adjunct faculty group responded *very often* with 29%. The adjunct faculty group responded *sometimes* with 20%, while the full-time faculty replied with only 9% (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14***I Am Happy*

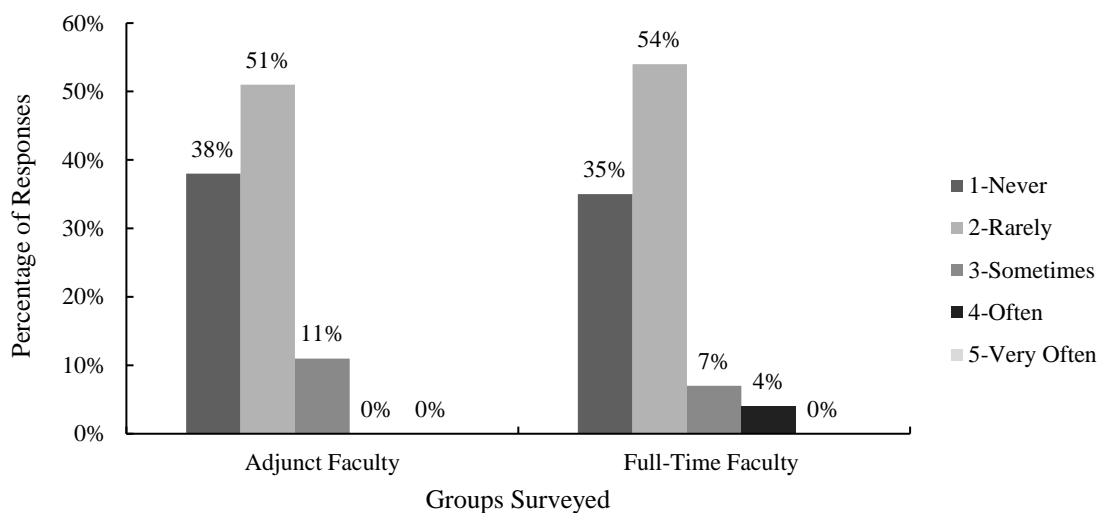
Continuing in the burnout portion of the instrument, statement four resulted in similar responses from the two groups. Forty-two percent of the adjunct faculty group selected that they *often* feel connected to others, whereas 40% of the full-time faculty group replied *often*. Thirty-six percent of participants replied, *sometimes* feeling connected to others, and only 24% of the full-time faculty group replied *sometimes*. The full-time faculty group replied *very often* with 30%, and the adjunct faculty group replied *very often* with only 20% (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15***I Feel Connected to Others*

Adjunct faculty and full-time faculty responded to statement eight comparably. Fifty-four percent of the full-time faculty group selected they *rarely* feel unproductive at work due to losing sleep over traumatic experiences of the people they help, while 51% of the adjunct faculty also replied to this statement with *rarely*. Another 38% of adjunct faculty and 35% of full-time faculty selected the *never* response. Finally, 11% of adjunct faculty and 7% of full-time faculty responded *sometimes* (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16**

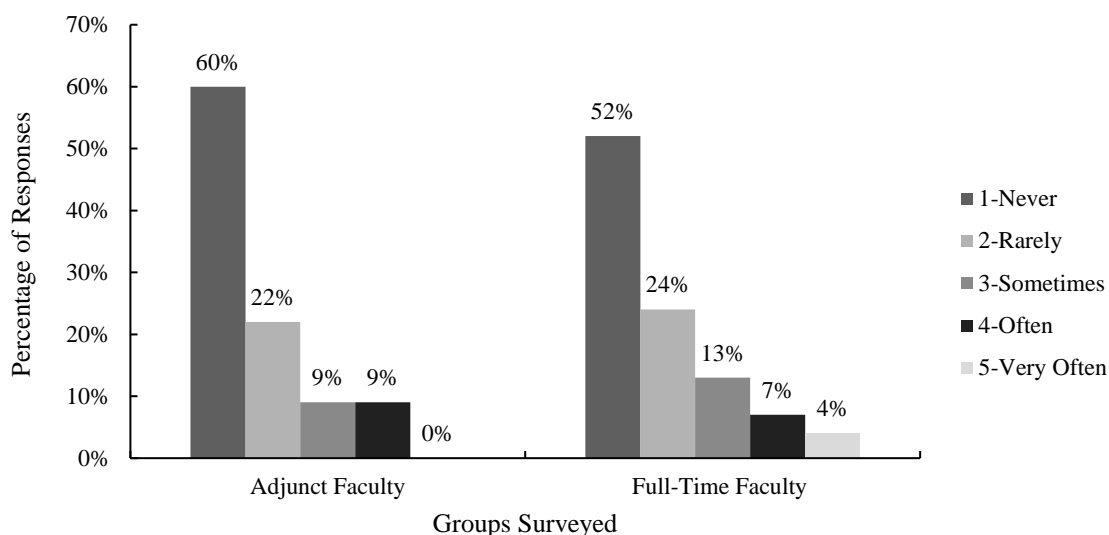
*I Am Not As Productive at Work Because I Am Losing Sleep Over Traumatic Experiences of a Person I [Help]*



Both the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group responded to statement 10 in a similar fashion. Sixty percent of the adjunct faculty group and 52% of the full-time faculty group replied *never* feeling trapped by their job as helpers. Another 24% of the full-time group and 22% of the adjunct faculty group responded they *rarely* feel trapped in their jobs. The adjunct faculty group responded *sometimes* with 9% and *very often* with 0%. The full-time faculty group responded *often* with 7% and *very often* with 4% (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17**

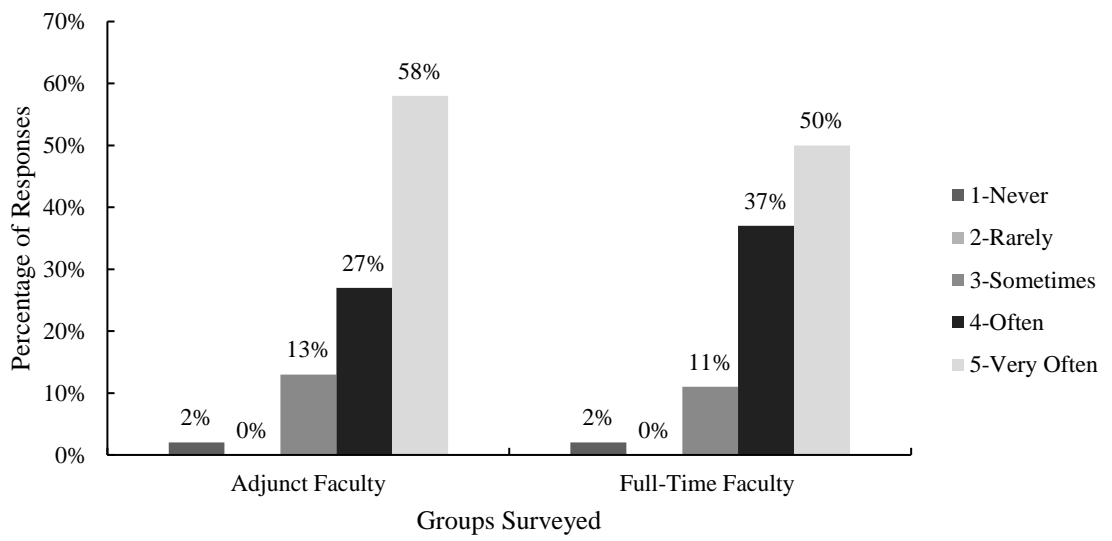
*I Feel Trapped by My Job as a [Helper]*



When faculty reached statement 15, the groups replied with some discrepancies. Statement 15 asked the participants to rate if a helper's beliefs sustain them. Fifty-eight percent of the adjunct faculty replied with *very often*, while only 50% of the full-time faculty group responded *very often*. Another 37% of full-time faculty and 27% of adjunct faculty replied they *often* have beliefs that sustain them. Thirteen percent of adjunct faculty members and 11% of full-time faculty selected *sometimes* (see Figure 18).

**Figure 18**

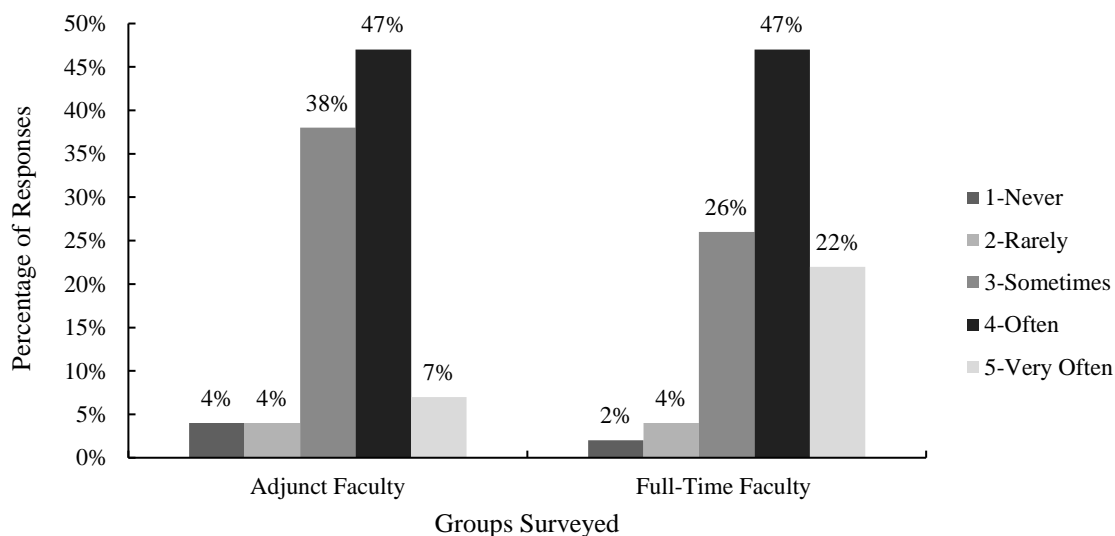
*I Have Beliefs That Sustain Me*



Continuing within the burnout part of the survey, the adjunct and full-time faculty groups both responded they *often* were the persons they always wanted to be with 47%. Thirty-eight percent of the adjunct faculty and 26% of the full-time faculty replied *sometimes*. Twenty-two percent of the full-time faculty replied *very often*, while only 7% of the adjunct faculty members replied *very often* (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19**

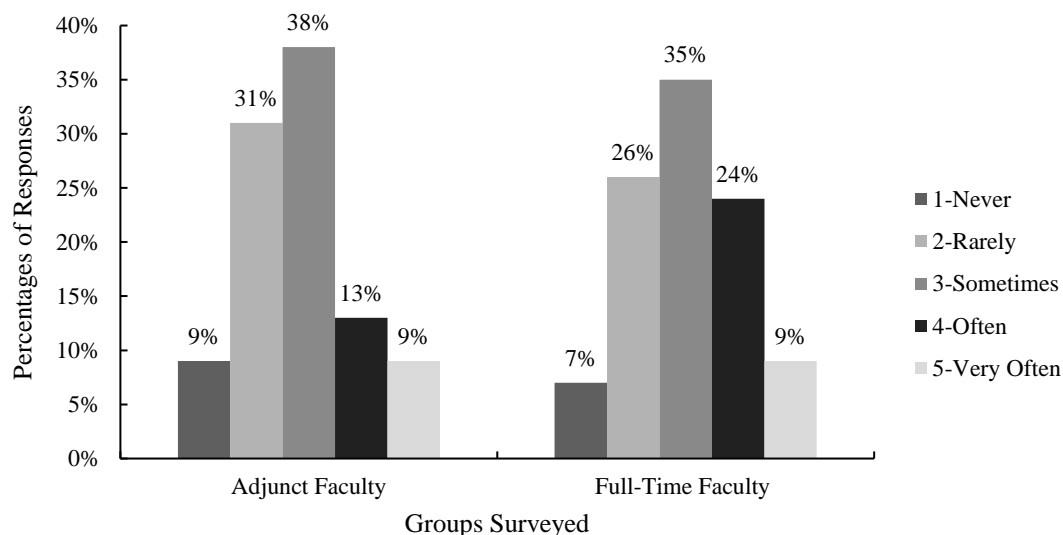
*I Am the Person I Always Wanted to Be*



Statement 19 examined if the adjunct faculty or full-time faculty groups felt worn out due to their work as helpers. Thirty-eight percent of adjunct faculty replied with *sometimes*, while 35% of full-time faculty members responded *sometimes*. Twenty-four percent of full-time faculty members stated they *often* felt worn out, while only 13% of the adjunct faculty group responded *often*. Thirty-one percent of the adjunct faculty group and 26% of the full-time faculty group replied *rarely*. Nine percent of both faculty groups responded *very often*. Nine percent of adjunct faculty and 7% of full-time faculty members responded they *never* felt worn out due to their work (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20**

*I Feel Worn Out Because of My Work as a [Helper]*

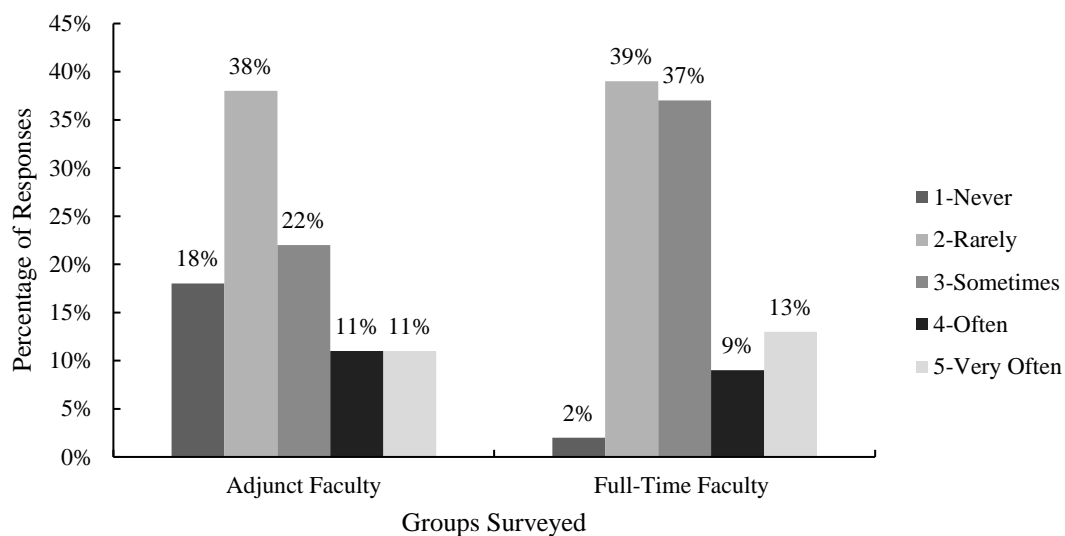


For statement 21, 39 percent of the full-time faculty *rarely* felt they were overwhelmed due to their caseload, while 38% of the adjunct faculty *rarely* felt overwhelmed. Thirty-seven percent of the full-time faculty group and 22% of the adjunct faculty felt as if they were *sometimes* overwhelmed by their workload. Furthermore, in the full-time faculty group, 9% replied *often*, and 13% responded *very often*. Only 2% of the full-time faculty felt they were *never* overwhelmed by their workload. In the adjunct faculty group, 11% replied they *often* or *very often* felt overwhelmed by their workload, while 18% felt they were *never* overwhelmed (see Figure 21).



**Figure 21**

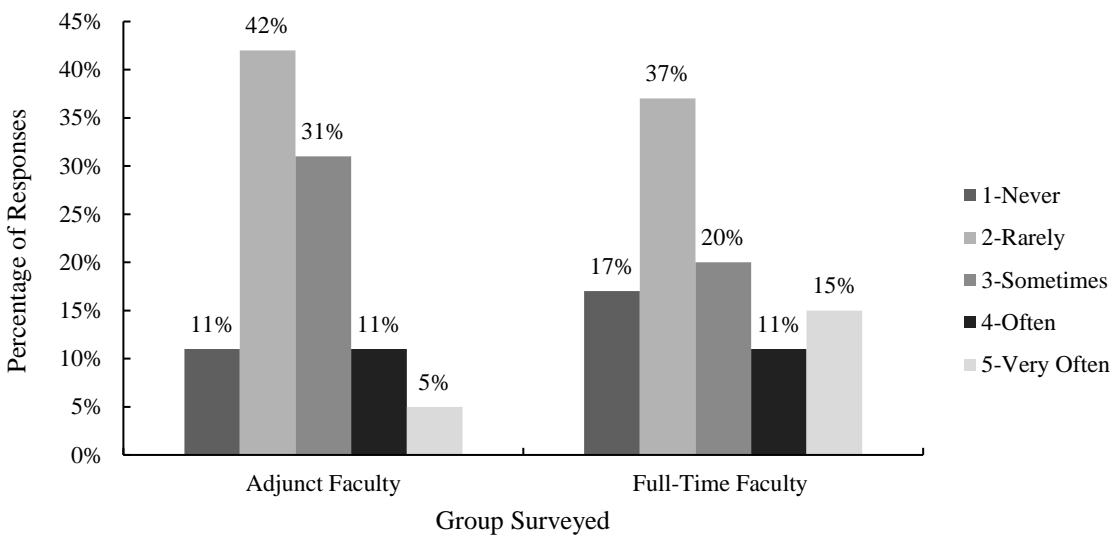
*I Feel Overwhelmed Because My Case [Work] Load Seems Endless*



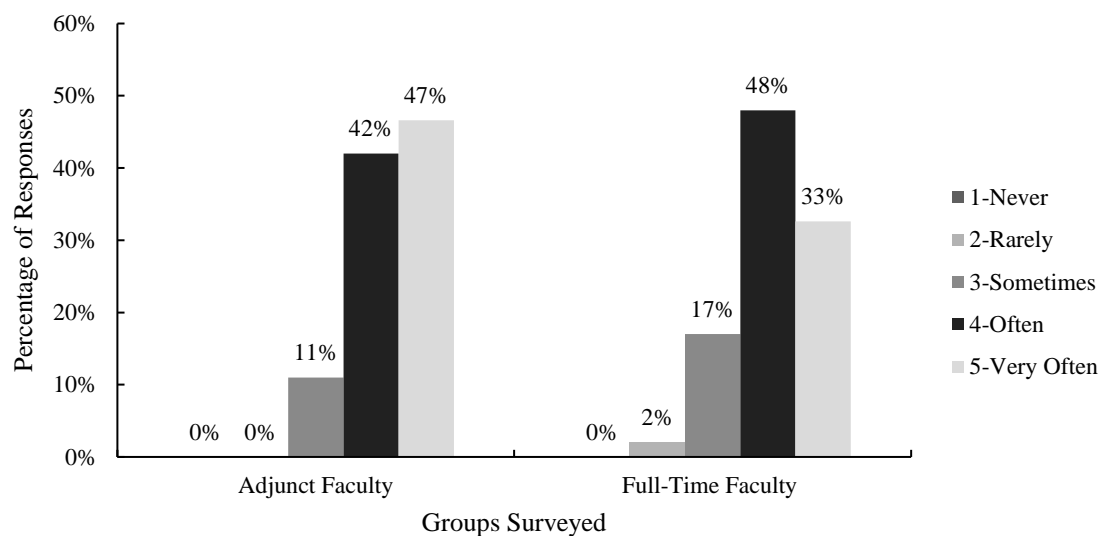
Adjunct and full-time faculty responded to statement 26 similarly. Overall, 42% of the adjunct faculty responded *rarely* feeling bogged down by the system, whereas 37% of the full-time faculty felt the same. Thirty-one percent of the adjunct faculty replied *sometimes*, while only 20% of the full-time faculty group responded they *sometimes* felt bogged down. Eleven percent of both the adjunct faculty and the full-time faculty selected *often*. Fifteen percent of the full-time faculty group replied *very often*, but only 5% of the adjunct faculty group felt the same. Finally, 17% of the full-time faculty *never* felt bogged down, and only 11% of the adjunct faculty *never* felt bogged down by the system (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22**

*I Feel “Bogged Down” by the System*



The final statement in the burnout category was about being a caring person. In all ratings on the Likert scale, the answers were similar. Forty-eight percent of the full-time faculty and 47% of the adjunct faculty replied *often* feeling like a caring person. Seventeen percent of full-time faculty and 11% of adjunct faculty members responded *sometimes*. Overall, the adjunct faculty group responded *very often* with 47%, whereas 33% of the full-time faculty members replied *very often* (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23***I Am a Very Caring Person***Mann Whitney *U***

Research question one asked about significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue. Data gathered from survey statements three, six, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, and 30 were analyzed to answer research question one. A Mann-Whitney *U* was performed to determine the level of significance. According to Roberts (2018), “The Mann-Whitney *U* Test assumes  $\alpha = .05$  and a significant difference when  $p < .05$ ” (p. 88). Since the *p*-value  $.0153297 < .05$ , the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

Research question two asked about the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to

burnout. Data gathered from survey statements one, four, eight, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, and 29 were analyzed to answer research question two. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  was performed to determine the level of significance for research question two. The  $p$ -value  $.153934 > .05$ ; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not a significant difference between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Four full-time faculty and four adjunct faculty members of a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college were asked the same eight questions. In order to maintain the anonymity of each participant, the faculty members were assigned an alphanumeric label in conjunction with the letter representing their status at the college. All the faculty interviewed were employees of the main campus.

#### ***Focus Group Question One***

**In what ways do you feel your workload is sustainable, or do you feel you are overloaded with work?**

This question was asked to understand how the faculty interviewed viewed their current workloads. Unmanageable workloads can lead to stress, burnout, or compassion fatigue (Daly et al., 2018; Greaves et al., 2017; Hsu et al., 2019). Participant F1 responded:

I feel my workload is sustainable primarily due to the high degree of knowledge in the area which I teach. Having cultivated numerous resources over the past 30 years in my field helps keep me current as a subject-matter expert.

According to Participant F2:

I believe my workload is sustainable because it ebbs and wanes. For example, this week I may have too much on my plate, but next week will be easier. I have a lot of control of my workload—it is only as hard as I make it.

Participant F3 stated:

I feel that my workload is sustainable because I can teach different classes at the same time, and I am able to know what each class needs. The courses I teach continue to fill and are viable to the community.

Finally, Participant F4 concluded:

There will always be a need for healthcare workers, so I feel my work is sustainable. At times I feel overloaded with work, usually when part of the team is not completing their tasks and that workload becomes my workload.

While interviewing the adjunct faculty, their responses were similar to those of the full-time faculty. Participant A1 stated, “I feel that my workload is sustainable.” According to Participant A2, “I think we all have days or moments where we feel overwhelmed with work, but overall I don’t feel overworked. Organization is the key to keep me from feeling overly stressed.” Participant A3 added:

I definitely feel my workload is sustainable. I review the main points for my lecture in the upcoming class and confirm examples of those points before class. Besides presenting the concepts of the material, I also show the students how to discern these ideas from the textbook.

To wrap-up the conversation surrounding question one, A4 shared:

My workload is very sustainable since I teach one hybrid class. When this class was listed on the schedule, it needed to be a six-hour week. Instead of meeting

twice a week for three hours per day, my class meets one day a week for six hours. This is nice in the sense I don't have to commute an hour each week for a three-hour class.

The consensus among both groups was very similar. Most believed their workloads were sustainable and worked well with their personal lives. A couple of the participants stated they felt overwhelmed at times but did not feel this negatively affected their personal lives in any way.

### *Focus Group Question Two*

**Why would you say you have control in your work environment, or do you experience little to no control in your current work environment?**

A faculty member's workload is one of the most significant causes of stress regarding both personal and professional life (Faisal et al., 2019). Participant F1 stated, "I would say I have control in my work environment due to the flexibility and freedom given in how I teach and structure the class." Participant F2 added:

I think I have a lot of control. I may not be able to control the people/students in my work environment, but I am able to control how I react or respond. I am in charge of developing my program, so it is only as labor-intensive as I choose it to be.

During the group conversation, F3 mentioned, "I have control in my work environment because I can run my class with little to no guidance." Participant F4 indicated:

I feel like I have some control of my work environment. I work with a great team, and we can compromise and work through scheduling issues. Our group tries to help each other so one of us is not so overwhelmed.

When the question was asked of the adjunct faculty, Participant A1 stated, “I do have control in my work environment on a daily basis.” Participant A2 added, “I have lots of control in my environment, which is great! It allows me to add in topics and gives me freedom as well in the classroom.” According to Participant A3:

I do feel I have control in my work environment in the way I present my lecture and exercises in class, but I also try to be open to suggestions from coworkers/supervisors/students because there is always room for improvement in the way information is presented or explained.

Participant A4 concurred:

Yes, I feel like I have control of my work environment. I have the assistance of our registration technicians that take care of the financial aspect of the class and making sure students are enrolled, which prevents me from having to commute to the campus more than one day per week. There are times, however, when I don't feel like I have much control in the classroom, as I often have to request assistance from our IT department to ensure my technology is set up correctly, and many times, the visit has never been made or they send someone who is not familiar with my typical setup.

Based on the interviews of full-time and adjunct faculty, the comments were very similar in nature. Even though one adjunct in particular expressed having less control than others, the adjunct faculty member did not stress this was a major issue.

### *Focus Group Question Three*

**Please explain whether or not you have any sense of recognition at work, or do you feel you receive little to no recognition in the workplace?**

Question three addressed the issue of recognition in the workplace. Similar to questions one and two, lack of recognition can lead to stress in the workplace (Faisal et al., 2019). Participant F1 elaborated:

I believe I have a sense of recognition, but that recognition typically comes from the students. I do not see a lot of personal recognition at work from my employer. However, I am not face-to-face with other staff in the workplace due to my different work hours. Even so, I know I am appreciated.

According to Participant F2:

I have never thought of it. I think that while recognition is nice, that is not why I do what I do. I am in the business of changing lives. My results are my recognition. However, I was nominated by my peers for a college-wide award. Even though I did not win, it was neat to be nominated. I have also been one of the few selected to go through a leadership program at my job.

Participant F3 stated, “We have recognition of work through small awards given out at the college development days. The bosses show appreciation by voicing, “Job well done,’ celebrating each other, and sometimes celebrating accomplishments.” Participant F4 concluded:

I feel like there is a sense of recognition at work. The leadership in our group really tries to make the rest of the college aware there are several hands in our department that each instructor has something special to contribute or is working on something to improve the lives of people in our community.

The adjunct faculty did not go to the same depth of discussion as the full-time faculty during their focus group. Participant A1 stated, “I feel like there is recognition in the



workplace. I also believe that recognition should be measured by the success of the students' outcomes." Participant A2 added, "I feel that I have minimum recognition except by the students. Students are always appreciative." According to Participant A3, "I do feel that I am recognized at work by my coworkers and supervisor. Our department is very much a team effort where everyone is treated well and valued." In contrast, Participant A4 responded:

Since I only teach one class and I am only on the campus about 70% of the time for my class, I do think my class/students are forgotten for their recognition of completing my class. My personal recognition comes from the fact I have just started my five-year mark of teaching my class, something I never thought would happen.

#### ***Focus Group Question Four***

**Why would you say you have a sense of belong in your work environment, or do you see a breakdown in a sense of belonging?**

Fear of missing out can lead employees to think they are not included in workplace activities, are missing important opportunities for career growth, or may miss the opportunity for a reward (Budnick et al., 2020). Participant F4 commented:

I would say I have some sense of belonging, and there have been several attempts made to improve that belonging over the past several years. But again, that is made more difficult by rare face-to-face interactions and working different hours than my other full-time colleagues.

Similarly, F4 stated:

I feel a sense of belonging in my work environment. I feel like what I bring to the

table matters, and what my co-workers bring to the table matters. Our relationship is one that we can understand each other, call each other out on things, and we are supportive of each other when things are stressful or things are great. I don't feel like everyone is competing or backstabbing. We want each other to shine.

According to Participant F2, "I think I belong." Participant F3 added, "Everybody tries to include everyone in conversations and celebrations. We all work to achieve the same goal."

Participants in the adjunct faculty focus group tended to answer similarly to the full-time faculty focus group. Participant A3 stated:

I do have a sense of belonging in my work environment with my co-workers.

Whenever I have asked for help with an issue, I have always been helped without any delay. I am also included in the social activities within our department.

According to Participant A1:

I believe that I am a small part of a larger whole. I do have a sense of belonging in my work environment. I have experienced not belonging in a work environment in the past, and it does make the work miserable at times.

Participant A2 responded, "I feel as if communication is the key to that [belonging], and for the most part, that has been great." To conclude, Participant A4 shared:

Again, my schedule is one day a week. Many times, I do not even go into the office. I go to class, teach, and leave. There are days I have no reason to go into the office. Most of my communication is via email. I receive all emails and I am included in staff events.

*Focus Group Question Five*

**In what ways have you experienced fairness, justice, and respect while on the job, or have you experienced little respect and fairness when in the work setting?**

Each participant in the full-time focus group answered this question in a similar fashion. Participant F4 stated:

I feel respected, treated justly, and treated fairly the majority of the time at work. Our group is good at balancing when tasks need to be completed. We are comfortable giving tasks to each other or all jumping in so the other one does not drown in paperwork. I feel disrespected when things are not fair, such as when a senior instructor does not train a new instructor appropriately or leaves jobs incomplete, and I am left to pick up the pieces and try to figure things out to complete it correctly.

Participant F2 replied, "I think things are pretty fair." Similarly, Participant F3 responded, "Fairness, justice, and respect have been experienced by making sure everyone is involved and included in the decisions. Everyone is held to the same standard." Finally, F1 concluded, "I have experienced fairness, justice, and respect while on the job. Fairness, justice, and respect have all been exemplified by the support I have received when I have had a difficult student. Thankfully, these occurrences have been rare!"

Results from the adjunct faculty focus group were similar to the full-time faculty focus group. Participant A4 indicated:

I receive fairness, justice, and respect while on the job from the department chair and on down the line. I am included in the class schedule, and if I have any issues

with class days, I feel like it is dealt with justly and quickly. I have always been treated respectfully, and I am respectful back.

Participant A1 mentioned, “I have experienced fairness, justice, and respect more in my current role than any other job.” According to Participant A2, “I have always felt that I have experienced fairness, justice, and respect while on the job. I feel that I have support and backing from my leadership team.” Finally, A3 stated:

In the last semester, I had a student who was difficult and frequently tried to sabotage the learning environment of the classroom. When I report this student’s activities to my supervisor, she always listened to me and advised future management to deal with this student.

#### ***Focus Group Question Six***

**In what ways do you feel your work is or is not meaningful and in line with your personal and professional values?**

In relation to question six, faculty were consistent with their answers. For example, F1 responded:

I feel my work is meaningful and in line with personal/professional values in that I gain immense satisfaction developing relationships with students, often extending beyond the end of class. Many students have become my employees and eventually colleagues in the healthcare profession. It is fulfilling to see individuals grow and develop, knowing that I helped facilitate their growth in a small way.

Participant F2 concurred, “I really have never felt that my work isn’t meaningful. I also would not do work that conflicted with my personal and/or professional values.”

Participant F4 also stated, “My work is meaningful because I am helping to make a difference in someone’s life every day. Whether the difference is directly or indirectly, what I teach makes a difference, and that is my goal.” Participant F3 commented:

My work is meaningful because I love to teach and get to do that daily. My professional and personal values allow me to be an effective instructor. The freedom to layout course assignments and how the course is taught helps me to include my professional and personal values. I like that I can put my own spin on the class.

Participants in the adjunct faculty focus group shared similar beliefs. The similarity between both groups was primarily their love for teaching and satisfaction from knowing students are learning. Participant A2 stated, “I love teaching and feel like it falls within my personal and professional values.” According to Participant A4, “My work is meaningful and is an extension of my personal and professional values.” Participant A1 added, “I feel like all of my work is meaningful and in line with my personal and professional values.” In conclusion, Participant A3 shared:

My work is meaningful in that I am assisting students who are usually training for a new occupation that will make a significant economic change in their lifestyle. Also, by training these students to become proficient in their career choice, I am part of the process that helps an industry receive well-rounded, trained employee[s].

### ***Focus Group Question Seven***

**Please explain why you do or do not feel you are a good fit for your job.**

When this question was first asked within the focus groups for both the full-time faculty and adjunct faculty, the room was silent. Both groups really had to think about this question, but in return responded thoughtfully. Participant F2 shared:

I think I am a good fit because I do my work, I LOVE my work, ask for feedback, implement the feedback when appropriate, and keep out of the gossip and watercooler discussions. I have a very good work ethic, and I return value for my salary.

Participant F1 also stated, “I believe I am a good fit for my position because I have the knowledge, enjoy teaching others, am self-motivated, and work well independently. I am adaptable and gain satisfaction through helping others learn.” According to Participant F3, “I am a good fit because I am passionate about the job and helping others succeed. I also strive to do the job 100% effectively.” Participant F4 indicated, “I am a good fit for my job because I care. As an instructor, I care that I make someone’s day better. I care that I teach students the right way to perform job duties.”

Participants from the adjunct faculty focus group had similar answers to those of the full-time faculty focus group. Participant A1 stated, “I am a good fit for my position. I believe this based on my educational background, the fact that I enjoy teaching, and I consider myself motivated to do the right thing.” According to Participant A2, “I think I am a good fit for my job. It falls within my area of education and on-the-job experience.” Participant A4 responded, “My job is a perfect fit for me. My background is teaching in public schools. My class requires a melding of both secondary and post-secondary education to ensure students receive the best education.” In conclusion, Participant A3 declared:

I do feel I am a good fit for my job, partially due to my extensive experience in the field and my education as a school psychologist, where I can determine a student's deficits and help them overcome some of their problems with learning new concepts.

***Focus Group Question Eight***

**Please explain whether you feel you must work extra hard at your job or whether you feel you have the freedom to decide how to do your work.**

Question eight led to another delayed moment with both focus groups, but both groups eventually provided similar responses. Participant F3 stated, "Sometimes I have to work extra hard if I am not familiar with what I am doing. For the most part, I can do things easily. There is a lot of support (if needed) and freedom to grow." According to Participant F4:

Sometimes I work extra hard to set up online learning material for my classes. I put in extra work to make sure the students are receiving the best of me. I also have the freedom to decide how I am going to do my work. Everyone has different teaching and learning strategies. I have the opportunity to try different approaches for the success of my students and the program.

Participant F2 reported, "I think that any pressure to work extra hard at my job comes from within myself. I think I have that freedom to choose." Participant F1 stated, "I feel I have the freedom to decide how to do my work. I feel that I am given latitude to make decisions regarding how to do my job and support to enable me."

Participants in the adjunct faculty focus group shared similar responses.

Participant A1 reported, “I feel like I work hard at my job, and I do have freedom on how my work is done. I feel like the support is there.” According to Participant A4:

That is a two-fold answer. When my position first started, it was all seated. Then my class went to a hybrid model, and in the beginning, that created a lot of anxiety and extra work on my part. I did not receive any formal training on how to set up my online class. I do not have a lot of experience with technology, and I think my class and I were forgotten. I pretty much had to seek out what I needed on my own. This required various trips to campus and many calls and emails. I wasn’t even for sure who to reach out to on campus, but I made some calls. I wasn’t even sure what I needed to ask. One of the biggest hurdles was misinformation regarding my zoom account. Since COVID, I have noticed there were more opportunities campus-wide to ensure all staff were able to get their classes set up. I did not get that kind of support. When COVID closed the campus, I was, however, able to continue my class without any breaks in my schedule. Guest speakers were able to join via zoom as well.

Participant A2 concurred and stated, “I think for the most part, I have lots of freedom to do the job the way I wanted to do. I mean, there are guidelines, but they allow for a lot of freedom.” Later, Participant A3 contributed to the discussion by adding:

Even though I am older than other instructors, I am intelligent and have an excellent memory. I don’t have to work extra hard at my job because I grasp ideas quickly. Since I determine the lecture and can adjust the speed of the course to some degree based on the abilities of the students, I feel I have the freedom to



decide how to do my work. The one thing I do wish for the students is a stronger foundation in basic educational skills, which would help them grasp concepts at a faster pace.

### **Summary**

In Chapter Four, the survey data collected were shared. The data were analyzed based on two different faculty groups—adjunct faculty and full-time faculty—regarding compassion fatigue and burnout. The figures presented in Chapter Four reflected the responses of both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty. Finally, quantitative responses were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney  $U$  to compare the differences between the two faculty groups.

In addition, Chapter Four included data collected via interviews with both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty regarding their understanding of compassion fatigue and burnout. These responses helped to answer research questions three and four. Four adjunct faculty and four full-time faculty were asked the same eight questions, and their responses assisted in the conclusions described in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five includes a synopsis of the results according to the descriptive and inferential data analysis shared in Chapter Four. Furthermore, Chapter Five also includes a summary of the focus groups. Finally, Chapter Five includes the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

The teaching profession has been known to provide high levels of satisfaction while also presenting substantial challenges (Boshoff et al., 2018). Previously, higher education was thought of as a low-stress position (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Opstrup & Pihl-Thingvad, 2016; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017); however, higher education faculty are discovering their jobs are anything but low-stress (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). Burnout has elicited concern in educational institutions (Iancu et al., 2018). Researchers have suggested burnout is due to three main stress events, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment (Iancu et al., 2018). Compassion fatigue, however, develops when burnout is not controlled (Mattioli et al., 2018).

Emotional exhaustion is the first and most important symptom of burnout in the workforce (Szempruch, 2018; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Emotional exhaustion is considered a subjective feeling versus an objective feeling (Szempruch, 2018). Emotional exhaustion develops when educators take on the negative feelings of others and do not feel they receive the help to manage these feelings (Szempruch, 2018).

Depersonalization occurs when educators disconnect their feelings, even losing interest in their abilities (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). Depersonalization is a result of high levels of work stress (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). Finally, those suffering from depersonalization experience decreased satisfaction in daily activities and job performance (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bussing et al., 2017).

The final significant stress event of concern in the education sector is inefficacy (Iancu et al., 2018). Low personal accomplishment includes feeling inadequate when

mastering personal accomplishments (Garwood et al., 2018; Rahmati, 2015). A person's self-efficacy is also included in the umbrella of low personal accomplishment (Shoji et al., 2016). Shoji et al. (2016) stated self-efficacy is when one can control the issues related to a stressful situation. When educators cannot do this, they are considered to have low self-efficacy and may find themselves suffering from compassion fatigue or burnout (Shoji et al., 2016).

The literature review in Chapter Two revealed the signs and symptoms of both compassion fatigue and burnout and how they affect the everyday lives of those working in the public service division. These signs and symptoms included obesity, high blood pressure, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, increased absenteeism, high turnover rates, lack of student involvement, and even suicide or suicidal ideation (Boshoff et al., 2018; Faisal et al., 2019). Unfortunately, a person can suffer burnout symptoms for up to 15 years yet remain functional (Greaves et al., 2017).

Compassion fatigue runs a little deeper than burnout, and the symptoms associated with compassion fatigue tend to be worse (Cetrano et al., 2017; Donahoo et al., 2018). Helpers often suffer from burnout first, as the symptoms come suddenly, whereas, with compassion fatigue, the symptoms take longer to appear (Cetrano et al., 2017). Without proper treatment, burnout can turn into compassion fatigue and bring additional stress to the educator (Cetrano et al., 2017; Ineme & Ineme, 2016). Symptoms associated with compassion fatigue include loss of faith or spirituality, inability to perform workload duties, and unproductive soothing behaviors (Merriman, 2015; Teater & Ludgate, 2014).

The literature review also included a discussion on ways to prevent both compassion fatigue and burnout. Coping methods include mindfulness such as yoga (Klein et al., 2020), prayer (Donahoo et al., 2018), self-education (Robino, 2019), self-care such as eating right and exercise (Brown et al., 2017), setting emotional boundaries in the office and the classroom (Donahoo et al., 2018), and individual or group therapy (Anclair et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2018). Coping methods for compassion fatigue and burnout were discussed in-depth in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five includes a review of the findings presented with thorough information regarding the statistical analysis of the data. The conclusions drawn from the statistical data analysis provide a greater understanding and combination of the results. Implications for practice are also suggested. Finally, recommendations for future research are provided.

## **Findings**

Research questions one and two were analyzed using descriptive statistics from the compassion fatigue and burnout survey statements of the Professional Quality of Life survey tool. Adjunct faculty and full-time faculty from the main campus of a southwest Missouri community college replied to 10 statements related to compassion fatigue and 10 statements related to burnout. The educators were instructed to reply to these statements based on their overall experiences over the previous 30 days. Using the Mann Whitney *U*, inferential statistics were conducted to compare the perceptions of the adjunct faculty and full-time faculty groups.

Research questions three and four were answered using eight open-ended focus group questions. These open-ended questions were posed to four adjunct faculty

members and four full-time faculty members. The educators' responses provided information about perceptions of compassion fatigue and burnout. Common themes were recognized and are presented in this section of Chapter Five.

### ***Research Question One***

#### **What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue?**

The descriptive data from both faculty groups revealed some consistency among the 10 statements to which both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty responded. Overall, the consensus between faculty groups was positive, with a few exceptions. Even though some of the faculty groups responded to statements similarly, there were some noteworthy differences regarding certain statements. For statement three – *I get satisfaction from being able to [help] others* – the two groups responded comparably. However, when both faculty groups responded to the statement, *I like my work as a [helper]*, full-time faculty participants had a higher discrepancy between the categories of *often* and *very often*.

Regarding techniques and protocols, the full-time faculty participants felt more comfortable with this statement than did the adjunct faculty participants. Also, full-time faculty participants felt more satisfied with their work than did the adjunct faculty participants. Adjunct faculty replied more favorably to the statement *I am proud of what I can do to [help]*. Finally, when both faculty groups responded to the statement *I have thoughts that I am a “success” as a [helper]*, the full-time faculty replied more favorably than the adjunct faculty group.

The inferential statistics based on the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test indicated there were significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue. The  $p$ -value was .02574, and the result is significant at  $p < .05$ . Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected. There were significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue.

### ***Research Question Two***

#### **What are the significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout?**

The descriptive data based on both faculty groups' perceptions indicated positive results from percentages located within each chart throughout Chapter Four. When the educators were asked if they felt worn out due to their career choice, both groups answered similarly, with the highest percentages for both faculty groups falling in the *sometimes* category. When the faculty groups replied to a statement regarding if they felt worn out because of their work, both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty replied most frequently in the *sometimes* category. The responses regarding "overwhelming caseloads" and feeling "bogged down" by the system were of concern to both the adjunct and full-time faculty groups.

The inferential statistics obtained based on the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test indicated there were no significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout. The  $p$ -value was .16452, and the result was not significant at  $p < .05$ . Based on these results, the null hypothesis was not

rejected as faculty seemed to have a general understanding of burnout and factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Perceptions were consistent between both faculty groups.

### ***Research Question Three***

#### **In what ways does compassion fatigue affect the health of full-time and adjunct faculty?**

Full-time and adjunct faculty members who participated in focus group discussions were asked open-ended questions about how compassion fatigue affected them. The overall consensus was that both full-time and adjunct faculty members believed they have control over their workload, which is crucial to balancing burnout and compassion fatigue (Leineweber et al., 2018). Another issue related to compassion fatigue and burnout is work overload (Faisal et al., 2019). The common theme among the full-time and adjunct faculty was that work overload is what they made for themselves.

At times, some faculty members felt overloaded with their teaching responsibilities, but they felt organization was the key to preventing the feeling of being overloaded in the workplace. All the faculty interviewed had a healthy understanding of burnout and compassion fatigue, except for one full-time faculty member. This particular full-time faculty member demonstrated some animosity when it came to other team members not being held to the same standards as others on the team. Based on this full-time faculty member's responses, burnout or compassion fatigue could pose a risk to this faculty member.

### ***Research Question Four***

#### **What coping methods do faculty members perceive as the most effective for dealing with stress?**

The final open-ended focus group question was asked of both focus groups. The consensus was that both faculty groups have control over their own workloads. Considering educator burnout is directly linked to lack of workload control (Iancu et al., 2018), this positive belief shared by both faculty groups indicates a healthy understanding of burnout. Both faculty groups made it abundantly clear they loved teaching and their current role as educators.

Feeling appreciated in the workplace was a common theme discussed by the two different focus groups. According to Faisal et al. (2019), recognition is an integral part of workplace satisfaction. Lack of recognition has been shown to lead to higher stress levels (Faisal et al., 2019). Another workplace issue that can cause increased stress is not having a healthy sense of belonging (Luzio et al., 2019). Having an increased sense of belonging in the workplace lends itself to higher levels of self-esteem (Luzio et al., 2019). Increased stress levels have been noted in those who feel as if they are missing out on something in the workplace (Budnick et al., 2020). The eight faculty members interviewed all felt they were included in workplace functions and information. Based on these multiple positive responses, the faculty appear to be able to cope with the stressors related to higher education.

Faculty members were asked if they felt their work was meaningful and in line with their personal beliefs. Educators who believe they can perform their duties ethically and correctly have a stronger desire to do so in the workplace (Capa et al., 2018). In both the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group, the consensus was strong that their work aligned with their ethical and moral belief systems.



## Conclusions

The theoretical framework was based upon Bandura's (1977) observational learning theory, which also includes social learning theory under the observational theory umbrella. The observational learning theory is that behavior is not something simply learned by discussion but more so by watching other people (Deaton, 2015; O'Kelley, 2019). Furthermore, Bandura's theory explains why people suffer from burnout and compassion fatigue (Shoji et al., 2016).

Observational learning theory involves modeling or shaping to learn new behaviors (Cherry, 2019a; Ervin et al., 2018). Educators observe other educators, either consciously or subconsciously (Cherry, 2019a). Bandura (1977) believed these repetitive behaviors could be either positive, negative, or even violent if the right circumstances were in place. Cherry (2019b) concluded that even if changes are observed, this does not mean changes will take place in a person.

Cherry (2019c) suggested the learning process of people through observation is a natural human phenomenon. Bandura (1977) discovered four principles related to the observational learning system method. These principles include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977; Shrestha, 2017).

To answer research question one, the differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue were addressed. Among the 10 statements presented to the adjunct faculty and full-time faculty, the most considerable difference was on the statement *I am proud of what I can do to [help]*. It can be concluded that both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty feel conflicted in their role as educators, especially during the unprecedented times currently

experienced in the higher education industry (Bao & Taliaferro, 2015; Cetrano et al., 2017; Ineme & Ineme, 2016; Teater & Ludgate, 2017). Even though an inferential statistical test was applied, there were significant differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

To answer research question two, the differences between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout were addressed. Full-time faculty replied with higher percentages of feeling happy with their work. Adjunct faculty felt more connected to others, and adjunct faculty also felt more worn out by their jobs. When it came to overwhelming caseloads, full-time faculty replied with a higher level of uncertainty. It can be concluded that both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty share similar concerns in the workplace and demonstrate concerning results regarding possibly being at risk of burnout (Berebitsky & Ellis, 2018; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020). Based on the inferential statistical test applied, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of full-time and adjunct faculty regarding the factors that contribute to burnout. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

To answer research question three, the ways compassion fatigue affects the health of full-time and adjunct faculty were addressed. The focus group discussion consisted of four adjunct faculty members and four full-time faculty members in two separate focus groups. Both faculty groups responded to each focus group question comparably and indicated feeling positive regarding their teaching experiences. According to Faisal et al.

(2019), an essential routine can provide a positive working environment for higher educational faculty.

To answer question four, the coping methods faculty members perceive as the most effective for dealing with stress were addressed. Within each focus group, questions were asked regarding control over workload, feeling involved in the workplace, aligning with their beliefs or ethical values, and feeling the work environment was fair. Each of these topics has a relation to stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. Those who feel control in these areas tend not to have a decreased risk of stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue (Budnick et al., 2020; Luzio et al., 2019; Olson et al., 2018; Steinbauer et al., 2018).

In conclusion, many differences were reviewed in the areas of burnout and compassion fatigue. Regarding compassion fatigue, differences were noticed in protocols, happy thoughts as helpers, and pride in what they do as helpers. The adjunct faculty do not receive the same amount of professional development or additional training as those in a full-time faculty role. Concerning burnout, differences were found mainly in the area of feeling overwhelmed by caseloads and bogged down by the system. Administrators need to ensure their adjunct faculty receive the same amount of professional assistance. Currently, many adjunct faculty members teach either off-hours or, due to COVID, many are only teaching online classes. Based on this, it is easy to forget about the needs of adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty are also suffering from the unknowns of the COVID pandemic and worry about their health and the health of their students in a face-to-face environment (Clay, 2020; Prusko & Kilgore, 2020).

## **Implications for Practice**

The discoveries of this study were noteworthy in identifying areas of need for compassion fatigue and burnout. Previous research was focused more on healthcare, war veterans, and K-12 educators (Kaiser et al., 2017; Kelly & Lefton, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Even though these helpers are at high risk for compassion fatigue and burnout symptoms, it is crucial to consider higher education faculty within this collective group of select members. Since the start of the study, the COVID pandemic has appeared and caused symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout throughout all disciplines of education (Bozkurt et al., 2020). This limitation was not an issue at the beginning of this study. This study narrowed the focus of areas affecting educators and putting them at risk of compassion fatigue or burnout.

The compassion fatigue survey results revealed, at times, that educators, specifically the adjunct faculty group, question their work as helpers, are unsure of their understanding of technologies and protocols, have less-happy thoughts about their work, and are less proud of what they can do to help. Based on these results, administrators and leaders within the workplace should focus more on including adjunct faculty to help improve their beliefs on these subjects. According to the literature, employees need to experience a sense of belonging, which in turn strengthens their overall self-esteem (Luzio et al., 2019; Steinbauer et al., 2018). Employees with an increased level of self-esteem tend to have a decreased chance of experiencing compassion fatigue (Steinbauer et al., 2018).

The burnout survey results revealed the adjunct faculty participants are concerned when it comes to being bogged down by the system. The full-time faculty group felt more

overwhelmed due to their workloads. Based on these findings, it could be suggested that there is limited support in these areas (Berebitsky & Ellis; 2018; Cetrano et al., 2017; Ineme & Ineme, 2016; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Teles et al., 2020).

Researchers have shown there is little encouragement provided to faculty on managing compassion fatigue and burnout. Given the differences between the adjunct faculty schedule and the full-time faculty schedule, more focus should be given to providing the same dedication and training opportunities to both groups. Considering the world is still in a COVID pandemic, more and more learning opportunities for faculty are being provided via zoom or other virtual learning methods. This virtual experience allows for annual conferences and other learning formats. Even though educational opportunities can be provided virtually, the monotony of the virtual experience is becoming evident (Akdemir, 2019; Teater & Ludgate, 2014). Many situations are out of the control of educators, which can lead to burnout if not corrected (Holman et al., 2019; Leineweber et al., 2018; Olson et al., 2018).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This mixed-methods study was conducted to determine if there are differences between higher education adjunct faculty and full-time faculty about the factors that contribute to compassion fatigue or burnout. Furthermore, this study was designed to determine the ways compassion fatigue affects the overall health of both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty and what coping methods are most effective for dealing with stress. Data were collected from both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty at a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college. Data were only collected from those faculty members who taught on the main campus of the community college. Based on this, future

research should include faculty from other campuses or should compare two different comparable community colleges.

Based on this study's results, it would be suggested that another researcher could dive deeper into the provided results. A broader focus group consisting of adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, and community college staff would bring more information to the study. This could lead to additional information and methods on preventing compassion fatigue and burnout for all faculty and staff.

A mixed-methods study of two comparable community colleges, one urban and one rural, would also provide information on whether compassion fatigue and burnout are more rural or urban issues. This would make for an interesting view from the perspective of the population. According to Garwood et al. (2018), burnout was found to affect educators in rural areas at a much higher rate than their urban counterparts.

### **Summary**

This mixed-methods study was designed to explore how compassion fatigue and burnout affect both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty members at a southwest Missouri Comprehensive Community College. Given that compassion fatigue and burnout are significant in the mental health of educators (Jurado et al., 2019), this study was deemed necessary. Stress is a significant issue in the overall workforce (Parent-Lamache & Marchand, 2018), and stress can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout in general.

Given this was a mixed-methods study, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. The Professional Quality of Life instrument was administered to 138 faculty members at a southwest Missouri community college. After those with incomplete surveys and those who did not meet the requirement of working on the main

campus were excluded, the study included 73 adjunct faculty and 65 full-time faculty. The percentage of adjunct faculty was 53%, while the percentage of full-time faculty was 47%.

The data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney *U* to discover any differences between the two groups. The qualitative data were obtained through two different focus groups. One focus group included four adjunct faculty, and the other included four full-time faculty members. Both groups were asked the same questions. The focus group questions were field-tested using the Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (VREP). According to Simon and White (2016), a rubric is the best way to overcome weaknesses in surveys and interviews.

Chapter One contained the introduction, background of the study, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and significance of the study. The research questions were also posed in Chapter One. Chapter One also included the definition of key terms and delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study.

Chapter Two included a review of literature and the theoretical framework. Bandura's (1977) observational theory and social learning theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. The four basic principles related to Bandura's (1977) observational learning theory include retention, attention, reproduction, and motivation. According to Bandura (1977), people must be motivated to put all the principles together to obtain an appropriate outcome (Cherry, 2019b).

Furthermore, Chapter Two included the causes of compassion fatigue and burnout within the educational realm. Chapter Two also included methods to heal educators who

may be suffering from compassion fatigue or burnout. Finally, different ways to prevent compassion fatigue or burnout in the future were detailed in Chapter Two.

The methodology for the study was provided in Chapter Three. Explained in Chapter Three was the concept of how data were gathered for this study. The problem and purpose overview was provided. The research questions were restated, and the research design was described. Based on the researcher's previous career as a registered nurse, bracketing was detailed in Chapter Three. Bracketing is used with qualitative research to alleviate any possible contaminated effects of misunderstood biases related to the study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Finally, bracketing allows the researcher to focus on the information obtained from the view of the participants in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The population and sample were outlined in Chapter Three for both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study. The population included 150 full-time faculty members and 250 adjunct faculty members from a southwest Missouri comprehensive community college. The focus group participants were selected using the Excel random number generator. Random sampling allows for all those participating in the study to receive an equal opportunity to participate in the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Chapter Three also included the instrument used to collect the quantitative data. The Professional Quality of Life Measure: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue, Version 5 was developed by Stamm (2010) and remains free to use as long as the instrument is not altered in any way. Each statement from the Profession Quality of Life instrument was entered into Qualtrics, where data were collected from each participant. These results



were compared using the Mann-Whitney *U* method to determine any significant differences. The data collected were compared to the literature review in Chapter Two. Also, in Chapter Three, the reliability and validity of the instrument were explained. Finally, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations were all provided.

Chapter Four included the process of data collection. A breakdown of the demographics was provided, and the percentages of adjunct faculty and full-time faculty members were presented. The Professional Quality of Life instrument was discussed. This instrument included 30 Likert-type statements, but only 20 of the statements were analyzed for this study. Ten statements were related to compassion fatigue, and 10 statements were related to burnout. Each statement was displayed separately to show the individual results. Finally, the open-ended focus group questions were transcribed and included in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five encompassed findings from all data collected throughout the study. The findings were presented by research question. Research question one was answered using descriptive data comparing the adjunct faculty group to the full-time faculty group. The full-time faculty group replied to the statements with a more positive outlook than those within the adjunct faculty group. The Mann-Whitney *U* test results indicated there were significant differences between the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research question two was also answered using descriptive data from the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group. The Mann-Whitney *U* analysis revealed there were no significant differences between the adjunct faculty and full-time faculty

members. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected for research question number two.

In response to research question number three, both faculty groups indicated some work overload; however, it was easily managed by both the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group. A common theme between both faculty groups included organization. Having control over their workloads was crucial and essential to preventing or balancing compassion fatigue and burnout in the workplace (Leineweber et al., 2018).

Finally, regarding research question four, both the adjunct faculty group and the full-time faculty group made it clear teaching is their life's work. Participants from both groups stated several times they loved teaching. Overall, they felt as if they were recognized, which is another way to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue in the workforce (Faisal et al., 2019). Chapter Five also included conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

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## Appendix A

### Professional Quality of Life Measure:

#### Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5

When you *[help]* people, you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you *[help]* can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are statements about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a *[helper]*. Consider each of the following statements about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you have experienced these things in the last 30 days.

- |           | <b>1=Never</b> | <b>2=Rarely</b> | <b>3=Sometimes</b> | <b>4=Often</b> | <b>5=Very Often</b>   |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| _____ 1.  |                |                 |                    |                | I am happy.   |
| _____ 2.  |                |                 |                    |                | I am preoccupied with more than one person I <i>[help]</i> .  |
| _____ 3.  |                |                 |                    |                | I get satisfaction from being able to <i>[help]</i> people.   |
| _____ 4.  |                |                 |                    |                | I feel connected to others.   |
| _____ 5.  |                |                 |                    |                | I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.   |
| _____ 6.  |                |                 |                    |                | I feel invigorated after working with those I <i>[help]</i> .   |
| _____ 7.  |                |                 |                    |                | I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a <i>[helper]</i> .                              |
| _____ 8.  |                |                 |                    |                | I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I <i>[help]</i> . |
| _____ 9.  |                |                 |                    |                | I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I <i>[help]</i> .                        |
| _____ 10. |                |                 |                    |                | I feel trapped by my job as a <i>[helper]</i> .   |
| _____ 11. |                |                 |                    |                | Because of my <i>[helping]</i> , I have felt “on edge” about various things.                                      |
| _____ 12. |                |                 |                    |                | I like my work as a <i>[helper]</i> .   |
| _____ 13. |                |                 |                    |                | I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I <i>[help]</i> .                             |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have *[helped]*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with *[helping]* techniques and protocols.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a *[helper]*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I *[help]* and how I could help them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because the activities remind me of frightening experiences of the people I *[help]*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I am proud of what I can do to *[help]*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. As a result of my *[helping]*, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I feel “bogged down” by the system.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I have thoughts that I am a “success” as a *[helper]*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I cannot recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I am a very caring person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

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## **Appendix B**

### **Focus Group Discussion Questions**

1. In what ways do you feel your workload is sustainable, or do you feel you are overloaded with work?
2. Why would you say you have control in your work environment, or do you experience little to no control in your current work environment?
3. Please explain whether or not you have any sense of recognition at work, or do you feel you receive little to no recognition in the workplace?
4. Why would you say you have a sense of belonging in your work environment, or do you see a breakdown in a sense of belonging?
5. In what ways have you experienced fairness, justice, and respect while on the job, or have you experienced little respect and fairness when in the work setting?
6. In what ways do you feel your work is or is not meaningful and in line with your personal and professional values?
7. Please explain why you do or do not feel you are a good fit for your job.
8. Please explain whether you feel you must work extra hard at your job or whether you feel you have the freedom to decide how to do your work.

## Appendix C

### Lindenwood Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Aug 10, 2020 11:10 AM CDT

RE:

IRB-21-5: Initial - A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Burnout

Dear Margaret Williams,

The study, A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Burnout, has been Approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

The submission was approved on August 10, 2020.

Here are the findings:

#### **IRB Discussion**

- A few of the questions in the interview component of the protocol solicit information about feelings of efficacy and inclusivity at the institution in question. Responses to these interview questions may be specific enough that participant responses may pose reputational risk to participants. However, the investigator is not retaining any identifiable information during the study and an adequate risk minimization rationale is provided in the application. The PI is further cautioned to review all study data and ensure responses from participant interviews are sufficiently deidentified and paraphrased were necessary to further ensure confidentiality.

#### **Regulatory Determinations**

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Even though data collected during the interview component may be considered sensitive, the investigator is not retaining identifiable information such that responses may be connected with any specific individual.

Sincerely,

Lindenwood University (lindenwood) Institutional Review Board

**Appendix D****Request for Information**

&lt;Survey&gt;

Date

Dear &lt;Title First Name and Last Name&gt;:

My name is Leigh Williams. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, and I am conducting a research study titled *A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Burnout that Affects Both Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty in a Community College Setting*.

I am requesting access to XXX full-time and adjunct faculty members' email addresses to conduct my study. I need the email addresses sorted by full-time faculty and adjunct faculty.

Please contact me at MLW888@lindenwood.edu with any questions or concerns you might have regarding this study.

Thank you,

Leigh Williams  
Lindenwood University  
Doctoral Student

**Appendix E**  
**Recruitment Letter**

<Survey>

Date

Dear <Title First Name and Last Name>:

My name is Leigh Williams. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, and I am conducting a research study titled *A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Burnout that Affects Both Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty in a Community College Setting*.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I have attached the Research Information Sheet and a copy of the survey link. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey online.

Please contact me at MLW888@lindenwood.edu with any questions or concerns you might have regarding this study.

Thank you,

Leigh Williams  
Lindenwood University  
Doctoral Student

## Appendix F

### Research Information Sheet for Survey

# LINDENWOOD

### Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to determine the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue on full-time and adjunct faculty who teach for a community college. During this study, you will be asked to participate in a survey. The survey will take about five minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

#### **Who can I contact with questions?**

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Leigh Williams at mlw888@lindenwood.edu  
Dr. Shelly Fransen at SFransen@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu

<survey link>

**Appendix G**  
**Letter of Participation**

<Focus Group>

Date

Dear <Title First Name and Last Name>:

My name is Leigh Williams. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, and I am conducting a research study titled *A Mixed-Methods Study Regarding Burnout that Affects Both Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty in a Community College Setting*.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I have attached the Research Information Sheet and a copy of the focus group discussion questions. If you choose to participate, please respond affirmatively to this email message, and I will be in contact with you to schedule a day and time that are convenient.

Please contact me at [MLW888@lindenwood.edu](mailto:MLW888@lindenwood.edu) with any questions or concerns you might have regarding this study.

Thank you,

Leigh Williams  
Lindenwood University  
Doctoral Student

## Appendix H

### Research Information Sheet for Full-Time Faculty

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to determine the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue on full-time and adjunct faculty who teach for a community college. During this study you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion for full-time faculty members. The focus group will have approximately 4-8 people. The focus group discussion will take about one hour.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

### **Who can I contact with questions?**

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Leigh Williams at [mlw888@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mlw888@lindenwood.edu)  
Dr. Shelly Fransen at [SFransen@lindenwood.edu](mailto:SFransen@lindenwood.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or [mleary@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mleary@lindenwood.edu)

## Appendix I

### Research Information Sheet for Adjunct Faculty

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to determine the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue on full-time and adjunct faculty who teach for a community college. During this study you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion for adjunct faculty members. The focus group will have approximately 4-8 people. The focus group discussion will take about one hour.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

### **Who can I contact with questions?**

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Leigh Williams at [mlw888@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mlw888@lindenwood.edu)  
Dr. Shelly Fransen at [SFransen@lindenwood.edu](mailto:SFransen@lindenwood.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or [mleary@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mleary@lindenwood.edu)



### **Vita**

Margaret Leigh Loflin-Williams completed her undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Tennessee in Martin, Tennessee, in 2006. After a year working as a registered nurse in Columbia, Missouri, she decided to further her education by obtaining a Master of Science (Nursing) in Clinical Nurse Leadership from Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri, in 2009.

Leigh's first teaching position began in 2008 as a health occupations instructor with the Columbia Area Career Center. After returning to the clinical setting to work as a registered nurse, she obtained a post-graduate certificate in Clinical Nurse Specialist – Adult Health and Gerontology in 2013. During this time, Leigh relocated to Springfield, Missouri, and began working for Cox College as an Assistant Professor in the nursing department.

Leigh accepted a position with Ozarks Technical Community College in 2015 as the manager of the allied health division of the Center of Workforce Development. In 2016, Leigh was promoted to a director position in the same department. During her tenure at Ozarks Technical Community College, Leigh completed the Leadership Academy in 2017. Leigh continues to work as the director for the allied health division at the Center for Workforce Development and focuses on leadership opportunities to benefit her allied health team.