Chapter 2

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# Introduction

The need for recovery from work is an increasing topic of research in human resource management, organizational leadership, and work psychology (Sonnetag et al., 2022). Spiritual engagement available to employees and workplace spirituality promotes job satisfaction, meaning, and work engagement (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Literature on the relationship between spiritual engagement and an employees’ need for recovery from work is lacking (Büssing et al., 2013; de Diego-Cordero et al., 2021). The problem of the study is that adjunct in online higher education institutions (HEIs) experience a high need for recovery from work and lack adequate spiritual rest (Bennet, 2003; Walker & McPhail, 2009; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2015; Han et al., 2020; Varga & Denniston, 2022). Adjunct faculty have grown to approximately over 70 percent of instructional appointments for HEIs (Colby, 2023). The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online HEIs.

The relationship between the need for recovery from work and spiritual engagement should be examined to offer insight into spiritual resources for adjunct faculty. Research has not examined the relationship between the need for recovery and spiritual engagement among adjunct faculty (Kühnel, Sonnentag, & Westman, 2009; Bolitzer, 2019). Evidence reveals a positive relationship between an employee’s need for recovery and their work engagement (cite source). Further research should include spiritual engagement among adjunct faculty. The literature search strategies, background of the problem, theoretical framework, sociological perspectives, faith perspectives, synthesis of current literature, variant perspectives, gap in the literature, and a summary are discussed.

# Literature Search Strategy

Developing a thorough literature review requires identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the context of the study by consulting major published works on a topic (Terrell, 2022). The literature review was obtained from journals and books at the National Library of Congress, the Akron University Bierce Library, the Youngstown State University Maag Library, and Omega Graduate School. Systematic bibliographic searches were performed to find relevant English language, peer-reviewed, studies from several databases including but not limited to SAGE, Springer, Science Direct, Elsevier, PsychINFO, ERIC, ProQuest, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar.

Abstracts, titles, and keywords of studies were searched using combinations of the following terms: *self-determination theory, conservation of resources, work engagement, spiritual resources, spirituality at work, spiritual engagement, adjunct faculty, job resources, need for recovery, theology of work,* and *Sabbath rest*.

A search of article bibliographies identified additional current scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. A refining process was used to research search engines e.g., Google Scholar and Google Books. The library databases used include ERIC, JSTOR, SpringerLink, Elsevier Science Direct, Emeral Insight, EBSCOHost, ProQuest Dissertations, ProQuest Research Library, and SAGE Journal.

# Background of the Problem

Stress is experienced across professions at an all-time high percentage in America. According to the American Psychological Association’s (APA) 2021 Work and Well-being Survey of 1,501 U.S. adult workers, 79% of employees had experienced work-related stress the month before the survey. Nearly 3 in 5 employees reported negative impacts of work-related stress (APA, 2020). Work-related stress leads to physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion and burnout (Danauskė, Raišienė, & Korsakienė, 2023; Maslach et al., 2013; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Exhaustion and burnout from work-related stress in the United States are linked to serious health conditions, even disease (APA, 2020). Against these societal conditions, higher education relies more on adjunct faculty than full-time tenured faculty to deliver course instruction (Murray, 2019; Spinrad & Relles, 2022). There is heightened stress and exhaustion experienced by adjunct faculty due to the increased job demands and reduced career advancement (Han et al., 2020).

Examining the macro- and micro-level stress factors associated experienced by adjunct faculty provides a comprehensive understanding of the problem. The macro-level stress factors include academic capitalism, the post-COVID-19 workplace, and the online course delivery format. The micro-level stress factors include the adjunct faculty’s role and the adjunct faculty’s psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These macro- and mico-level stress factors converge, creating an increased need for recovery from work-related stress among online adjunct faculty. Figure 1 details the macro- and micro-level stress factors contributing to adjunct faculty stress. The macro-level stress factors are in the red-shaded boxes, and the micro-level stress factors are in the purple-shaded boxes.

**Figure 1**

*Macro & Micro Factors Contributing to Adjunct Faculty Stress*

Stress &

Need for Recovery

Online Format

Post-COVID-19

Academic Capitalism

Adjunct Role

Psychological Needs

Macro factors

Micro factors

Impact on faculty

## Macro-Level Stress Factors

The first macro-level stress factor involves academic capitalism, which is a the application of capitalistic practices and tendencies of the larger economy. Academic capitalism is defined as “the pursuit of market and market-like activities to generate external revenues” (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Before delineating the specific nature of academic capitalism, it will be helpful to provide a general analysis of capitalism’s effect on employe well-being. In modern American culture, which values profit and efficiency over well-being, employees are more prone to burnout (Gallagher, 2019). Capitalism places a heavy emphasis on productivity and efficiency, often at the expense of employee well-being (Daniel, 2019; Isham, Mair, & Jackson, 2020; Obrenovic et al., 2020). American society locates an individual’s identity and worth on their contribution to economic gain. Consumerism has become the vehicle for social status and an external marker of well-being (Balabanis & Stathopoulou, 2021).

Academic capitalism is the application of capitalism within higher education institutions. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) point out that the “traditional tripartite faculty role of teaching, research, and service…during the period from 1980 to 2004” has shifted from a preference for teaching to researching (p. 25). Universities created intellectual property offices to manage faculty research and patenting. Thus, by the late 1990s, organizations and associations were created, e.g., Association of University Technology Managers, to promote intellectual property as a new revenue source for universities (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Etzkowitz (1993) first coined the term “entrepreneurial university” to describe the growing shift in universities looking to promote economic development through faculty research. In the evolution of HEIs developing entrepreneurial attitudes and practices, universities became brokers of knowledge, innovation, and marketable technology (Etzkowitz, 2019; Feola et al., 2021).

Jessop (2018) points out that entrepreneurial universities have found five ways to increase revenues. Three of the five ways to increase revenue relate to adjunct faculty, i.e., new methods of teaching that “seek to cut costs and boost efficiency by standardizing and commoditizing education” (Jessop, 2018, p. 107), new markets for university goods through online course and program offerings, and third, new supply sources of faculty to leverage a competitive edge by “maximizing managerial control while curbing labor autonomy” (Spinrad et al., 2022, p. 922). Together, these findings help explain how entrepreneurial approaches to managing HEIs have resulted in adjunct faculty constituting about 70% of instructional staff. One outcome of a progressively entrepreneurial approach to higher education is the outsourcing of instruction to non-tenure track adjunct faculty (Spinrad & Relles, 2022). Adjunct faculty are tasked with teaching in the new markets of online courses that reach new students. Spinrad et al. (2022) suggest that HEIs review entrepreneurial attitudes and practices from multiple perspectives so that educational equity and justice are served.

A second macro-level stress factor is the post-COVID-19 socio-economic environment in America. The ‘Great Resignation’ of 2021 accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic is a societal reaction to the problematic working conditions of the 21st century, namely high levels of burnout and an inability to rest from work-related stress (Sheather & Slattery, 2021). Some interpret the workforce reaction as a refusal to work amid COVID-19 health risks (Tessema et al., 2022). Alternatively, it may be possible to classify the large-scale resignations as a reevaluation of the meaning of work for the individual in a post-pandemic era (Sull et al., 2022). The coronavirus pandemic required an immediate shift to remote learning for universities. “When organizational change happens quickly, as was the case throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, occupational stressors increase the stress response in employees” (Koster & McHenry, 2023).

Regarding adjunct faculty, it becomes difficult to measure the economic impact of COVID-19. The American Association of University Professors published a report, *The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020-21*, that provides employment and salary data for 929 colleges and universities. The report acknowledges the difficult in measuring the financial status of adjunct faculty post-COVID-19:

Any researcher who tries to quantify the economic impact of COVID-19 on contingent faculty members— particularly adjunct faculty members—will quickly discover an ugly secret in higher education: colleges and universities are not required to report detailed employment data on contingent faculty members. (The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020-21, 2021, p. 12)

Though detailed data is difficult, nevertheless, the challenges noted above concerning the post-COVID-19 work environment would easily apply to adjunct faculty. Bosley and Custer (2021) explain that adjunct faculty receive less than minimum wage per course if time for grading and course preparation are factored. Many adjunct faculty, due to course load maximums, teach at multiple universities and colleges to financially make ends meet (Koster & McHenry, 2023; Bosley & Custer, 2021; Bickerstaff & Ran, 2020).

The third macro-level factor contributing to adjunct faculty stress is the online course delivery format. Since the emergence of online distance learning began in the late 1990s and recently has become a primary mode of course delivery accounting for 28% of undergraduate students completing online only programs and 61% of undergraduate students taking at least one online course (Kentnor 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The proliferation of online course delivery has exacerbated unique stress among adjunct faculty called *technostress*. The term *technostress* was first coined by Brod (1984) to describe the difficulty workers faced managing new computer technology applications in the workplace.  Mahapatra and Pati (2018, as cited in Taser et al., 2022) stated that technostress can lead to employee burnout without proper self-management strategies. Technostress leads to greater need for recovery from work-related stress (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023).

Adjunct faculty face technostress in the forms of educational technology tools, such as Zoom, Learning Management Systems, virtual office hours, emails, and productivity tracking software such as Microsoft Teams, or Salesforce. Technological advancements have significantly strained individual employees (Chen et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2022; Marsh et al., 2022). Working remotely from home, telework presents online adjunct faculty with additional work strain by “blurring boundaries” between home and work life (Varga & Denniston, 2022). The advantages presented by teleworking may become counterproductive by increasing work-related stress (Widar et al., 2022).

## Micro-Level Stress Factors

The first micro-level stress factor related to stress is the role adjuncts play in HEIs. Adjunct faculty face challenging factors endemic to their role as non-tenure track professors, e.g., low pay, lack of institutional support, intense workloads, and often balancing multiple positions at various colleges (Anthony, 2020; Caruth & Caruth, 2013). Adjunct faculty dissatisfaction has been linked to limited opportunity for advancement and job autonomy, in addition to low pay and job security (Bolitzer, 2019; Maynard & Joseph, 2008; Spinrad et al., 2022). Adjunct faculty are often left without institutional support systems that would engage them in professional development, program evaluation, and curriculum development (Danaei, 2019).

Another micro-level stress factor is unmet psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Adjunct faculty are sacrificing individual psychological needs for the sake of the increased demand. Deci and Ryan (1980) maintain that individuals are highly motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are being met in the workplace. In a qualitative study, Koster & McHenry (2023) reveal three significant concerns among adjunct faculty, e.g., work-life imbalance, unmet needs for administrative or colleague support, and a lack of psycho-emotional well-being. In the absence of face-to-face interactions, faculty feel disconnected from their students and colleagues (Didenko et al, 2021; Nenakhova, 2021). Adjunct faculty needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are challenging to satisfy in an online setting (Masalimova et al., 2023). Faculty cite an imbalance between work-life and loss of control over job tasks as primary reasons for leaving the profession (Flaherty, 2022).

The current adjunct model also has severe human and moral costs, e.g., faculty members often live on poverty wages without benefits, job security or career trajectory. The existing dominant workplace models, Job Demand-Resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and Job-Crafting Theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), fail to integrate spiritual engagement adequately and thus are only able to offer a partial remedy. Moderate to high need for recovery results in burnout, a psychological condition characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Adjunct faculty are experiencing exhaustion, burnout, and greater degrees of work-family conflict. White-Lewis et al. (2023) cite the top reason adjunct faculty departures as lack of administrative support and unmet needs that align with self-determination theory.

# Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations of the study involves multiple theories each adding a nuance on the need for recovery from work-related stress experienced by online adjunct facult. First, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1980) provides the psychological motivations for employees. Second, the Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) reveals the processes behind the stress adjunct faculty experience in higher education. Finally, a theology of work rooted in a Judeo-Christian perspective provides a spiritual grounds for healthy views of work and worker well-being. Figure 2 shows the relationship between the theoretical foundations explored in the study.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Framework*

## Self-Determination Theory

The concept of Self-determination theory was developed by Deci & Ryan (1980). This research is framed by Deci and Ryan’s (1980) Self-determination theory (SDT), which offers a robust understanding of human motivation in the workplace (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Gagne et al., 2022; Hobfoll, 1989; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). SDT is a motivation theory that focuses on the individual’s ability to remain motivated at work within specific environmental factors such as management style and support (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). SDT stands in contrast with top-down organizational models such as Job-Demands Resources (Demerouti et al., 2001) which assumes that the organizational leadership is primarily responsible for employee motivation and job satisfaction. Rigby and Ryan (2018) describe this shift from externally regulated motivational models to intrinsically regulated to be a “Copernican Turn” in human resource management.

Applying motivation models which measure employee experiences will greatly enhance organizational culture and improve human resource management (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Self-determination theory emphasizes individual needs involving multiple motivational drivers for employee behavior, i.e., autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci et al., 2017). SDT has been studied within various contexts, e.g., education, parenting, healthcare, sports, psychotherapy, and remote work (Deci & Ryan 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Deci et al. define autonomy as “characterized by people being engaged in an activity with a full sense of willingness, volition, and choice” (2017, p. 20). Organizations can impact internally regulated motivation by helping employees understand the purpose and worth of their jobs, allow employees to feel more ownership in executing their jobs, provide objective feedback, and offer support (Deci et al., 2017). Internally regulated motivation can include intrinsic and extrinsic motivational mechanisms. SDT focuses more on the “conditions that elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish” intrinsic motivation rather than on the causation of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70).

SDT as a framework for examining non-tenured adjunct faculty has significant relevance to adjunct faculty’s ability to meet their needs for autonomy in the workplace. Deci et al., (2017) state that “…some work environments foster more autonomous motivation and engagement in their employees, whereas others have them focused more on external contingencies or managers’ approval” (p. 22). Universities and colleges notoriously manage non-tenure adjunct faculty through external mechanisms, e.g., lower pay and benefits, less representation in governing, short-term contracts, which often leave faculty feeling disconnected from the organization (Crick et al., 2020). Ryan and Deci’s (2000) study found that external regulators, e.g., compliance, rewards, punishments, reduce an employee’s intrinsic motivation. Situated within the context of non-tenured adjunct faculty, this research examines the relationship between an employee’s practice of spiritual rest and their need for recovery from work.

## Effort-Recovery Model

The Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) provides another theory of human motivation that connects physiological and psychological systems. Three components of the Effort-Recovery Model: 1) employees use psychological resources to deal with work-related activity; 2) resource usage leads to task performance and resource decline; and 3) recovery can begin when the work-related demands end (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). There are four classic recovery experiences: a) psychological detachment, which is not thinking about work during nonwork hours; b) relaxation, which is having a low activation level; c) mastery, which is facing a positive challenge to learn something new; and d) control, which is having a feeling of control over nonwork time (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Bennett, Bakker, & Field, 2017). The roots of the ERM can be found in several developments in organizational psychology. First, Lazarus & Folkman’s (1984) distinguished work explains that job demands can either be challenge demands or hindrance demands. Crawford et al. (2010) support these findings in their study. The stress-appraisal approach (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) shows that work demands could be positive or negative and helps recategorize work characteristics as challenge demands, hindrance demands, and job resources (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Challenge demands are work demands including time constraints, workloads, among others, that become stressful but also contribute to employee self-efficacy (Bennett, Bakker, & Field, 2017), autonomous motivation, and increased work engagement in a problem-solving activity. However, problem-solving rumination during nonwork time is negatively related to psychological detachment (Querstret & Cropley, 2012). Employees struggle to find relaxation experiences. Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine (2007) demonstrated that work characteristics are positively related to long-term effects such as burnout and performance but have less to do with employee affect and energy resources. Emphasis is placed on employees’ need for recovery after work to manage short-term effects of fatigue, exhaustion, and vigor. Short-term effects vary daily (Sonnentag, 2012; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). There is a negative relationship between the need for recovery and employee well-being (Andruilli & Gerards, 2023; Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006).

## Theology of Work

Contemporary research describes spiritual rest in terms of practicing mindfulness, developing work-life balance, and deepening awareness of work as meaningful to one’s inner life (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023; Singh & Singh, 2022; Rathee & Rajain, 2020; Marschke, Preziosi, & Harrington, 2009). This research proposes an interdisciplinary theology of work developed through examining social sciences, organizational psychology, and the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Spiritual rest in the Judeo-Christian context is defined as a Sabbath rest. Spiritual rest is necessary for developing a proper theology of work. Gallagher (2019) describes Sabbath rest as a spiritual discipline practiced daily to “create space for God” and as an “attitude of orientation towards the living God in each day, and as a sacred time to pursue God in each week” (p. 143). A Hebrew perspective of time is offered by Rabbi Heschel (1951). Sabbath is a preparation for eternity that involves mystical, spiritual discipline separate from regular activity, aligning oneself to God’s timing (Heschel, 1951; Gallagher, 2019). Sabbath involves family worship, remembering God’s nature and activity, and appreciating the connection between God, self, and others. Eugene Peterson (1989) describes the Sabbath from a Hebrew perspective, ordered with an evening-to-morning orientation. Peterson (1989) states, “We wake into a world we didn’t make, into a salvation we didn’t earn” (p. 69).

In this way, Sabbath rest becomes a holistic way to orient human activity beyond a work stoppage. Sabbath rest enables a person to discover meaning in work and work’s proper relationship to life (de Villiers & Marchinkowski, 2021). Marschke, Preziosi, and Harrington (2009) make the same claim of workplace spirituality; however, they do so without reference to a Judeo-Christian heritage. Workplace spirituality is “the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community” (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 137). The critical difference between a secular workplace spirituality and a Sabbath rest lies in the source. Sabbath rest stands in contrast to workplace spirituality, which emphasizes increased moral values in the workplace and encourages employees to nourish their inner life (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023; Singh & Singh, 2022; Rathee & Rajain, 2020). Additionally, Sabbath rest seeks a rest in the divine, not the self (de Villiers & Marchinkowski, 2021). The transformative nature of Sabbath rest can be accessed when the practice goes beyond a stoppage of work and becomes a regularly scheduled time set aside for reflection on the meaning of life and work (Diddams et al., 2004).

The function of Sabbath rest is to create space for God’s presence to obtain a proper perspective on work (Gallagher, 2019). A proper theology of rest finds its culmination in Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God’s Sabbath law as the (Möller, 2019; *New International Version*, 2011, Matthew 5:17). Christ embodies the Sabbath by returning the Sabbath to its original role of creating freedom rather than a socio-economic system of oppression (Brueggemann, 2021; Andreasen, 2019). Christ offers himself as the Sabbath (Matthew 11:29-30). Observing Christ’s activities on the Sabbath provides readers with a balanced understanding of the role of the Sabbath in an individual’s life. Christ taught, participated in synagogue, gathered food, healed the sick and oppressed on the Sabbath (Mark 1:27-28; Mark 2:23-28; Mark 3:1-6; Mark 6:1-2; Luke 4:16; Luke 13:10-17; and John 5:5). Through these controversial actions on the Sabbath, Christ demonstrates that the Sabbath is designed for the benefit of the people, specifically to restore the marginalized in society (Brueggemann, 2021; Gallagher, 2019; Andreasen, 2019).

MacCarty (2011) claims that “true Sabbath observance joins God in the work of redemption, relieving the burdens of the oppressed…” (p. 65). However, it would be an inaccurate conclusion to view Christ as always working on the Sabbath. Christ regularly teaches the value of physical and spiritual rest throughout the Gospel teachings (Luke 5:15-16; Mark 1:35-45; Matthew 14:13-23). Christ teaches a proper balance between work and rest in God’s kingdom. Work and rest are not viewed as polar opposites. Both need to be rightly ordered. Sabbath liberates humans from the burden of not perpetual work (Muller, 1999). God offers Sabbath as a counter-cultural practice of rhythmic work and rest in contrast to the imbalance of work until exhaustion and burnout (Gallagher, 2019; Breuggemann, 2014).

# Sociological Perspectives

## Motivation Theory in the Workplace

Several motivation theories within organizational psychology inform workplace management. Each motivation theory is built on prior assumptions of general human behavior. This section examines the dominant workplace motivation theories.

***Deci & Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory*.** Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of basic human needs has fundamentally shaped motivation theories in psychology. Deci and Ryan contextualize Maslow’s theory in the workplace to describe employee needs. By studying employee behavior, Deci and Ryan (2000) have determined that employees have innate psychological needs, i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The degree to which the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met will determine the degree of employee job satisfaction, performance, and well-being (Goštautaitė, Bučiūnienė, & Milašauskienė, 2022). Rigby and Ryan (2018) describe top-down management approaches often neglect critical and potent intrinsic motivational capacities within individual employees. Human resource management in the 21st century has shifted emphasis from organizational, top-down employee engagement models toward individual, bottom-up approaches. From an individualistic perspective, employees exhibit three basic human needs: a) relatedness, the need to have close, affectionate relationships with others; b) autonomy, the need to control the course of their lives; and c) competence, the need to be effective in dealing with the environment (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gagné et al., 2022).

# Faith Perspectives

Incorporate faith-based insights and perspectives relevant to your dissertation’s topic. Discuss how these viewpoints intersect with the sociological aspects of your research. However, we encourage faith integration throughout Chapters 2 and 5 as appropriate.

***Hobfoll’s Conservation of Resources Theory*.** Most employees are inherently concerned with maintaining resources and preventing loss. Employees experiencing high strain have decreased job satisfaction and increased likelihood of burnout or turnover (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Hobfoll’s conservation of resources theory (1989) explains why individuals seek resources and respond when resources are threatened. Conservation of resources (COR) theory explains human motivation in the workplace, proposing that “…individuals will strive to maintain, preserve, cultivate, defend, and build those resources that they value” (Dewe, 2017, p. 429). According to Hobfoll’s theory, stress is a reaction to a threat or loss of real or perceived resources (Holmgreen et al., 2017; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Conservation of Resources theory claims the primary human motivator is to seek to obtain, retain, and protect resources to avoid stress, be psychologically healthy, and have positive work-flow experiences.

Examining the underlying assumption of the conservation of resources will reveal inadequacies for understanding human motivation. Many organizational theories are based on COR such as Job-Demands Resouces theory (Demerouti et al., 2001), Job-Crafting Theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), and the Effort-Recovery Model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Though the literature seems to give widespread support for Hobfoll’s theory, there are concerns with the theory’s assumptions that. Conservation of resources theory is built on the three prior assumptions of Freud’s pleasure principle, Maslow’s heirarchy of needs, and Bandura’s social learning theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Two of these assumptions, Freud’s pleasure principle and Maslow’s heirarchy of needs, seem unable to explain more complex human motivations from a Christian faith-integrated perspective. Freud’s (1900/1913) pleasure principle holds that humans are subconsciously motivated toward pleasure and away from pain. However, enduring suffering can viewed as a mark of maturity when done with a purpose (Hannush, 2021). Maslow’s (1968) heirarchy of needs argues that humans seeks needs in a progressive fashion from physical, social, and then to psychological. Maslow believed that satisfied needs do not motivate behavior (Greene & Burke, 2007). Whereas, self-determination theory assumes that human behavior is driven by an innate need for growth (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Striving for growth is different than striving for the acquisition of resources.

Hobfoll bases the conservation of resources theory on an “evolutionary need to acquire” resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). However, in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus also connects the concept of stress to acquiring resources (Matthew 6). From a biblical perspective, stress increases with the preoccupation with more resources. Hobfoll and Jesus address the perception of a lack of available resources. The distinctive difference is that Jesus’ approach locates the provision of resources in God’s covenant with his people. In contrast, Hobfoll assumes that the world is a place of scarcity in which self-preservation strategies are necessary for survival. This scarcity mindset is due to the fact that after the Fall, humans have to work hard to survive, and this can lead to a feeling of scarcity and fear of not having enough. This scarcity mindset can lead to perceiving the world as a threatening place. COR does not identify which resources provide the ultimate benefit. Whereas a Christian faith identifies the most important resources as those coming from a faith experience. Additionally, COR suggests resources are an end in themselves rather than a means to other ends. These reasons make the conservation of resources theory a limited sociological lens that does not address the complexities of employee needs from a Christian faith-integrated perspective.

# Synthesis of Current Literature

Critically review and synthesize the existing literature related to your dissertation’s focus. Highlight key findings, identify gaps in the literature, and how what is known about the problem informs your dissertation. Tables may help demonstrate alignment and organization of major concepts, topics, and theories.

The two dominant work engagement models in organizational psychology previously mentioned are the Job-Demands Resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Job-Crafting Theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Each model has significant inadequacies from a Christian worldview perspective. The theoretical model of the Job-Demands Resources theory is based on a unidirectional relationship between the employer/employee. As a top-down approach to organizational behavior, employers are responsible for designing jobs with a proper balance of demands and resources. Job resources are believed to help employees accomplish goals and mitigate the effects of job demands (Van Wingerden, Derks, & Bakker, 2017). Job demands lead to eventual burnout, and job resources lead to work engagement. This dynamic presupposes a nonmutual, even adversarial, relationship between employer and employee. In this model, there is no room to recognize the potential of employees to have internal motives for productive work and accountability. The burden of accountability is placed on management, and the employee is considered a passive player in the relationship. This model does not allow for mutual goal setting and alignment between management and the employee.

Though Job-Crafting takes an opposite bottom-up approach to organizational behavior, it is incompatible with a Christian worldview perspective on work and employee well-being. First, the Job-Crafting theory presupposes a proactive employee to begin the process of job crafting (Teng & Chen, 2019; Vermooten et al., 2019). The outcomes of job crafting could lead to greater work engagement and job satisfaction or potentially overwork and exploit the employee at the cost of the employee’s well-being (Bolino et al., 2016; Harju, Kaltiainen, & Hakanen, 2021). Experts identify the potential for employee exploitation as the ‘dark side’ of Job-Crafting; however, there is not an adequate explanation for how to avoid this downside (Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015; Hood, 2019; Boehnlein & Baum, 2022). The Job-Crafting model prioritizes work productivity as the Job-Demands Resources model over employee well-being. The burden of responsibility for rectifying an imbalance of demands and resources is left to the proactive employee. Employees without a proactive personality cannot access the Job-Crafting model’s benefits (Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016; Vermooten et al., 2019). Studies show conflicting evidence about the ability of employees to job craft in all occupations. Some authors argue that specific work environments and industries may be hostile or incompatible with a proactive employee seeking job crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017), whereas Petrou et al. (2012) stated that job crafting can occur in any occupational context.

## Spiritual Engagement

Bickerton et al. (2014) was the first study to operationalize spiritual resources as a subcategory of personal resources within Hobfoll’s (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Spiritual resources, defined as beliefs, practices, and experiences that result from a connection to the divine, include a secure attachment to God, collaborative religious coping, and calling (Bickerton et al., 2014).

One of the more significant conclusions Bickerton et al. (2014) found was that spiritual resources had a more significant effect on work engagement than job resources among religious workers. This finding supports personal resources within the conceptual framework of Job-Crafting and agrees with Demerouti et al.’s (2001) insistence that Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) should only include organizational resources job control, autonomy, promotion, and task variety. Though the Bickerton et al. (2014) study offers significant advancement of spiritual resources to manage job demands, personal resources are not conceptually part of the JD-R model. The Job Demands-Resources model identifies job characteristics as demands on the employee or a resource the employee can leverage against the demands. However, the founding authors explicitly state that the demands and resources are considered inherent in the job design and cannot include individual employee characteristics (Demerouti et al, 2001). As a result, employees can leverage spiritual resources to improve work engagement. This study would have better fit spiritual resources within the Job-Crafting model since it provides employees the capacity to achieve work engagement from a bottom-up conceptual approach.

Bickerton et al. (2014) inaccurately cites Demerouti et al.’s (2001) founding study on JD-R model as claiming that job resources and personal resources promote work engagement (Bickerton et al., 2014, p. 371). However, Demerouti et al. (2001) take the position that “in our study, we focus on external resources because there is no general agreement regarding which internal resources can be considered stable or situation independent - and which can be changed by adequate job design” (p. 501). The full scope of job resources included feedback, job rewards, job control, participation, job security, and supervisor support (Demerouti et al., 2001) which are strictly confined to job characteristics rather than personal resources.

Spirituality is the “human craving for connection with the transcendent, the desire to integrate the self into a meaningful whole, and attaining one’s potential…” (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2021, p. 127). Mitroff and Denton (1999) also emphasize spirituality as connecting with others in the universe. Three factors compose spirituality: connecting to the work community, finding significance at work, and accessing individual hopefulness (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020). Cavanagh (1999) defined the concept as “the desire to find ultimate purpose in life, and to live accordingly.” Ashmos and Duchon (2000) defined spirituality at work as “recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community.”

The literature makes a distinction between workplace spirituality and employee spiritual engagement. Workplace spirituality focuses on the overall environment cultivated by the organization that enables employees to experience a sense of connection with others, transcendence, meaning, and inner satisfaction (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Shankar Pawar, 2008). Enhancing workplace spirituality allows employees to feel connected to the organization, increasing work engagement and a sense of belonging (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020). “This suggests that higher levels of work engagement could lead to higher levels of workplace spirituality. As such, organisations could potentially promote work engagement (vigour, dedication & absorption) by focusing more on workplace spirituality” (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020, p. 861). Studies that address spirituality in the workplace are done at an organizational level. Yet, little research exists addressing individual employee spiritual engagement (de Diego-Cordero et al., 2021).

As educators experience a need for recovery, school administrators should be looking for new ways to offer spiritual resources. This is additive to the role spirituality plays in well-being. The study shows well-being is affected by decreasing burnout and increasing job satisfaction. This study should provide a significant basis for advocating spiritual engagement. “Spiritual resources are a class of personal resources derived from a connection with a sacred being” (Hashemi et al., 2017). The results showed that spiritual resources, both directly and indirectly through emotional exhaustion and work engagement, have significant effects on employees’ work well-being and turnover intention. The results also indicated that spiritual resources, despite cultural and religious differences, can increase the perception of control, the sense of meaning and calling and flexibility in the employees, thereby reducing emotional exhaustion and increasing work engagement (Hashemi et al., 2017).

## Background of Instrument and Variables

This quantitative correlational research will examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions utilizing two validated instruments, the Spiritual Engagement Instrument (SpEI; Roof, Bocarnea, & Winston, 2017) and the Need for Recovery Scale short-form (NFR; Stevens et al., 2019). The instruments to measure an individual’s spiritual engagement and that individual’s need for recovery from work, respectively. The statistical analysis of these two instruments could point to items of correlation between spiritual engagement and the need for recovery from work.

The Need for Recovery Scale short-form (NFR) instrument measures employee exhaustion and the need for recovery from work (Stevens et al., 2019). The instrument consists of three items. Second, this research will also utilize the Spiritual Engagement Instrument (SpEI), measuring factors of spiritual engagement in four dimensions, i.e., worship, meditation, fasting, and spiritual rest (Roof et al., 2017). This research will focus analysis on the spiritual rest subscale consisting of five items.

The Spiritual Engagement Instrument (SpEI; Roof, Bocarnea, & Winston, 2017) is a tool that measures factors of spiritual engagement in four dimensions (i.e., worship, meditation, fasting, and rest). The SpEI is scored on a six-point Likert scale: strongly agree, moderately agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree, moderately disagree, and strongly disagree. The SpEI can measure the four dimensions in conjunction with other social constructs, such as job satisfaction or leadership behaviors in the workplace (Roof et al., 2017). The Cronbach alpha values for each of the four dimensions of the SpEI are: worship 0.94, meditation 0.96, fasting 0.98, and rest 0.96. The four factors together explain 85.24% of the variance (Roof et al., 2017).

The SpEI survey is intended to capture perceptions within a participant’s own faith tradition, worldview, or philosophy, those spiritual practice and association beliefs and attitudes that draw that person closer to God or the divine. Though the participant may feel strongly theologically or have specific ideas of how the spiritual practices or disciplines should be conducted, the survey was designed to measure across a wide range of such perspectives. Each participant is encouraged to do their best not to be distracted by the nature of any specific question. Each statement is rated on a Likert scale using the categories of Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Mildly Agree, Mildly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, as indicated on the survey form.

The Need for Recovery Scale (NFR) developed by Stevens et al. (2019) is a validated short-form version of the Danish Need for Recovery Scale. The short form can reduce the burden on researchers and respondents by creating and validating a shortened version of the Danish NFR Scale (Stevens et al., 2019). The short-form NFR scale consists of three items (exhausted at the end of a work day, hard to find interest in other people after a work day, it takes over an hour to fully recover from a work day) demonstrated excellent validity and responsiveness compared to the full nine-item scale (Stevens et al., 2019). The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) score is 0.88, identical to a Cronbach alpha score. The ICC Responsiveness score is 0.80 (Stevens et al., 2019). The Need for Recovery short-form version is scored on a five-point Likert scale.

# Variant Perspectives

Scholars have built an extensive research base over the past four decades addressing work engagement, recovery from work, stress, and burnout. There are two primary worldview perspectives in the currently established research. Both worldviews address an employee’s need for recovery from work, however, with notable differences. First, a humanistic worldview limits the employee resources and work demands to material objects such as compensation, promotion, and benefits or temporal circumstances such as supervisor feedback, environmental pressures, emotional demands, and so forth. Within the humanistic framework, there is no acknowledgment of spiritual resources available for the employee to mitigate work-related stress and burnout. Employers and employees are relegated to negotiating between material and tangible resources and demands to improve work engagement and productivity. Pantheism is a second existing worldview with research support in employee work engagement. Several studies have demonstrated the positive effects of mindfulness on relieving work-related stress and increasing work engagement.

## Proactive Personality Theory

Proactive Personality theory is an alternative framework for explaining the effects of an employee’s need for recovery from work and work engagement (Sonnentag, 2003; Kakanen et al., 2008; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Bateman and Crant’s (1993) built the Proactive Personality theory to describe the systemic relationship between the person, environment, and behavior. Proactive behavior directly alters environments with personal and situational causes (Lewin, 1938). A Proactive Personality is a disposition toward proactive behaviors, e.g., scan for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until change or closure occurs (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). However, the Proactive Personality theory was not part of this research’s conceptual framework. Proactive Personality is linked to employees staying engaged at work in the face of increasing demands (Bakker, 2011; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). On the other hand, self-determination theory offers a better framework for examining faculty motivations and job satisfaction (Crick et al., 2020).

The two dominant work engagement models in organizational psychology are the Job-Demands Resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Job-Crafting Theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The Job-Demands Resources theory views all job characteristics (i.e., psychological, organizational, physical, and social) from an organizational perspective as either demands or resources. Job demands such as high-pressure situations and emotionally demanding work, among others, increase strain, leading to cynicism, work-related stress, and potential burnout. Job resources help employees accomplish goals and mitigate the effects of job demands (Van Wingerden, Derks, & Bakker, 2017). Job resources such as compensation, career advancement, and peer support, among others, lead to employee motivation, engagement, and productivity (Zhang & Parker, 2019). Employers use this top-down management approach to design jobs, balancing demands and resources.

## Job Demands-Resources Theory

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R; Demerouti et al., 2001) model is a dominant perspective in organizational psychology. It appears that JD-R is less about provoking strategies for change and more about describing the effects of employee job dynamics. By definition, the JD-R model is all of the job characteristics from an organization’s perspective that categorize all characteristics as job demands or resources. Research demonstrates that individual employees may vary in classifying a job demand as positive (i.e., challenge demand) or negative. Therefore, how can a job characteristic be inherently categorized as a challenge or hindrance demand without factoring in the effect on the employee?

## Job-Crafting Theory

The Job-Crafting Theory is an employee-initiated approach to shaping the work environment to fit individual needs when and as the employee feels necessary (J-CT; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012; Petrou et al., 2012). Employees engage in crafting through three domains, i.e., tasks, relationships, and cognitions. Job crafting presupposes an employee’s proactive personality to initiate the job crafting process (Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016). The job crafting process demonstrates positive benefits of employee work engagement, such as vigor, dedication, and absorption (Oprea et al., 2019). Some research suggests that job crafting has adverse side effects, such as misaligned goals, unequal access, overwork, and exploitation (Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015; Hood, 2019; Boehnlein & Baum, 2022). Irshad and Raja (2021) cite job-crafting as a mediator of job satisfaction for university faculty amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Variations of JD-R and J-CT

Several authors attempt to bring these two theories together. Employee can engage in job crafting through four behaviors: increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands, and decreasing hindering job demands (Ferreira et al., 2022). However, the Job Crafting model (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and Job-Demands Resources model (Tims et al., 2012) maintain significant differences. They differ in defining job crafting content. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) focus on changes in task/relational/cognitive boundaries, whereas Tims et al. (2012) focus on changes in job characteristics. Job Crafting and Job-Demands Resources also differ concerning the purpose of job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) consider crafting as a way to improve meaning and work identity, whereas Tims et al. (2012) consider crafting as a way to balance job resources and demands to achieve person-job fit (Zhang and Parker, 2019).

Job Demands-Resource theory advocates borrowing and conducting research that measures personal resources such as self-efficacy and optimism. Xanthopoulou et al.’s (2007) study, working with the JD-R theory, demonstrated that job resources tend to increase personal resources, thus resulting in positive individual and organizational outcomes. As job resources are more accessible to employees, then employees will sense greater personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism) and remain engaged in the organization. Xanthopoulou et al.’s (2007) study claims to confirm the JD-R model and expand the model by locating personal resources within the framework. Bakker & Demerouti (2007) argue for including personal resources with the JD-R model based on Xanthopoulou et al.’s (2007) study. Bakker & Demerouti (2007) argue that “personal resources partly mediated the relationship between job resources and work engagement, suggesting that job resources foster the development of personal resources” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 323).

In another study, Bakker & Demerouti (2008) explain the reasoning for expanding the JD-R model is based on Xanthopoulou et al.’s (2007) study showing how personal resources affect work engagement and that personal resources and job resources are interrelated. Nevertheless, the authors then recommend further research to establish the inclusion of personal resources in the JD-R model. The fact that personal and job resources are related to increased work engagement and decreased exhaustion is clear. However, the question is whether the JD-R model is designed and intends to incorporate personal resources. The original studies in Job Demands-Resource theory excluded personal resources with an explicit preference for resources to be exclusively organizational rather than personal. Though more recent studies have expanded the JD-R model to be more inclusive of personal resources. Bakker & Demerouti (2017) allow the JD-R model to encompass personal resources and job crafting.

# Literature Gap

Focusing on spiritual engagement as a resource for employee work engagement may enable adjunct faculty working in an online environment to experience recovery from work and relief from work-related stress, leading to decreased burnout. Current literature on adjunct faculty promotes negotiating job demands and resources to achieve job satisfaction and well-being (Eagan Jr., Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015; Bolitzer, 2019). However, there is a gap in the literature concerning spiritual engagement of adjunct faculty to reduce the need for recovery from work (Kühnel, Sonnentag, & Westman, 2009; Büssing et al., 2013; Roof et al., 2017). Spiritual resources are a class of personal resources derived from a connection with the divine being (Hashemi et al., 2017). Spiritual engagement differs from workplace spirituality by focusing on individual practices rather than the organizational environment. Spiritual rest or the practice of Sabbath involves a commitment to stop labor, engage in rest, and adjust daily habits to focus on faith and family (Chandler, 2010; Gallagher, 2019; Hartman, 2011; Roof et al., 2017).

As faculty experience a need for recovery, university administrators should look for new ways to offer or promote employee sustainability through alternate means, such as spiritual resources (Varga & Denniston, 2022; Spinrad et al., 2022). Spirituality plays an additive role in employee well-being. Increasing spiritual engagement positively affects employee well-being and job satisfaction and decreases burnout (Hashemi et al., 2017). Hashemi et al. (2017) demonstrated that spiritual resources improve employee well-being, and reduce turnover intention by positively affecting an employee’s perception of control, the sense of meaning and calling, and flexibility.

This research will contribute to the gap in literature among Christian social researchers examining the effects of spiritual engagement on non-ministerial professions (Büssing et al., 2013; Kühnel, Sonnentag, & Westman, 2009; Roof et al., 2017) by identifying sabbath rest as a spiritual resource for adjunct faculty in need of recovery from work demands. A handful of studies exist on the spiritual resource constructs among the clergy (Büssing et al., 2013; Chandler, 2009; Chandler, 2010; Hough et al., 2019; Terry & Cunningham, 2020). However, the same research questions are not being conducted for adjunct faculty in HEIs (Bolitzer, 2019). As well as the significant gap in empirical research, social researchers are not integrating faith into the workplace, leaving many Christians to rely on resources based on incompatible worldviews such as atheism, humanism, and pantheism.

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