Chapter 3

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# ~~Introduction~~

This chapter is an introduction to the research methodology for this quantitative correlational study regarding the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions. This approach will examine potential correlations between the practice of spiritual rest and ~~its effect on~~ the need for recovery from work-related stress among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions. The research plan, including the research questions, hypotheses, methodology, design, dissertation participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures and analysis, ethical considerations are also primary components of this chapter.

The problem is adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions experience a high need for recovery from work and lack adequate spiritual rest (Varga & Denniston, 2022; Han et al., 2020; Bennet, 2003; Walker & McPhail, 2009; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2015). The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

The research questions emerged from the purpose statement. The hypotheses aligned with the research questions to support the purpose of the dissertation. The results of the dissertation answered the research hypotheses.

# Research Questions

This study seeks to examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work in answer to the following research questions:

RQ1: What relationship exists, if any, between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions?

RQ2: What relationship, if any, exists between spiritual rest and years of teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions?

RQ3: What relationship, if any, exists between the need for recovery from work and years of teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions?

This study formulates specific hypotheses to guide the investigation of the relationships between spiritual rest, the need for recovery from work, and teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online HEIs. These hypotheses aim to determine whether statistically significant relationships exist between these variables, thus providing an understanding of the potential impacts of spiritual rest on faculty need for recovery from work. This study seeks to generate empirical evidence that can inform faculty practices, HEI policies, and support systems designed to enhance the overall work experience for adjunct faculty. The following section details the hypotheses to be examined.

# Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be examined in this study:

H01: No statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and the need for recovery from work scores among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha1: A statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and the need for recovery from work scores among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H02: No statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and years of adjunct teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha2: A statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and years of adjunct teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H02a: No statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and faculty length of employment among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha2a: A statistically significant relationship exists between spiritual rest subscale scores and faculty length of employment among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H03: No statistically significant relationship exists between recovery from work scores and years of adjunct teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha3: A statistically significant relationship exists between recovery from work scores and years of adjunct teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H03a: No statistically significant relationship exists between recovery from work scores and faculty length of employment among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha3a: A statistically significant relationship exists between recovery from work scores and faculty length of employment among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

## Hypotheses for “Other Findings” (Indirectly Related to RQs)

The following hypotheses, though not directly related to the research questions, will be examined for other findings:

H04: No statistically significant difference exists in spiritual rest subscale scores between retired and non-retired status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha4: A statistically significant difference exists in spiritual rest subscale scores between retired and non-retired status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H05: No statistically significant difference exists in spiritual rest subscale scores between full and part-time status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha5: A statistically significant difference exists in spiritual rest subscale scores between full and part-time status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H06: No statistically significant difference exists in recovery from work scores between retired and non-retired status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha6: A statistically significant difference exists in recovery from work scores between retired and non-retired status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

H07: No statistically significant difference exists in recovery from work scores between full and part-time status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Ha7: A statistically significant difference exists in recovery from work scores between full and part-time status among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions.

Having outlined the research questions and hypotheses, the next step is to detail the research methodology and design that will be employed to investigate these relationships. This study adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing correlational methods to analyze the data gathered from adjunct faculty in online HEIs. By employing validated instruments and statistical techniques, the study aims to investigate the potential connections between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work, as well as how these variables may be influenced by the length of teaching experience. The following section will elaborate on the quantitative methods and specific design elements used to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

# Research Methodology and Design

Quantitative research methods will be used to gather and test data via Spearman rank-order from two validated instruments. This study will examine the correlations between two discrete variables within the same group on an ordinal scale (Crump, 2024). The researcher assumes that spiritual rest will be the predictor variable and the need for recovery from work will be an outcome variable. The study will test the theoretical relationship between these discrete variables (Judd & Sadler, 2003).

Quantitative correlational research attempts to establish relationships between variables within a population. Quantitative research requires researchers to use numeric data to describe the attitudes, behaviors, or opinions of the sample population under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2009). The research must strive for objectivity and remain independent from the dissertation subjects. The theoretical framework accurately reflects the constructs. The variables in this dissertation are assumed to be measurable with validated and reliable instruments. This quantitative dissertation addresses the potential correlations between the variables. Multiple variables are measured for each participant and statistics are used to determine the magnitude and direction of the associations among the variables (Plano Clark, 2015). The theoretical framework is assumed to accurately reflect the constructs under examination. Due to the limitations of the theoretical framework, the results of this dissertation are limited.

This quantitative dissertation will utilize a correlational design to examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online colleges. Quantitative research methods are used to gather and the Spearman rank correlation non-parametric test will be performed (Siegel, 1957). The Spearman correlational test will determine if a relationship between spiritual rest, measured by the SpEI, and the need for recovery from work, measured by the NFR, exists. The two instruments will be accessed through a secure and anonymous online survey. Data from the instruments will be provided in Excel spreadsheet format for ease of transfer into PSPP.

## Population and Sampling

The target population for this dissertation will be adjunct faculty in online colleges from the midwestern United States. Adjunct faculty, by definition, are considered part-time employees of the university (citation). However, many adjunct faculty work at multiple higher education institutions to collectively obtain full-time workloads (citation). The population for this dissertation will be any faculty with adjunct status. Purposive sampling will ensure eligible participants meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria of part-time non-tenure track faculty teaching college-level courses solely through an online instructional delivery format. The exclusion criteria for this dissertation would be individuals who teach college-level courses in hybrid, blended, or on-campus formats for any of their teaching loads. This dissertation would also exclude individuals employed outside of higher education. This dissertation excludes teaching faculty who have tenured, or tenure-track status in higher education institutions. The random sampling will continue until a sample size of 55-100 participants is attained. Permission to recruit participants will be secured from the institutional research board.

## Instrumentation

This quantitative correlational study 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 measure ~~an~~ spiritual engagement and that individuals 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.

This dissertation will also utilize the Spiritual Engagement Instrument (SpEI), which measures factors of spiritual engagement in four dimensions~~, i.e.,~~ worship, meditation, fasting, and spiritual rest (Roof, et al., 2017). This study will focus on the spiritual rest subscale consisting of five items. The SpEI survey intends to capture perceptions within a participant’s 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.

This dissertation will utilize the Need for Recovery Scale short-form (NFR) instrument, which measures employee exhaustion and the need for recovery from work (Stevens et al., 2019). The instrument consists of three items. The NFR instrument measures employee exhaustion and the need for recovery from work (Stevens et al., 2019). The instrument consists of three items. Second, this study 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 study will focus on the analysis of the spiritual rest subscale, which consists of five items.

## Variables

Table 1 aligns this study’s research questions and the constructs/variables measured by the selected validated instruments to help establish clear organization and structure.

**Table 1***Alignment of Variables to Research Questions*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Quantitative Variable(s) | Research Question | Theory or Literature Support |
| Spiritual rest, need for recovery from work | What relationship exists, if any, between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions? | Roof et al., 2017 |
| Spiritual rest | What relationship, if any, exists between spiritual rest and years of teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions? | Varga & Denniston, 2022; Han et al., 2020; Bennet, 2003; Walker & McPhail, 2009; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2015 |
| Need for recovery from work | What relationship, if any, exists between the need for recovery from work and years of teaching experience among adjunct faculty in online higher education institutions? | Stevens et al., 2019; Büssing et al., 2013; de Diego-Cordero et al., 2021 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Validity and Reliability

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 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 recover from a work day fully) 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.

# Data Collection and Analysis

## Data Collection

Outline the procedures for collecting data. Detail the steps, timeline, and protocols for ensuring data collection consistency and quality.

Study participants will ~~be allowed to~~ complete the demographic and assessment surveys through an online survey application. Survio survey software will host the online survey. Participants will receive an email link with a unique code associated with each survey. Participants will answer a short survey of questions associated with the two validated instruments identified in this dissertation (See Appendix XX). Participants will be assigned a unique identifier associated with data collection and analysis. Personally identifying information will not be shared with the researcher.

Time Schedule

Data collection will be conducted over an eight-week period during the summer months, June through July. It should be noted that many faculty will be in summer recess during the data collection period. This may allow for greater response rates, but also could have an impact on the degree of faculty need for recovery since the prior spring semester will have ended during the data collection period of this study.

## Data Preparation

Describe the processes for preparing data for analysis, such as cleaning and organizing quantitative data or transcribing and member-checking qualitative data.

## Data Analysis

Explain the methods and techniques for analyzing the collected data. Specify different analytical strategies for quantitative data as appropriate. For quantitative designs, state the statistical tests, assumptions testing, non-parametric alternatives to parametric tests, and post hoc procedures.

# Ethical Considerations

In preparation for conducting this dissertation, the researcher will complete the National Institutes of Health (NIH) training course, “Protecting Human Research Participants” (see Appendix XX). Additionally, the researcher undertook to insure the protection of all participants through the use of a formal consent form that:

* Explained the purpose of the study;
* Described the quantitative data collection procedures and expected interview lengths;
* Disclosed a participant’s right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason;
* Described how a participant’s right to privacy were protected through the use of pseudonyms;
* Included procedures for adhering to federally regulated institutional review board guidelines.

The researcher will secure all data on a web-based HIPPA compliant server monitored through a password-protected personal computer with limited access and accessibility.

While conducting this dissertation, the ethical rules and considerations for the withhumans currently enforced in the United States and those outlined by the American PsychologicalAssociation were followed. All participants will be informed of the objectivesand scope of the study and their rights according to the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in the United States (Federal Register, n.d., [45 CFR 46.116](https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2017-01058/p-818)).The participants who agreed to participate in the dissertation will sign an informed consent letter.Participation in this dissertation is voluntary and does not involve payment.

## Participant Consent

Carefully describe how participants will be protected and informed of their rights and how consent will be captured.

## Bias Acknowledgment and Mitigation

Acknowledge potential biases in your dissertation study and outline strategies to mitigate these biases, such as researcher bias, selection bias, or data analysis bias. Acknowledge how faith-based biases will inform or potentially skew data analysis. It is always best to disclose potential bias rather than try to conceal it.

# Summary and Conclusion

The quantitative correlational research methods of this study will effectively address the research questions by examining the relationships between variables within the target population of adjunct faculty in online HEIs. Specifically, these methods will investigate the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work, as well as their associations with years of teaching experience among adjunct faculty. Two validated instruments, the Spiritual Engagement Instrument (SpEI) and the Need for Recovery Scale short-form (NFR)~~,~~ will be used to examine the relationship between spiritual rest and the need for recovery from work among adjunct faculty. The SpEI measures spiritual engagement across four dimensions, with a focus on the spiritual rest subscale. The NFR assesses employee exhaustion and the need for recovery from work. Both instruments aim to provide statistical data to identify potential correlations.

The target population for this dissertation consists of adjunct faculty in online HEIs from the midwestern United States. Purposive sampling ensures participants meet specific criteria, excluding hybrid, blended, or on-campus instructors, as well as those with tenured or tenure-track status or employed outside higher education. The sample size aims for 55-100 participants, with recruitment permissions obtained from the Institutional Research Board.

This research methodology contributes to the study’s purpose by offering data insights into the relationship between spiritual rest, recovery from work, and teaching experience among adjunct faculty. By quantitatively analyzing these relationships, this study aims to enhance understanding of the factors influencing adjunct faculty's well-being and job satisfaction in online HEIs. Furthermore, the findings derived from correlational analyses will inform potential interventions or strategies to support adjunct faculty in managing work-related stress and promoting spiritual rest.

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