

VARIABLES PREDICTING TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG MENTAL HEALTH AND  
ADDICTIONS THERAPISTS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation [Proposal] Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to explore the correlations between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements on turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Previous research studies indicate that turnover may negatively affect patient care, increase cost to employers, decrease workplace morale and increase workload demands for remaining therapists. Some research studies have also found that pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements may be related to turnover intention. This study planned to support current research as well as determine the strength of the correlation between each of these variables and turnover intention. To complete this research study, mental health and addictions therapists were recruited via email and social media to complete the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ), the Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI), workload data, and flexible work arrangements data and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). A regression analysis was done to determine each correlation's strength and predict which variables are the strongest indicators of turnover intention. The results of this study found that the predictor variables accounted for 62.9% of the variance in the levels of turnover intention. Additionally, the predictor variable with the strongest correlation to turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists was pay satisfaction, followed by burnout and lastly, flexible work arrangements. Workload was not found to have a relationship to turnover intention.

*Keywords:* pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements, turnover intention

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### **Introduction**

The need for behavioral health and substance abuse counselors will grow 23% by 2026 (Murphy, 2022), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (2020) predicts that the demand for substance abuse services will far surpass the number of therapists available (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). Therapist turnover has been an ongoing problem in behavioral health and addictions counseling for years (Adams, 2019; Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019). Researchers have indicated that turnover intention increases costs for employers, and negatively affects patient care and workplace morale (Adams et al., 2019; Scanlan & Still, 2019; Young, 2022). Several factors have been found to contribute to turnover intention, including low pay, burnout, workload, and more recently, flexible work arrangements (Scanlan & Still, 2019; Sutrisno, 2020; Tsen et al., 2021). This quantitative research study investigated which of factors are the most important to therapists to improve therapist retention, thereby reducing organizational cost, improving patient care, and reducing turnover intention.

### **Background**

The most crucial resource for any organization is its employees, and the success of an organization is often associated with its capacity to attract, retain, and reward employees appropriately, and retaining talented personnel may determine an organization's success or failure (Ahmad-Saufi et al., 2023). From a Biblical stance, employees should engage enthusiastically and take joy in their work. According to Scripture, "everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man," (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Ecclesiastes. 3:13). Colossians informs workers to not only work hard but suggests that individuals are responsible for the quality of their work (*English Standard Version Bible*,

2001, Colossians, 3:22). However, organizational leaders are expected to be role models living in accordance with Scripture, and to treat workers in a fair and equitable manner. In the book of Ephesians, employers are advised that, as workers are expected to work hard and honestly for employers, employers are to do the same on behalf of those who work for them (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Ephesians. 6:9).

Turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists is high, and the costs are considerable (Fukui et al., 2019; Herschell et al., 2020). Those costs are not merely monetary, but include effects on the organization, the employees, and the patients. Among addictions and mental health therapists, there are consistently high voluntary turnover rates, with some studies showing turnover rates as high as 50% (Murphy & Kruis, 2022; Murphy, 2022). In behavioral health settings, turnover among mental health therapists, coupled with anticipated future shortages, threatens the delivery of quality behavioral health and addictions services (Ross et al., 2021; Pasquarella et al., 2021).

The financial repercussions of turnover intention, which often results in actual turnover, may include recruitment, training, and onboarding for organizations (Namin et al., 2021). Due to the organizational costs related to high turnover intention and turnover, many research studies have been completed on causal factors and contributing variables. Some potential turnover intention factors suggested in the mental health field include pay dissatisfaction, increased burnout, job autonomy, job demands, emotional labor and lack of organizational support (Fukui et al., 2019).

Turnover intention in mental health settings not only affects organizational costs, but it has also been found to contribute to lower workplace morale (Adams et al., 2019; Scanlan & Still, 2019). Previous studies have found that lower workplace morale may be caused by

employees with turnover intention who are disengaged, or are engaging in counterproductive organizational behaviors, like loafing or absenteeism (Xiong & Wen, 2020) or by remaining workers being forced to compensate for employees who have left their positions, (Adams et al., 2019; Scanlan & Still, 2019).

Furthermore, research suggests that therapist turnover is the best predictor of actual turnover (Lazzari et al., 2022) and has been correlated with poorer clinical outcomes and reduced quality of care (Fukui et al, 2019; Scanlan & Still, 2019). Turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists has been found to negatively impact patient care, lower workplace morale, and cause undue strain on remaining employees (Adams et al., 2019; Scanlan & Still, 2019).

According to Adams' equity theory, if employees do not perceive fair treatment from their organization, that creates dissatisfaction which may include turnover intention (Faisal & Naushad, 2021). Fair treatment can include factors like pay satisfaction or a reasonable workload. This theoretical perspective implies that providing employees with equitable treatment may reduce turnover intention.

Research studies have linked pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements to turnover intention and the results indicate both pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements are negatively correlated to turnover intention (Chen & Fulmer, 2017; Silaban et al., 2018). Furthermore, burnout and workload have been found to be positively linked to turnover intention (Junaidi et al., 2020; Yang & Hayes, 2020). This suggests that further research may predict which variables have the strongest correlations to turnover intention, thereby assisting organizations in making changes that reduce turnover intention among behavioral health and addictions therapists. The industry average of behavioral health staff turnover is considered to be

problematic and falls around 30% annually, some studies showing rates as high as 50% (Brabson et al., 2020; Murphy, 2022).

### **Problem Statement**

Therapist turnover among mental health and addiction counselors has become a significant issue for employers, therapists, and clients alike (Adams et al., 2019; Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019), with mental health and substance use disorders affecting around 20% of adolescents and adults in the United States (Kelly & Hearld, 2020). Organizational costs related to recruitment, onboarding, and lost productivity for employers have been estimated to range from 30% to 150% of the employee's annual salary (Thibault-Landry et al., 2017). Furthermore, when a therapist leaves their position, the remaining therapists often deal with increased workloads to meet treatment demands (Eby et al., 2010; Adams et al., 2019). This has been shown to be related to low workplace morale (Eby et al., 2010; Adams et al., 2019). For clients, increased therapist turnover has been associated with both lower quality of care and poor treatment results (Russell et al., 2020; Brabson et al., 2020; Scanlan & Still, 2019; Young, 2022). Therapist turnover creates disruptions between patients and treatment centers, and research has found that clients will do better and stay in treatment longer if they can stay with the same therapist (Murphy, 2022; Chen et al., 2020).

According to Namin et al. (2021), turnover intention has been found to be linked to several contributing variables. Some of those variables may include pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements. For instance, some studies indicate that both pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements are negatively correlated to turnover intention (Young, 2022; Tsen, 2020). Additionally, increased workload and burnout have been found to be

positively correlated to turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Murphy & Krus, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021).

To improve quality of care for clients and quality of life for our therapists, it is crucial to explore the degree to which each of these variables predicts turnover intention. This research may assist employers in developing successful methods to improve retention of mental health and addictions therapists, thereby reducing thousands of dollars in annual employer costs, improving care for patients, and increasing employee satisfaction. However, by not continuing to explore this field of research, employers, therapists, and clients may continue to suffer the consequences of frequent turnover among mental health and addictions therapists.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational survey research study was to determine the relationship between the variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention among mental health and addiction therapists.

### **Research Question(s) and Hypotheses**

#### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What is the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention?

#### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

**Assumptions and Limitations of the Study** From a practical perspective, an assumption

of this study was that due to high levels of turnover in the field of mental health and addictions, exploring the relationship between the study variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements, on turnover intention is significant. The theoretical foundation of this study was based on Adams' equity theory. Furthermore, the ontology of this study assumed that the use of quantitative methods is appropriate for exploring the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements, on turnover intention using electronic surveys for data collection.

This study had potential limitations. One limitation was that it does not consider extraneous factors that may affect the study variables, such as household income, work relationships, or organizational support. Additionally, the instruments were self-reporting measures conducted during a specific time, it is possible that changes may occur over a longer period. A longitudinal study that collects data over time may reflect different results.

### **Theoretical Foundation of the Study**

Equity theory of motivation, or Adams' equity theory, developed by Adams in 1963, was the theoretical framework for this study. This theory is applicable to turnover intention and retention research when turnover intention can be seen as a consequence of perceived inequity (Ngo-Henha, 2017). According to this theory, if employees do not perceive fair treatment from their organization, which may include factors like pay satisfaction or a reasonable workload, this creates dissatisfaction and negative consequences that may include turnover intention (Faisal & Naushad, 2021).

Adam's equity theory calls for a fair and equitable balance between employee inputs and outputs. Inputs can be described as hard work, skill level or enthusiasm, while outputs might include salary, benefits, or recognition. According to Adams (1965), employees are motivated

when they believe they are receiving fair reward for their work. In other words, their inputs are comparable to their outputs (Ngo-Henha, 2017). Therefore, if an employee perceives that their work efforts are not fairly rewarded, they may consider terminating their employment (Faisal & Naushad, 2021). Additionally, equity theory does not always have to be based on social comparison and can be focused on the individuals' perceptions of their own worth (Geurts et al., 1999). Adams' equity theory of motivation can provide a useful theoretical framework for this study on turnover intention because it suggests that employees consider the fairness of their treatment relative to their perception of their worth, as well as identifying specific factors that may contribute to perceptions of inequity, such as pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements.

From a Biblical perspective, the concept of fair remunerations and just treatment is reiterated throughout several Scripture passages. For example, "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Luke 10:7) and "Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Colossians 4:1). Additionally, Scripture encourages organizations and business leaders by stating, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Proverbs 3:27). Therapists in the mental health and addictions fields are serving the Lord by serving others. Placing demands on mental health and addictions therapists that may be unreasonable, such as being overworked or underpaid, particularly for organizational profit, is not in line with Biblical teachings.

### **Definition of Terms**

The terms used in this study were turnover intention, pay satisfaction, burnout, workload,

and flexible work arrangements. The following is a list of these terms and their definitions as used in this study.

**Turnover Intention** was defined as “an employee's intention to voluntarily change jobs or companies,” (Schyns et al., 2007, p. 660).

**Pay Satisfaction** was defined as “the amount of overall positive or negative affect (or feelings) that individuals have toward their pay,” (Miceli & Lane, 1991, p. 246).

**Burnout** was defined as “to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources,” (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159).

**Workload** was defined as “the amount of work assigned to or expected from a worker in a specified time period” or “the perceived relationship between the amount of mental processing capability or resources required to complete a task,” (Inegbedion et al., 2020).

**Flexible Work Arrangement** was defined as “any policies, practices, formal or informal, which permit people to vary when and where work is carried out” (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell & MacVicar 2007, p. 18).

**Mental Health and Addictions Therapist** was defined as mental health counselors who “help individuals deal with a broad range of mental health issues, such as those associated with addictions and substance abuse; family, parenting, and marital problems; stress management; self-esteem; or aging,” (National Center for O\*NET Development, 2023).

### **Significance of the Study**

By investigating the correlation of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and work flexibility on turnover intention among mental health and addiction therapists, this study supported current research that suggests a negative relationship between pay and work flexibility on turnover intention (Silaban et al., 2018) and a positive relationship between burnout on



turnover intention (Junaidi et al., 2020). This study also determined the strength of each correlation. This can help employers in developing plans to improve retention of mental health and addictions therapists, thereby reducing costs, improving patient care, and maintaining employee morale.

Therapist turnover has been an ongoing issue for employers, therapists, and clients (Adams et al., 2019; Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019). It has been associated with increased organizational cost (Fukui et al., 2019), low workplace morale (Eby et al., 2010; Adams et al., 2019), and reduced quality of care (Russell et al., 2020; Brabson et al., 2020; Young, 2022). This study continued research in this area by determining which variables are the most important for mental health and addictions therapists. The results of this study may contribute to helping employers in reducing turnover intention, thereby reducing organizational costs, improving patient care, improving workplace morale, and increasing employee satisfaction. However, by not continuing to explore this field of research, employers, therapists, and clients may continue to experience the negative consequences related to turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

### **Summary**

The field of mental health has experienced ongoing turnover intention among mental health and addiction counselors for years, and turnover intention has been found to be directly correlated to actual turnover (Fukui et al., 2019). A 2-year study of therapists working primarily in substance abuse as addictions counselors found that turnover ranged from 33% to 74% (Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019). Additionally, turnover among therapists working primarily in mental health services has been estimated to be between 30 and 60% annually (Adams et al., 2019). This dilemma and its consequences have become a significant issue for employers. To

address this issue, systemic research is needed on the degree of the relationship between several variables and their impact on turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

This chapter provides the critical importance of providing new insight and research regarding the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements among mental health and addictions therapists. Based on Adams' equity theory, this study examined the effects of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements and on turnover intention among therapists. From a theoretical perspective, this study provided evidence of each variable's relationship to turnover intention. From a practical perspective, this study provided evidence for the importance of just and equitable treatment of mental health and addictions therapists, such as fair pay or reasonable workloads.

The subsequent chapter provides a detailed review of existing literature conducted on the variables of this study, including pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention. Chapter 2 provides support for the theoretical framework for this study. Additionally, this chapter includes a Biblical foundation on the importance of the research study with references to Scripture to explore each construct from a biblical perspective.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

Therapist turnover has been an ongoing issue in behavioral health counseling and addictions counseling for over 20 years. In 2001, research was already being conducted on retention and turnover among mental health providers where, at that time, turnover ranged from 30-60% annually (Mor Barak et al., 2001). According to Brabson et al. (2020), there has been an increased demand for mental health and addictions services that may continue to intensify.

Researchers predicted that the mental health effects related to stress, isolation and economic strain would cause an increase in deaths due to suicide and substance abuse as a result of the coronavirus (Fish & Mittal, 2020). In 2020, deaths associated with alcohol, drugs, and suicide claimed the lives of 186,763 Americans, showing a 20 % 1-year increase in the combined death rate and the highest number of substance abuse deaths ever recorded for a single year (TFAH, 2020). Furthermore, interim data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show drug overdose deaths continued to rise 15% in 2021 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2022). The increased need for mental health and addictions therapists will strain an already burdened mental health care system, while also challenging therapists to bear the primary responsibility of adapting to this increase in demand. This identified need, coupled with turnover and turnover intention among behavioral health and addictions therapists signifies that it has become crucial for organizations to focus on the development and implementation of interventions, which may include systemic changes, to improve staff retention.

The effects of turnover and turnover intention have been found to be a hindrance for not only organizations, but for employees and clients as well (Murphy, 2022). This literature review intends to explore current research on turnover intention, particularly among addictions

therapists and behavioral health therapists, and its relationship to several defined variables. The variables identified for this study include pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. Additionally, the importance of ongoing research regarding turnover intention and predicting variables is stressed. This literature review will review several turnover intention theories and identify why they were not chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. Also, the turnover intention theory that provides the theoretical framework for this study will be identified and reviewed.

In this Chapter, a Biblical foundation for the importance of the research study will be provided. In addition, each construct will be explored with references to Scripture from a biblical perspective as witnessed in Bible narratives. The articles used for this literature review were reviewed with a specific search strategy described next.

### **Description of Search Strategy**

Literature searches were conducted throughout 2021 and 2022 using the Jerry Falwell Library search engine, accessed via the Liberty University website. The Jerry Falwell Library includes the following databases: APA (American Psychological Association) PsycNET, EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest Central, SAGE and ScienceDirect. Additionally, Google Scholar was used for additional research studies not available via Liberty University databases. Search terms included the following: addiction therapists and turnover intention, addictions and mental health therapists and turnover intention, turnover and turnover intention, therapists and pay satisfaction, pay satisfaction and turnover intention, variables affecting turnover intention and effects of pay satisfaction, addictions and mental health therapists and burnout, burnout, turnover intention, substance use therapists and burnout, mental health professionals and burnout, burnout and workload on turnover intention, mental health therapists, workload, workload and turnover

intention, workload and mental health therapists, workload and addictions therapists, workload and substance abuse therapists, flexible work, flexible work arrangements, flexible work arrangements and mental health and substance use counselors, and mental health therapists. Searches were limited to English language research conducted within the past 5 years and consisted of scholarly research and peer-reviewed journal articles. Approximately 350 articles and abstracts were reviewed. All research articles were included in this literature review based on their relevance to supporting data.

Biblical research was conducted through Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Biblical research was additionally conducted through word study. The database for the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible was utilized for direct Scriptural quotes.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Turnover Intention**

According to Lazzari et al. (2020), turnover intention can be defined as an employee's intention to voluntarily resign from their current position or company, while turnover itself can be defined as the rate at which employees leave their position or employer and are replaced. Turnover intention may also refer to an employee's involuntary turnover intention. Involuntary turnover intention refers to incidents where the organization in question plans to remove an employee from a position, causing the turnover. Involuntary turnover may occur when an organization is dissatisfied with an employee's job performance and chooses to fire him. It may also occur in instances of downsizing or restructuring of an organization.

Research suggests that turnover intention may be the greatest predictor of actual turnover (Lazzari et al., 2022; Fukui et al., 2019; Namin et al., 2021). One 2019 study among mental health providers found that turnover intention may be influenced by various job stressors, like

burnout or workload (Fukui et al., 2019). Furthermore, several other contributing variables have been identified as being correlated with turnover intention, variables that include not only burnout and workload, but also pay, and more recently, flexible work arrangements. Research has found that pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements are negatively correlated to turnover intention (Young, 2022; Ghaffari et al., 2017; Tsen, 2020; Young, 2022), while increased workload and burnout have been found to be positively correlated to turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Murphy & Kruis, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021).

There are many challenges related to turnover intention and turnover (Rumawas, 2022). These challenges affect not only the employers but also patients, customers, fellow employees, and even other organizations. For employers, there are significant costs related to turnover. These costs may include recruitment, training, and lost productivity. Estimates place the cost to employers between 30% and 150% of the employee's annual salary (Thibault-Landry et al., 2017). According to Butali et al. (2014), turnover may affect correspondence, interactions, or the ability to maintain a relationship, particularly if the staff member they were communicating with is no longer there. Research data also suggests that an elevated level of employee turnover is closely related to a low level of organizational productivity and organizational performance (Namin et al., 2022).

According to Leider et al. (2021), who conducted a study of governmental public health employees, 20% were planning to leave, with another 30% planning to retire. According to that study, retention of the existing employees was imperative. With mental health and addictions therapists, Brabson et al. (2020) found that turnover may fluctuate based on a variety of factors. According to their research, the industry average for turnover among mental health and addictions therapists is 30% annually, which is far greater than other industries in which turnover

is considered problematic, including physicians at 7%, and teachers at 8%. Previous research has suggested that some mental health agencies may even experience 100% turnover in a 4-year period (Beidas et al. 2016).

There are few studies that examine the consequences of behavioral health clinicians' turnover and patient outcomes, but some research has found that patient care among mental health and addictions therapists is negatively affected by turnover intention (Brabson et al., 2020; Scanlan & Still, 2019). For patients, increased therapist turnover has been associated with both lower quality of care and poorer treatment results (Russell et al., 2020; Young, 2022). Moreover, research has found that clients, particularly those in substance abuse or addictions treatment, will do better and stay in treatment longer if they can continue working with the same therapist (Murphy, 2022; Chen et al., 2020). One research study, examining high clinician turnover in community behavioral health settings, had 328 participants complete measures for depression and anxiety and mental and physical health functioning. The results of that study found that therapist turnover was most strongly associated with a decline in higher functioning in older clients, but it was not consistently correlated to worsening clinical outcomes for clients (Johnson-Kwochka et al., 2020). According to Johnson-Kwochka et al. (2020), therapist turnover was not only strongly associated with decline in higher functioning for older clients but was also associated with clinical decline for clients who had low to moderate anxiety. Unexpectedly, however, therapist turnover was found to be associated with increased mental health functioning for clients who at their baseline had an exceptionally low level of mental health functioning (Johnson-Kwochka et al., 2020). This disparity may be due to therapeutic rapport or other extraneous circumstances, but it indicates the need for further research on therapist turnover and client outcomes.

According to Xiong and Wen (2020), turnover intention has been found to negatively affect the employees who remain with the organization. Their research suggests that turnover intention is related not only to poorer work performance and absenteeism but has also been found to cause employees to be less committed to their work. De Simone et al. (2018) found that reduced commitment to one's work may negatively impact their productivity or outcomes. When this phenomenon occurs, these employees become a liability to their organizations (Xiong & Wen, 2020). Additionally, turnover intention has also been found to decrease workplace morale and productivity (Lazzari et al., 2022). Moreover, dissatisfied workers unable to leave their organizations may exhibit counterproductive workplace behaviors (Yean et al., 2022). Counterproductive workplace behaviors may not only include absenteeism or tardiness but may also include misuse of organizational resources (Yean et al., 2022). Exploring the factors that affect turnover intention will assist in an organization's ability to retain workers, thereby reducing the negative effects of turnover intention and turnover. [OBJ]

### **Turnover Intention Theories**

In 1958, March and Simon introduced the first formal theory of what was then described as voluntary fluctuation. March and Simon's model is (Govindaraju, 2018). They suggested individuals take an interest in an organization if the incentives received match or exceed employee efforts. According to this theory, perceived appeal and ease of development were two crucial factors that impacted worker turnover, (Govindaraju, 2018). This period, known as the foundation model period, lasted until 1970, (Smokrović et al., 2022). Several models were then introduced in the 1990s, and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century was marked by the conception of new constructs and meta-analyses (Smokrović et al., 2022). There were eight current turnover



intention theories reviewed to determine the theoretical framework for this study before the equity theory was chosen.

### *Equity Theory of Motivation*

Equity theory of motivation was developed by Adams in 1963. According to Ngo-Henha (2017), Adams was an American behavioral and workplace psychologist who developed his theory on the premise that employees are motivated when they believe they are receiving fair recompense for their work. In other words, their inputs are comparable to their outputs. Regarding turnover intention, if an employee perceives that their work efforts are not fairly rewarded, they may consider ending their employment. There are three components of Adams' equity theory, inputs, outputs, and comparisons. According to the equity theory of motivation, the employee provides inputs, or contributions, to receive a reward. Inputs may include time commitments, job responsibilities, organizational loyalty, or enthusiasm for one's work. Outputs are the compensation the individual receives as a result. Outputs can include salary, job security, flexible work arrangements, healthcare, and vacation time. There may also be fewer tangible outputs like praise or emotional support. According to the results of a study conducted by Huffman et al. (2021), if an individual perceives an unfair distribution of justice, then there is a perceived disparity favoring the organization at the expense of the employee. Subsequently, the employee will look for a way to reduce feelings of inequity; and according to this research study, the result is turnover intention.

The equity theory of motivation was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study on turnover intention because the theory suggests that employees consider the fairness of their treatment relative to their perception of their worth, as well as identifying specific factors that may contribute to perceptions of inequity, such as pay satisfaction, flexible work arrangements,

workload, and burnout. In terms of pay satisfaction or flexible work arrangements, therapists may be demotivated if they feel the compensation or benefits are not comparable to others with similar educational requirements and experience in different organizations. Additionally, perceptions of burnout or workload may increase feelings of inequity when compared to others in the field, for example, a non-profit organization versus a private practice organization.

### ***Contrasting Theories***

#### **Theory of Organizational Equilibrium.**

According to theory of organizational equilibrium, people are the most valuable resource of an organization (Govindaraju, 2018). Also, one of the most significant roles of management is to motivate employees to continue to make contributions. Ngo-Henha (2017) stated that there are seven tenets of this theory. The first is that an organization consists of a system of interrelated social behaviors of participants. Second, each participant receives incentives from the organization for which the participant makes contributions. Third, participants will continue working if their perception is that the incentives are higher than contributions. The fourth is that the contributions from all the participants provide the resources needed for the organization to produce the incentives. Fifth is that an organization is solvent only if the contributions are adequate to provide the incentives necessary to sustain contributions. Sixth, job satisfaction depends on an employee's compatibility with their role at work. The final tenet is that the predictability of their relationships at work is congruent with their job and self-image.

According to Bryce et al. (2021), individuals choose professions like counseling and therapy due to traits developed through adversity, individual characteristics, and experiential motivations, with a focus on human behavior and mental processes rather than organizational equilibrium. Furthermore, mental health and addictions therapists work in various settings,

including outpatient clinics, private practices, and academic institutions, where the organization's goals or dynamics may differ. For this reason, this theory was not chosen as the theoretical framework for my study.

### **Social Exchange Theory.**

Social exchange theory was developed by Homans (1958). According to Homans (1958), behaviors are the result of cost-benefit analyses by people attempting to interact with society and the environment. In other words, if employees are content with their work and are having their needs met, this will result in positive work outcomes. According to this theory, employees choose their commitment level at work based on perceived support from their employer and an individual's behavior results from the costs and benefits associated with their current job. According to Shah et al. (2022), employees may form their intentions to stay at the workplace or leave the workplace dependent upon the weighting of the costs and benefits, therefore, when benefits outweigh the costs, employees may stay at their workplace; when costs are higher than the benefits, they may form their intentions to leave their workplace.

The social exchange theory was not chosen as the theoretical framework for this study due to its primary focus on the exchange of resources between individuals. Mental health and addictions therapy involves interpersonal dynamics and emotional processes that extend beyond resource exchange. Additionally, with social exchange theory, there are types of relationships other than social and economic that are not explored (Ahmad et al., 2023).

### **Job Embeddedness Theory.**

In 2001, job embeddedness theory was introduced to improve traditional employee turnover models (Darabi, & Holtom, 2018). Mitchell et al. (2001) theorized that when an employee is more embedded within their organization, they are less likely to quit. According to

this theory, job embeddedness explores three components of the employee-organization relationship. Those components are links, fit, and sacrifice. Links refer to formal or informal connections between a person and their organization. Fit signifies the employee's perception of compatibility or comfort within the organization. The final component, sacrifice, denotes the perceived costs of tangible and intangible benefits that employees would lose if they quit an organization.

According to Darabi and Holtom (2018), job embeddedness predicts whether an employee will stay in an organization, as well as other positive work outcomes. Furthermore, they have found that those who are more embedded are less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. The work of mental health and addictions therapists often focuses more on therapeutic interactions rather than organizational fit or organizational commitment. Additionally, much of the research on job embeddedness theory has been conducted in industries like business, retail stores and financial institutions, rather than the field of mental health (Shah et al., 2020).

### **Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory.**

Herzberg's two-factor theory, also known as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, denotes that there are two types of motivating factors for employees, motivation, and hygiene (Miner & Herzberg, 2005). In this theory, Alrawahi et al. (2020), motivators are the main drivers of job satisfaction and include achievements, recognition, and work advancement. Alternatively, hygiene factors, or dissatisfiers, are the main causes of job dissatisfaction and include factors such as working conditions, salaries, relationships with colleagues, and supervision. According to Miner & Herzberg (2005), motivators yield positive satisfaction, motivate the employees for a superior performance and may increase employee retention. One empirical examination of this

theory found that that motivation factors and hygiene factors were of key importance when it came to perceived employee job satisfaction, motivation, increased wellbeing and positivity, and employee turnover (Mitsakis & Galanakis, 2022). However, according to Chiat & Panatik (2019), research studies on Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation have not adequately determined which factor, hygiene or motivator is more important in reducing employees' turnover intentions. For this reason, this theory was not chosen as the theoretical framework for this research study.

### **Resource-Based View.**

The resource-based view was originally proposed by Wernerfelt in 1984 but was refined by others, including Barney (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). According to Barney et al. (2021), the resource-based view of an organization has found some support in business literature; however, some suggest that the theory terms are too ambiguous. This theory states that an organization will have an advantage over its competitors when their resources are rare, valuable, and costly to imitate (D'oria et al., 2021).

According to Ngo-Henha (2017), the resource-based theory, considered a major employee retention theory, purports that the more valued an employee feels by the organization or its clients, the more positive they will feel about their position, and their organization. Due to variations in employee-based resources in the mental health field and opinions that suggests that employee-based resources may only lead to a competitive advantage when they are a fit with other organizational capabilities (Collins, 2020), this theory was not chosen for the theoretical framework for this study.

### **The Human Capital Theory.**

According to Becker (1964), human capital consists of the knowledge and skills acquired

through education, on-the-job training, and experience. Per the human capital theory, education, development, and training have a positive impact not only on wages, but on the production capacity of employees. Therefore, education, work, productivity, and earnings exist along a linear continuum (Marginson, 2017). According to Chang et al. (2018) human capital is positively related to professional commitment, and professional commitment is negatively related to turnover intention. Additionally, on and off the job training, job tenure, and education were also negatively correlated with turnover intention (Ju & Li, 2019). Additionally, Manthi et al. (2018) found that career development among tutors in teachers' college, and turnover intention had a negative but significant relationship.

Turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists is often driven by factors other than education or training, such as burnout or workplace stress. These factors may not be adequately explained by the human capital theory; therefore, it was not appropriate as the theoretical framework for this study.

### **Expectancy Theory.**

The final turnover intention theory to be explored is the expectancy theory. According to the expectancy theory, developed by Vroom in 1964, individuals have expectations, and if those expectations are not met, this will lead to dissatisfaction (Kamau et al., 2021). Additionally, Vroom's theory of motivation suggests that there is a link between effort and reward. Ngo-Henha (2017) posits that based on this theory, management should make efforts to evaluate and meet the employee expectations to retain employees and control turnover intention. In other words, the expectancy theory proposes that employees are motivated by the belief that their effort will be rewarded. In mental health, turnover intention may be influenced by factors beyond motivation and reward, such as burnout (Adams et al., 2019; Young, 2022). Therefore, the

expectancy theory would not be appropriate for this research study on turnover intention among mental health and addictions counselors.

One commonality throughout these turnover intention theories is the premise of reciprocity. Turnover intention is reduced by offering something of adequate value in return for the employees' loyalty and labor, whether it be in the form of monetary compensation, recognition, autonomy, fulfillment, emotional attachment, training and development or a sense of equitable fairness. However, based on the aforementioned reasoning, the equity theory of motivation is the best choice for the theoretical framework for this research study.

### **Mental Health and Addictions Therapists**

Mental health counselors perform many duties. They not only assess and treat mental and emotional health disorders, but they often provide therapy for relationship issues and other life challenges. Through various methods of psychotherapy, therapists work with patients to build therapeutic rapport, develop coping skills, make behavioral changes, manage emotions, and reach treatment goals. Therapists are required to demonstrate empathy, compassion, and patience for their clients, while maintaining boundaries consistently from one client to another (Posluns & Gall, 2020).

According to Barnett et al. (2007), therapists may experience stressors related to the substantial emotional demands associated with clients. Some occupational stressors that therapists may experience could include client lack of improvement, client relapse, suicide attempts or suicides, aggressive behaviors, or violence, as well as the administrative demands required of therapists like paperwork, continuing education, malpractice complaints and licensing. Mental health therapists treat clients with an array of varying diagnoses ranging from anxiety and depression to relationship issues or even more severe and persistent mental illnesses

like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Most counselors will also be exposed to clients' traumatic experiences in their professional work, and research suggests that counselors may experience secondary traumatic stress as the result of this exposure (Ivicic & Motta, 2017). One small study found that that 22.7% of mental health professionals in the United States experienced secondary or vicarious trauma (Ivicic & Motta 2017), but there is limited research on this subject. Secondary trauma (secondary traumatic stress), according to the American Counseling Association (2010), is the emotional residue that results from a therapist repeatedly hearing narratives or graphic descriptions about traumatic incidents. Vicarious trauma, or secondary traumatic stress has been described as a consequence of working with trauma-affected clients. According to Branson (2019), working with trauma-affected clients is accumulative, and over time has the potential to create lasting changes to the clinician's worldview that can manifest professionally and personally. The changes may include the therapist's ego, memory, ability to stay grounded, and frame of reference about themselves, others, and the world.

In the past, clients with severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia and co-occurring substance use disorders traditionally received treatments for their co-occurring disorders from two different therapists. Research has found that individuals with mental health disorders are more at risk for developing addictions disorders than those in the general population (Kim et al., 2020). According to recent research, almost 75% of adults with substance use disorders in 2015 through 2017 had co-occurring mental health disorders (Jones & McCance-Katz, 2019).

In the 1980s, integrated treatments were developed that combined substance abuse and mental health interventions in one clinical program (Drake et al., 1988). The development of integrated treatment models led to one therapist providing substance abuse treatment and mental



health therapy simultaneously. Due to these new treatment modalities, one therapist is usually required to treat clients with multiple complex issues. Current research suggests that this added burden on therapists who are working with complex or difficult clients also increases their risk of compassion fatigue, burnout, or job dissatisfaction (Yang & Hayes, 2020), all of which have been linked to turnover intention.

### **Pay Satisfaction**

Pay satisfaction can be described as the amount of negative or positive feelings individuals have toward their pay (Miceli & Lane, 1991). Pay satisfaction, for many, includes benefits like medical insurance, paid holidays, and vacation time, as well as monetary compensation in the form of pay or bonuses. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with pay is influenced by the incongruity between what employees believe they should receive based on what they believe they contribute to the organization, and what they receive in the form compensation (Sereqi, 2020; Jakel, 2019). Over the last few decades, pay satisfaction has become one of the most studied variables in relation to turnover intention. Satisfaction with pay has not only been linked to turnover intention, but also with improved job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and has even been found to have a positive and significant association with individual work performance (Coudounaris et al., 2020). In the 1960s, the first systematic study on pay satisfaction was conducted, the researchers at that time asserted that ensuring employee satisfaction required understanding all the factors that determined pay satisfaction (Coudounaris et al., 2020). Additionally, research has indicated that employers who offer competitive salaries are more likely to retain their employees (Young, 2022; Ghaffari et al., 2017).

In the United States, mental health therapists are not highly paid. This is despite the higher levels of education required for licensure. One recent American study found that

therapists in their sample had greater financial distress than two-thirds of the U.S. population (Adams et al., 2019), and that, in one year, 41% of therapists reported leaving their employers for inadequate pay (Beidas et al., 2016; Adams et al., 2019). A recent report by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Boards Behavioral Health Workforce Advisory Committee in Washington state found that high student debt combined with low wages were driving shortages and turnover among behavioral health workers (Yorke-Payne, 2023). The significance of pay to most employees makes it imperative for organizations to analyze the attitudes and behaviors of employees towards pay. This will enable organizations to establish not only the right policies, but also to implement pay structures to perform more effectively (Serreghi, 2020).

### ***Pay Satisfaction and Turnover Intention***

Several studies have been conducted recently to explore the correlation between pay satisfaction and turnover intention. A portion of this research has been conducted on pay satisfaction and turnover among mental health and addictions therapists. Among mental health and addictions therapists, this research has shown that inadequate pay may increase turnover intention (Adams et al., 2019; Young, 2022; McEntee, 2020).

Courdounaris et al. (2020) found that for nurses, pay satisfaction was significantly and negatively related to turnover intention, while a survey study conducted in a hospital in West Jakarta found that the higher the compensation, the lower the turnover intention, and alternately, the lower the compensation the higher the turnover intention (Silaban et al., 2018). In Ghana, a survey study among nurses found that pay structure was significantly and negatively related to turn over intention, and the influence of pay level, pay raises, and pay structure had positive and statistically significant impacts on nurses' job satisfaction (Coudounaris et al., 2020). According to several research studies, pay satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention (Siregar &

Maryati, 2021; Bhatt & Sharma, 2019). In other words, the less satisfied workers were with pay, the higher the likelihood was that they would quit.

Research has shown that pay satisfaction affects turnover intention in many fields, and in many countries. House et al., (2022) conducted a study that explored turnover intention among military physicians. Their research found that military physicians reported higher turnover intention than military nurses. Despite the efforts made to retain nurses in military treatment facilities and hospitals, there have been less efforts employed to retain physicians. Military physicians make substantially less than their civilian counterparts, which may affect retention (House et al., 2022). Primary care physicians in rural China also grapple with high turnover intention (Wang et al., 2020). These rural physicians reported challenges in financial compensation that they reported to be demotivating, and, despite a recent pay raise for rural Chinese doctors, the salary gap has widened over the past decade between them and healthcare professionals working in primary healthcare facilities and public hospitals (Wang et al., 2020).

Similar research on pay satisfaction and turnover continues to be conducted in other professions, and in various areas. In China, the high turnover rate among social workers has become a serious challenge, and while most attribute the high turnover rate to low pay or heavy workload, one study found unfairness perceived to be coming from managers caused social workers to question the meaning and value of their work (Wang et al., 2021). Their research study found that while pay was a factor, feelings of perceived inequity had a greater influence on social workers' intentions to leave.

Pay satisfaction and turnover intention is not limited to the amount of compensation an employee receives in wages and benefits but is also impacted by pay equity. A recent study on minority public health personnel found that pay equity may reduce turnover intention (Mitchell

et al., 2022). Pay equity can be defined as the concept of compensating employees who have similar job functions with comparably equal pay. According to some research, if employees believe that their salary is fair, their intention to find a new job is low (Hwang & Yi, 2021; Coudounaris et al, 2020). Pay equity may quickly become a more influential variable related to turnover intention due to current shifts toward pay transparency. One research study among teachers dealing with pay inequity, found that salary satisfaction plays a mediating role between various dimensions of organizational justice and turnover intention, indicating that procedural fairness, interaction fairness, and distributional justice not only have a direct impact on turnover intention, but also indirectly affect turnover intention by affecting salary satisfaction (Zhou & Ma, 2022).

### **Burnout**

Burnout is a phenomenon of psychological exhaustion, leading to extreme mental and physical fatigue, caused by work. It often manifests as emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, reduced sense of personal accomplishment, and disproportionate psychological energy consumption, particularly for those who work in service of others (Song et al., 2020). The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) has classified burnout as an occupational phenomenon, and the World Health Organization defines burnout as having three main characteristics: feelings of exhaustion, increased mental distance from work (or work-related negative emotions), and reduced professional performance (Song et al. 2020).

The term burnout was first used by author Graham Green in his 1960 novel, “A Burnt-Out Case,” that told the story of a man who had found neither meaning in his profession or pleasure in his life. The term burnt-out case, in the novel, referred to a leper, who had lost both fingers and toes but was on the road to recovery. This term was later picked up by

Freudenberger, where it was introduced into psychology. Freudenberger (1974) described burnout as a state of exhaustion and frustration due to a professional activity, or work, which fails to produce the expected results. In 1976, Maslach introduced burnout into scientific literature and defined it as a gradual process of fatigue, cynicism, and reduced commitment. Following years of studies, Maslach and Jackson redeveloped the concept and expanded the operational definition of burnout as a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1997). Burnout is a challenge many therapists will face at some point in their careers, and burnout prevalence rates are estimated to be from 21% to 67% (Johnson et al., 2020). Some causes of burnout have been identified as workload, adequacy of pay and work flexibility (Yang & Hayes, 2020; Scanlan & Still, 2019; Ershad et al., 2020). Additionally, burnout has been associated with physical exhaustion, headaches, weight loss and other physiological symptoms (Singh et al., 2020; Beitel et al., 2017; Carrola et al., 2022; Demerouti et al., 2021) but it is usually characterized by emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, poor engagement, and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Yang & Hayes, 2020; Skinner & Roche, 2021). Some research suggests that burnout may happen in stages of progressive deterioration in the levels of worker commitment to their job and may evolve to enthusiasm to apathy (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022).

Mental health and addictions therapists may be particularly prone to burnout. One study found that for addictions therapists in an opioid treatment program found that 26% of participants of their study reported burnout (Beitel et al., 2018). In their study, counselors described their burnout symptoms including cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological symptoms, with job-related demands as the cause. Beitel et al. (2018) asserted that addictions

counselors who work in opioid treatment programs were at an increased risk of burnout. According to Filteau et al., (2020), addictions therapists and counselors are expected to provide personal support and availability to those in recovery. For the patient, the addictions therapist's personal availability constituted quality care. For the staff, however, it was identified as a contributor to stress and burnout. This was reported to be exasperated when therapists and counselors were expected to cover for vacant roles during staffing shortages (Filteau et al., 2020).

Meredith et al. (2019) asserts that those who experience burnout can negatively affect their coworkers, and that burnout can perpetuate, and be almost contagious, through social interactions with others. Burnout has also been linked to lower productivity and impaired quality of work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). According to Beitel et al., (2018), addictions therapists who participated in their study on burnout purported that both self-initiated (i.e., engaging in enjoyable activities, exercising, taking breaks during the workday) and employer-supported strategies (e.g., paid time off, flexible work arrangements) could be utilized to manage or prevent burnout.

The consequences of burnout have been the subject of a plethora of research studies. O'Conner et al. (2018), conducted a systematic review of sixty-two studies published between 1997-2017 intended to estimate the level of burnout in mental health professionals and to identify specific causes of burnout for this population. The results of this review found that the average mental health professional has elevated levels of emotional exhaustion, moderate levels of depersonalization but retains reasonable levels of personal accomplishment. Increasing age was found to be associated with an increased risk of depersonalization but also a heightened sense of personal accomplishment. Work-related factors such as workload and relationships at

work, were found to be causes for burnout, while role clarity, a sense of being fairly treated by the organization, a sense of professional autonomy, and access to consistent clinical supervision appeared to be protective factors against burnout. Additionally, staff working in community mental health teams appeared to be more vulnerable to burnout than those working in some specialist community teams.

The effects of burnout are not limited to emotional and physical difficulties for the therapists, burnout has also been shown to have a negative effect on patient care. One review of research studies of mental health professionals found that two consequences of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization of clients, were related to practitioner over-involvement with clients and clients engaging in negative behaviors (Posluns & Gall, 2020). It was also found that burnout can reduce the level of care provided by the practitioner (Posluns & Gall, 2020).

Burnout has been found to cause both mental and physical health problems, including depression, insomnia, anxiety, headaches, and overall distress (O’Conner et al, 2018; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Burnout has also been found to be detrimental to both familial and societal relationships (Khoshkar et al., 2020). Results from burnout research have found a negative association between burnout and romantic relationship satisfaction (Khoshkar et al., 2020). Finally, it has been shown that burnout can produce dysfunctional outcomes such as a lower organizational commitment, higher absenteeism, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover intention (Wang et al., 2020; Scanlan & Still, 2019).

### ***Burnout and Turnover Intention***

While the cause of burnout is not limited to the emotional demands of mental health and addictions counseling, research has found that job stress may lead to burnout and turnover

intention among mental health professionals (Bukochua & Javakhishvili, 2021; Hosain & Hossain, 2019; Atef et al., 2017; Gabriel & Aguinis, 2021). The factors indicative of burnout, like reduced sense of accomplishment, emotional exhaustion and poor engagement have all been found to be positively correlated with turnover intention (Yang & Hayes, 2020), and some research has identified burnout as the strongest predictor of turnover intention (Murphy & Kruis, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021). Current data suggests that the annual turnover rate for clinical staff ranges from 25% to 50% in mental health agencies and 19% to 33% in substance use disorder agencies (Hutchison et al., 2021).

A study conducted in 2020, found a significant direct effect of burnout on turnover intention ( $\gamma = 0.28$ ), and a significant indirect effect ( $\gamma = -0.14$ ) of job satisfaction on turnover intention through burnout as a mediator (Wang et al., 2020). Wang et al. (2019) found that job burnout was a strong predictor of turnover intention among geriatric nurses employed in nursing homes.

In an effort to reduce burnout, thereby reducing the possibility of turnover and turnover intention, research has identified several protective factors against burnout that include role clarity, a sense of professional autonomy, a sense of being fairly treated, and access to regular clinical supervision (O'Connor et al., 2018). Murphy & Kruis (2022) conducted an anonymous survey of 206 rural Pennsylvania addictions therapists that sought to examine the relationship between workload, workplace environment, and emotional exhaustion on turnover intention. Their results found that higher levels of emotional exhaustion, or burnout, were related to a greater intention to quit (Murphy & Kruis, 2022).

### **Workload**

Workload, for mental health and addictions therapists, usually refers to caseload, or the



number of clients seen we week. Workload may also include required documentation, including administrative tasks like treatment plans or progress notes. Since the pandemic, there has been an increase in the need for mental health and addictions counseling, often causing increased workloads for therapists (Bailey et al., 2021; Brabson et al., 2020). One multilevel model study revealed that therapists' weekly work hours and caseloads were significantly associated with increased emotional exhaustion, with larger caseloads indicating a heavier workload (Kim et al., 2018). Increased workloads may be the result of issues like understaffing, labor shortages or frequent turnover.

One study of mental health professionals, who were supporting front line workers during Covid-19, found that increased workloads and the additional responsibilities that those increased workloads entailed, precipitated neglect of their own physical health and emotional wellbeing (Billings et al., 2021).

Heavier workloads have been linked to poorer outcomes for patients (Bailey et al., 2021; Delgadillo et al., 2018). In addition, excessive workloads may require working overtime hours or impose unrealistic time pressures upon employees, both of which have been linked to emotional exhaustion (Hammond et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Brabson et al., 2020). Additional research has found that workload is not only positively correlated with emotional exhaustion but also positively correlated with decreased feelings of accomplishment (Hammond et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Brabson et al., 2020). Furthermore, excessive workloads have been linked to higher job stress, mental exhaustion, and turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Azharudeen & Arulrajah, 2018; Luther et al., 2017). One study of Polish nurses found that excessive work is only sustainable for a short term, and in the long term would be detrimental to hospitals and quality of

care (Kowalczyk et al., 2020).

Some current research suggests that workload may be subjective. For example, if an employee believes their workload is more or less than their colleagues it may affect their perception of the fairness of the distribution of duties. For mental health therapists, this may mean seeing several more clients than other therapists within the same organization. According to Inegbedion et al. (2020), employee perception of workload balance influences job satisfaction, suggesting that employee perception of workload is critical to organizational productivity and may be related to turnover or turnover intention. This would indicate a need to prioritize equitable job designs and workload management to minimize the discrepancies between normal, low, and high workloads.

### ***Workload and Turnover Intention***

While some research has found workload does not significantly influence turnover intention (Wibowo et al., 2021), other available research on workloads and turnover intention has found that larger workloads may be positively correlated with turnover intention, and having a reasonable workload has a strong negative association with burnout (Zivin et al., 2022). Excessive workloads have been found to hinder an employee's ability to meet job demands and cause emotional exhaustion (Hammond et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Brabson et al., 2020). Additionally, excessive workloads have been linked to turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Azharudeen & Arulrajah, 2018; Luther et al., 2017). One research study, conducted in Indonesia, found that overtime, job stress, and workload significantly positively affected turnover intention (Junaidi et al., 2020). These results are supported by newer research in higher education. One recent research study found that job stress and workload have a positive effect on turnover intention, but that job satisfaction may mediate the relationship between workload and turnover

intention (Anees et al., 2021).

### **Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements or flexible work arrangements can include remote work, or working from home or another location, taking time off when needed, or the flexibility to make one's own schedule. The two most common examples of flexible work arrangements are flextime, which allows employees to determine their work's start and finish times and flexplace, which allows employees to work remotely (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Ray & Pana-Cryan (2021) conducted a study that utilized 2002–2018 General Social Survey Quality of Work life (GSS-QWL) data to assess reported job stress, job satisfaction, healthy days, and days with activity limitations among workers reporting work flexibility. They found that the ability to change one's schedule decreased the odds of job stress by 20% and increased the odds of job satisfaction by 62%. The results of this research found that the ability to take time off when needed decreased the reported job stress by 56%, and more than doubled the reported likelihood of job satisfaction. Alternately, this same research study found that remote work or working at home was associated with a 22% increase in job stress, possibly related to at home stressors, but a 65% increase in job satisfaction (Ray & Pana-Cryan, 2021). This data suggests a need for further research into flexible work arrangements and remote work.

While flexible work arrangements may not be new in some fields, they are new in the field of psychotherapy and addictions counseling. The COVID-19 pandemic required many therapists to work remotely due to stay-at-home orders and social distancing. Tsen, 2020; Shifrin & Michel, 2021), with research linking flexible work arrangements to better physical health and overall well-being for employees (Shifrin & Michel, 2019; Ray & Pana-Cyran, 2021; Mache, Servaty, & Harth, 2020;). One study found that there was a positive relationship between flexible

work arrangements and both employee engagement and employee well-being (Weideman & Hofmeyr 2020; Conradie & De Klerk, 2019). For their study, Weideman & Hofmeyr (2020), measured employee engagement as engaging cognitively, physically, and emotionally to one's job roles.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations were required to employ work at home policies. This offered more flexibility for employees by eliminating the time and money spent on travel. According to Ng et al. (2022), a long-term employment relationship is positively associated with organizations offering flexible work arrangements. In addition, offering employees work flexibility may influence employees' attitude towards work, reduce barriers between work and private life and enhance work-life balance.

### ***Flexible Work Arrangements and Turnover Intention***

Flexible work arrangements, particularly now that some workers have experienced remote and flexible work, has been found to influence turnover intention in recent research. Some studies have found that therapists who perceived their jobs as more independent, particularly when related to flexible work arrangements, had a lower turnover intention (Tsen, 2020; Young, 2022). Flexible work arrangements have also been positively correlated with job satisfaction (Chen & Fulmer, 2017), which is often indicated as a predictor of turnover intention (Ozcan et al., 2020). Furthermore, one recent study of federal workers has also found that government agencies that were more supportive of flexible work arrangements experienced less voluntary turnover (Choi, 2020).

While remote work or work from home has been touted as a good employee retention strategy, some research suggests that this may not be entirely true (Clark et al., 2017). In some studies, the relationship between the constructs of turnover intention and flexible work

arrangements has been found to vary in strength (Onken-Menke et al., 2018; Peretz, et al., 2018), while other research has found no relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention (Clark et al., 2017). This conflicting data suggests that more research is needed in exploring the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

### **Biblical Foundations of the Study**

Turnover intention may seem contrary to Scripture. The Bible encourages a good work ethic. According to Colossians 3:23-24 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001), “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” However, in instances where your job is making you unhappy or anxious, “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Proverbs 17:22). The Lord does not encourage staying in positions in which we are treated unfairly or worked to emotional exhaustion.

From a Biblical perspective, Colossians 4:1 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001) state: “Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” This scripture was written to address the issues in the church at that time but is a command to treat workers fairly. It was a reminder to the masters that they are subject to a Master as well, the Lord. This teaching is consistent with Luke 6:31 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001), “And as ye that men would do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” According to Scripture, Christian business leaders are advised: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Proverbs 3:27) and “to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than

sacrifice,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Proverbs 21:3).

“The laborer is worthy of his wages,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Luke 10:7).

The concept of fair pay for workers is noted in both the Old and New Testament. In

Deuteronomy 25:4 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001), “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing.” The idea behind leaving the ox unmuzzled while threshing or treading out the corn, allowed the ox to eat the grains that its labor had detached from the husks. This proscription was levied regarding the rights of animals employed in labor; the ox should be free to enjoy the fruits of its own labor, or the laborer is worthy of his rewards (or wages). Scripture also provides us with the following guidance: “You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns. You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the Lord, and you be guilty of sin,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Deuteronomy 24:14-15).

With regards to flexible work arrangements, Scripture promotes work life balance.

According to Proverbs 11:1 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001), “A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.” While this Scripture refers to dishonest business practices and businessmen anticipating the end of religious holidays so they can continue their work, it not only promotes balance, but also implies that we should not take advantage of others for our own benefit. Allowing workers flexible work arrangements allows employees more work life balance, with an opportunity to practice self-care and incorporate healthy habits into their day. Other Bible verses can be used to explore how Scripture views workload and burnout.

Excessive workloads have been found to contribute to both burnout and turnover

intention (Hammond et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Zivin et al., 2022). From a Bible perspective, Psalm 127:2 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001) states, “It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.” Scripture also asserts that the Lord observes our stewardship of those in our care and we will be held accountable for how people and resources are managed. According to Psalm 34:17 (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001), “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.”

“And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on its God rested from all his work that he had done in creation,” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Genesis 2:2–3). The Lord rested when his work was done, and Scripture does not condone working until we are burned out. One story from Scripture directly informs on not working to the point of emotional exhaustion, “When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?” And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.” Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who

fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So, it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace," (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Exodus 18:14–23). Scripture informs us that even after performing miracles, Jesus had to rest. "After dismissing the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone," (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Matthew 14:23).

Therapists in the mental health and addictions fields are serving the Lord and mankind by making their life's work about helping others. Placing unreasonable demands on mental health and addictions therapists through overwork and underpay, particularly for organizational profit, is not fair or just. Workload, burnout, and financial strain due to low wages, has been found to be related to turnover intention among therapists (Adams et al., 2019; Young, 2022), and therapists continue to be underpaid despite the amount of education and training required for this position. Additionally, if burnout results from extended effort in a high stress environment, Jesus provided guidance by stating "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light," (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, Matthew 11:28–30).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, turnover intention, and the variables that may affect turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists were discussed. Those variables included pay



satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements. Additionally, the negative effects of turnover intention on organizations, client care and employees were also reviewed. The literature review has investigated multiple peer-reviewed, scholarly research articles related to this research topic, most of which were published within the past five years. The results of this literature review indicate that most studies support the theory that turnover intention has several negative consequences, including but not limited to organizational costs, lower company morale and poorer outcomes for clients. Additionally, most research data suggested that pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements are negatively related to turnover intention, while burnout and workload are positively related to turnover intention. It has not been determined; however, which variable was the most significant. It is also important to note that some studies did not support these assertions.

Biblical references and scripture were utilized to explore the Biblical perspective on each variable, including turnover intention. From this perspective, employers should be tasked with providing fair pay, as well as providing organizational support for employee work life balance. According to scripture, it is also important for employers to discourage excessive workloads and actively work to prevent employee burnout. Next, Chapter 3 will detail the research method utilized for this study.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

### Overview

Current research shows that there may be a relationship between turnover intention and pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements among mental health and addictions therapists (Scanlan & Still, 2019; Sutrisno, 2020; Tsen et al., 2021). Due to the high turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists, as well as anticipated future shortages, there is a need to determine which of the variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements best predict turnover intention in this field. This study sought to quantitatively examine the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention. Chapter 3 consists of the proposed methodology including research questions, hypothesis, research design, study participants, instruments and measurements, operationalization of study variables, data analysis, assumptions, and limitations.

### Research Questions and Hypothesis

#### Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements and turnover intention?

#### Hypotheses

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

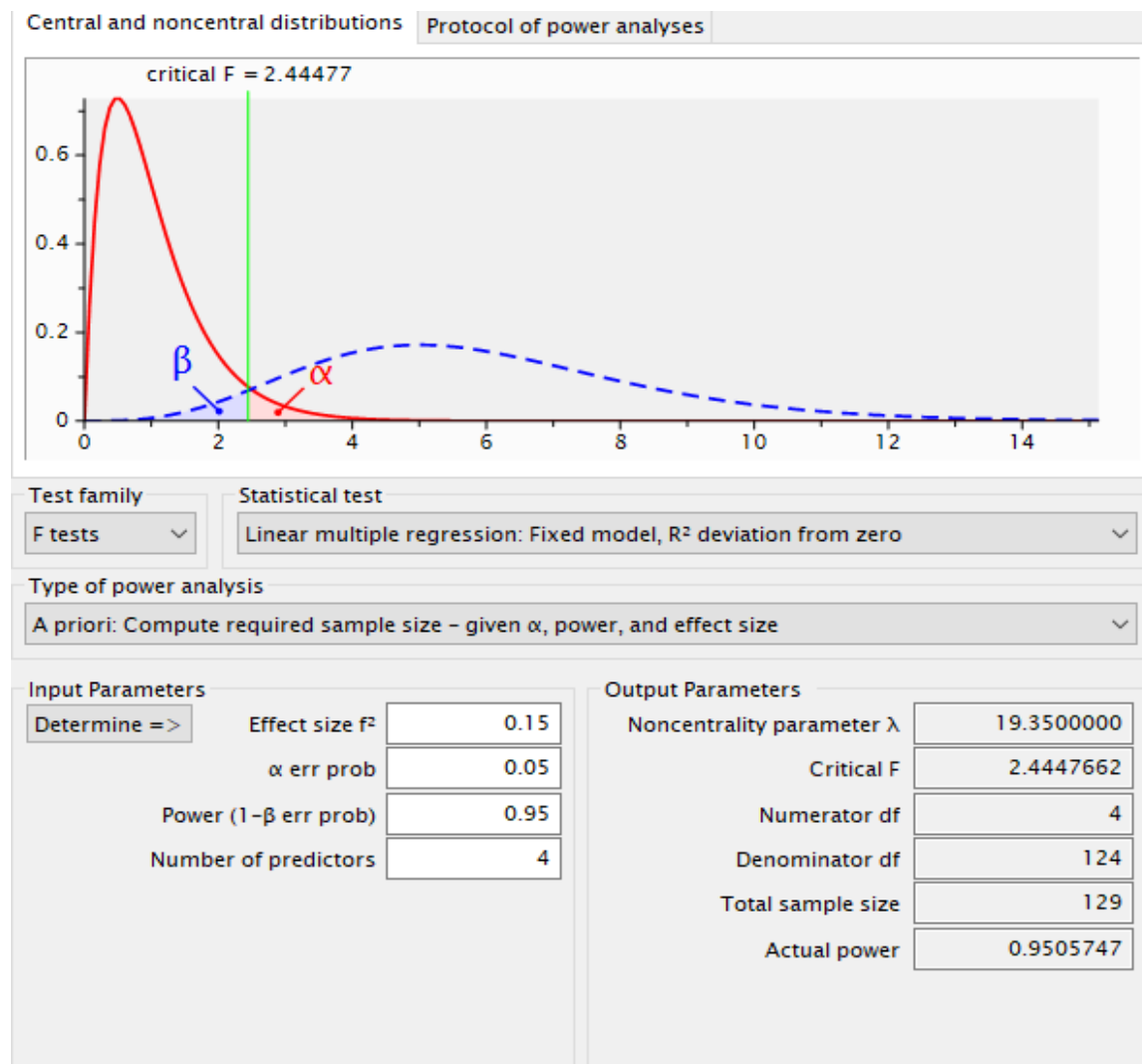
### **Research Design**

For this research study, a quantitative correlational research design was utilized.

Correlational research measures whether a relationship exists between variables, and data for this research may be collected through surveys or questionnaires. This non-experimental design is suitable when the research questions are exploratory in nature, intended to assess a statistical relationship between variables, and participants are not assigned to certain conditions (Price et al., 2017). This research study was conducted as a descriptive study that utilized a correlational research design to explore the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements and turnover intention on mental health and addictions therapists.

### **Participants**

Participants for the study were full-time, outpatient mental health therapists, and full-time addictions and substance abuse therapists. Therapists from various outpatient clinics were recruited via group emails and social media platforms. The participant sample size was determined using an a priori analysis for a medium effect size  $f^2 = 0.15$ , an alpha level of .05, a power of .95, with four predictor variables selected as input parameters. Based on these parameters, the G\*Power software (version 3.1.9.6) calculated that a minimum sample size of  $N = 129$  was indicated. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1***Statistical Power Analysis***Study Procedures**

Participants for this research study were recruited via email and social media by convenience sampling from various mental health and substance abuse outpatient clinics. The outpatient clinics included in the recruitment process included various private practice outpatient clinics, non-profit outpatient clinics, and government-agency outpatient clinics that were emailed the recruitment posting with a link to the survey. Participants were asked to complete anonymous, self-administered questionnaires via online survey. The first item in the survey was

the consent (see Appendix A), followed by the demographic data being collected. In the event the consent was not completed, the participant will not be given the survey to answer.

Demographic data collected for this research study was gender, age, and licensure status.

Surveys for this research study were hosted via SurveyMonkey and remained open for 8 weeks (about 2 months). SurveyMonkey is a survey tool that allows users to create, send, and analyze surveys. SurveyMonkey also allows researchers to email surveys to respondents and post them on their websites or social media platforms to increase response rate by increasing the number of participants with access to the survey. For this research study, the recruitment posting (see Appendix B), with a link to the survey, was posted on social media sites, including Facebook and reddit. Group emails were also sent to mental health and addictions therapists with publicly available email information. Following data collection, a multiple regression analysis using SPSS software version 28 was completed to determine correlations between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Initially, the survey was to remain open for four weeks, however due to not having enough participants to meet the sample size requirement, the announcement was reposted on social media sites and remained open for 4 additional weeks. Struminskaya & Gummer (2021) suggest keeping self-report surveys open for a shorter time rather than a longer time for several reasons. One of those reasons they noted was that timely collection of data offers better insight into current research questions about societal issues, like current turnover trends. Additionally, according to Goritz & Stieger (2009), subjects who participated in survey research later were less likely to complete their questionnaires.

### **Instrumentation and Measurement**

Questionnaires for this study were The Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) (see Appendix C), the Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI) (see Appendix D), workload and flexible

work arrangements data (defined as employee flexible work arrangements) (see Appendix E), and Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) (see Appendix F). Permissions were granted from the authors to use the PSQ (see Appendix G), the CBI (see Appendix H) and the TIS-6 (see Appendix I) and to publish them in the Appendix.

### **The Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ)**

Pay satisfaction was measured by the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) (Heneman & Schwab, 1985). This 18-item measure was developed to assess five dimensions of satisfaction with pay (level, benefits, raises, structure, and administration). Results on two heterogeneous samples of employees provided support for the multidimensional hypothesis, with the four scales of pay level, amount of last raise, benefits, and pay administration/structure indicating high internal consistency reliabilities (Heneman & Schwab, 1985). Regarding validity, confirmatory factor analyses of this measure by Judge (1993) and DeConinck et al. (1996) found that the items from the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire supported the model best used to measure pay satisfaction, and the coefficient alpha reliability estimate for the overall scale was .89. Consent was provided by the author to use the survey in this study.

### **Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI)**

Burnout was measured by the Counselor Burnout Inventory. This 20-item self-report measure is designed to measure burnout in professional counselors in five dimensions, exhaustion, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client, and deterioration in personal life. This inventory consists of 20 5-point Likert-type scale items with subscales for exhaustion, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client, and deterioration in personal life. Respondents rate items 1= never true, 2= rarely true, 3= sometimes true, 4= often

true and 5= always true. Scores for each of the subscales range from 4-20 with a total score range of 20-100.

Bardhoshi et al. (2019) reviewed multiple studies, including the original study conducted by Lee et al. (2007) and found that aggregated internal consistency was .90. Convergent validity of the CBI was established across 10 instruments, including the widely used Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The Counselor Burnout Inventory adds two domain-specific dimensions crucial in understanding counselors' overall experience of burnout: professional counselors' negative work environment and deterioration in counselors' personal lives. In developing the CBI, Lee et al. (2007) completed both an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Structural validity indicated an adequate to good fit. Consent was provided by the author to utilize the CBI in this research study.

### **Workload Per Week**

Workload data was measured by the average number of clients seen per week. Utilizing the average number of patients seen per week as a measure of workload for mental health and addictions therapists can be considered valid for numerous reasons. The number of clients or patients seen is a direct indication of the time required for the provider to assess and treat mental health conditions. Due to each client requiring a specific amount of time, the more clients seen is equal to more time and effort expended by the provider. According to a study conducted by Kim et al., (2018), workload was defined as the therapist report of their caseload (i.e., number of clients the therapist is providing services to, and hours worked per week. According to Carayon & Gurses (2008), the most commonly used unit-level workload measure for nurses is the nurse-patient ratio. Staff-to-patient ratio has been found to be closely related to job satisfaction and perceived stress (Daouda et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2019).

### **Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements were defined as whether participants are offered flexible work arrangements at their place of employment. One dichotomous question with the possibility of a “yes” or “no” answer was included in the demographic information: “Does your employer offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible scheduling?”

According to a review on flexible work arrangements, the concept of flexibility may become ambiguous and may be considered from either an organizational or employee perspective (Bal & Izak, 2020). According to Bal & Izak (2020), flexible work arrangements are organizational practices that allow employees to decide when and where work is conducted. For this research study, flexible work arrangements were limited to whether employees are afforded flexible work arrangements.

### **Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)**

Turnover intention was operationally defined as an employee’s intention or desire to voluntarily quit their job in an organization (Treglown et al., 2018). Turnover intention was measured by the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), a widely used turnover intention scale. The TIS-6 is a six-item, self-administered questionnaire that has been found to be reliable in assessing turnover intention and predicting actual turnover (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). According to a study conducted by Bothma and Roodt (2013), the TIS-6 measures turnover intentions reliably ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ), and significantly distinguishes between those who choose to stay with their employers and those who chose to leave, thus confirming its criterion-predictive validity. The TIS-6 also establishes statistically significant differences between those who choose to stay with their employers and those who chose to leave with respect to a number of the remaining theoretical variables used in the study, also confirming its differential validity. These



comparisons were conducted for the 4-month and 4-year periods after the survey. A five-point Likert scale was used to rate responses, and items are summed to score. The midpoint of the scale is 18. The scores below 18 indicate a desire to stay. If the scores are above 18, a desire to leave the organization is indicated. The minimum scores a participant can get is 6 and the maximum is 30, with higher scores indicating higher turnover intention. For this research study, consent was obtained to utilize the TIS-6.

### **Operationalization of Variables**

*Pay Satisfaction* was defined as the amount of negative or positive feelings individuals have toward their pay (Miceli & Lane, 1991).

*Burnout* was defined as exhaustion caused by excessive work-related demands on energy, strength, or resources, (Freudenberger, 1974).

*Workload* was defined as the amount of work assigned to a worker in a specified time period, (Inegbedion et al., 2020).

*Flexible Work Arrangements* was defined as policies which permit employees to vary when and where work is carried out (Maxwell et al., 2007).

*Turnover Intention* was defined as an employee's intention to voluntarily change jobs (Schyns et al., 2007).

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, a multiple regression analysis was completed to investigate the relationship between the independent variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements, and the dependent variable, turnover intention. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the measures of central tendency. The three most common measures of central tendency are the mean, median and mode. These were used to describe the average value

of the four independent variables and the dependent variable. A multiple regression analysis allows researchers to determine the strength of the relationship between a dependent variable and several predictor variables. There were several key assumptions to be met when using a multiple regression analysis. First, regression assumes that variables have normal distributions (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). For this research study, a visual inspection of the distribution using a Q-plot of regression was used for assessing normality, as well as a Shapiro-Wilk test.

A second assumption to be met is that the study has two or more independent variables, which must be either continuous or categorical. All four predictor variables for this research study are continuous or categorical, thereby meeting this requirement (Yang & Chen, 2019).

An additional assumption to be met is that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables, individually and collectively. Scatterplots were created via SPSS Statistics, v. 28 to check for linearity. Multiple regression analysis can only accurately estimate the relationship between dependent and independent variables if the relationships are linear in nature (Osborne & Waters, 2002). In the event this assumption was not met, a non-linear regression analysis would have been completed using SPSS Statistics, v. 28.

Homoscedasticity is another necessary assumption. Homoscedasticity occurs when the residual variability is constant across a range of predictor variables (Yang & Chen, 2019). To determine homoscedasticity, SPSS statistics v. 28 will be used to produce a scatterplot of the residuals. The absence of a systematic pattern on the scatterplot supports the assumption of homoscedasticity. In the event the assumption was not met, a robust regression with robust standard error would have been conducted.

Additionally, the data must not show multicollinearity. This occurs when two or more independent or predictor variables are highly correlated with each other (Gordinsky, 2016).

There are two types of multicollinearity, data or structural. If there were data multicollinearity issues, some of the highly correlated independent variables would have been removed. Structural multicollinearity issues could have been resolved by centering the variables. Centering the variables or standardizing the variables involves calculating the mean for each continuous independent variable and then subtracting the mean from all observed values of that variable. Multicollinearity was completed with Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) using SPSS statistical software v. 28.

It is further assumed that there should be no significant outliers (Osborne & Waters, 2002). An outlier is a value that is distant from the other values. A scatterplot of residuals was used to visually identify outliers. Outliers would be dropped if they did not change the result, however if an outlier affected the results, it would not be dropped.

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

In any research study, there are various assumptions, limitations and delimitations that must be considered. This study included only English-speaking participants willing to complete multiple questionnaires within a limited time. This delimitation helped to ensure the results were as accurate as possible due to the homogenous group of participants. The most important assumption for this study is that the data collected was valid and reliable. An additional assumption was that the participants are truly therapists. It is also an assumption that there is a relationship between each independent variable in this research study and the dependent variable. Limitations of this research study included the difficulty of predicting actual turnover rate due to the complexity of the variables being measured, as the four independent variables may be insufficient to capture the entire phenomenon of turnover intention. Additionally, limiting the survey to an online platform reduced participation only to those with computer access and

comfortable with the survey platform. Finally, it was a limitation that the participants are from a non-random sampling which limits generalizability.

### **Summary**

Chapter Three reviewed the research design, sample, methods, and procedures utilized to conduct the study. This chapter identified the purpose of the study including research questions and corresponding hypotheses. Additionally, chapter three offered a detailed description of the research design, inclusion criteria for the sample population and outlined procedures used to conduct the study. Chapter Three also reviewed how participants were selected, the steps for data collection and analysis, and provided an overview of the methodology supporting the results. The five survey instruments used to collect the survey data were described with reference to their psychometric properties. Finally, the chapter concluded with the delimitations, assumptions, and limitations of this research study. The subsequent chapter describes the results of the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Overview

According to some studies, turnover intention has been found to be linked to several contributing variables including pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements (Namin et al., 2021). Both pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements have been found to be negatively correlated to turnover intention (Young, 2022; Tsen, 2020), while increased workload and burnout have been found to be positively correlated to turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Murphy & Kruis, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021). To support existing research, and determine which variables best predict turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists, this researcher used a quantitative analysis to investigate the relationship between the independent variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements on turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. This study collected data using supported and valid questionnaires, The Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) the Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI), and the six-item Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). These questionnaires were self-rated by therapists to determine pay satisfaction, burnout, and turnover intention. Study questions also included one dichotomous question regarding flexible work arrangements and a numerical question determining workload by asking how many clients, on average, were seen per week.

This researcher recruited full time mental health and addictions therapists from social media and publicly available email accounts. All potential participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time, without consequence. The participant sample size was calculated using an a priori analysis for a medium effect size  $f^2 = 0.15$ , an alpha level of .05, a power of .95. Four predictor variables were selected as input

parameters. Based on these parameters, the G\*Power software (version 3.1.9.6) calculated that a minimum sample size of  $N = 129$  was indicated. (see Figure 1). The first emails were sent out on August 30, 2023, to 20 publicly available emails. The survey was then also posted on one Facebook page and two reddit threads, r/sample size and r/psychology research.

Surveys for this research study were hosted via SurveyMonkey and remained open for 8 weeks (about 2 months). For this research study, the recruitment posting (see Appendix B), with a link to the survey, was posted to social media. Group emails were also sent to mental health and addictions therapists with publicly available email information obtained from various mental health clinics webpages. It should be noted that most therapists do not have their email information readily available, and this researcher found it necessary to send messages to various mental health clinics with webpages. These clinics were found with a google search using the terms, therapists, therapists near me, mental health clinics, substance use therapists near me, and substance use clinics.

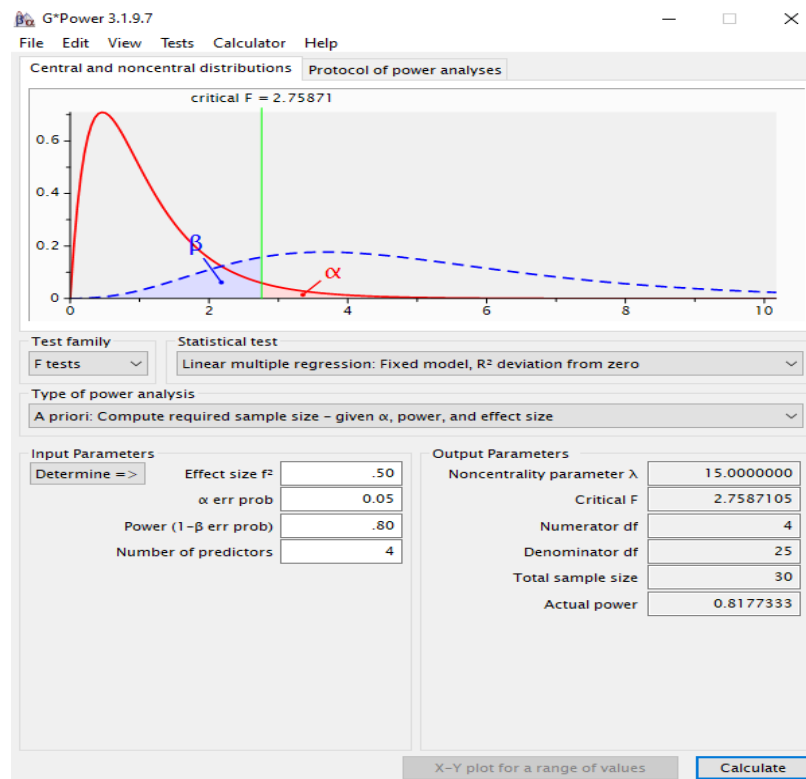
Following data collection, a multiple regression analysis using SPSS software version 28 was completed to determine correlations between each independent variable, pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements and the dependent variable, turnover intention. Initially, the survey was to remain open for 4 weeks, however due to not having enough participants to meet the sample size requirement of 129, the announcement was reposted and remained open for 4 additional weeks. This extension led to 50 participants, which still fell short of the 129 required for statistical significance. For this reason, a second priori analysis for a medium effect size  $f^2 = 0.50$ , an alpha level of .05, and a power of .80 was conducted with four predictor variables were selected. Based on these parameters, the G\*Power software (version

3.1.9.6) calculated that a minimum sample size of  $N = 30$  was indicated. (see Figure 2).

According to Serder et al. (2021), .80 or 80% is the ideal power for a study.

## Figure 2

### *Statistical Power Analysis II*



This chapter contains the results of this study. Participant demographics collected from the online surveys are detailed in the first section. Overall means for each variable were calculated and used to complete a multiple regression analysis, detailed in the second section. Finally, the last section provides a summary of the chapter.

## Descriptive Results

To better comprehend the sample, three demographic questions were asked in the survey. The demographic variables were age, gender, and licensure status. This demographic information

was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The ages ranged from 27 to 54, with an average age of 39.47 (See Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Participant Descriptive Demographics (N=34)*

*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	34	27.0	54.0	39.471	7.7508
Valid N (listwise)	34				

*Note:*

This table has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Gender data was collected. There were only seven participants who identified as male for this research study. The remaining participants included 26 females and one participant who identified as non-binary. Therefore, 76.5% of the participants were female, 20.6% were male and 2.9% identified as non-binary (See Table 2.)

**Table 2**

*Participant Gender*

*Gender*

	N	%
Male	7	20.6%
Female	26	76.5%
Non Binary	1	2.9%

*Note:* This table has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Licensure status was also collected as part of this research study. Of the 34 participants who completed the survey, all but one was licensed. This indicates that 97.1% of the participants



in this study were licensed mental health and addictions therapists (See Table 3.)

**Table 3**

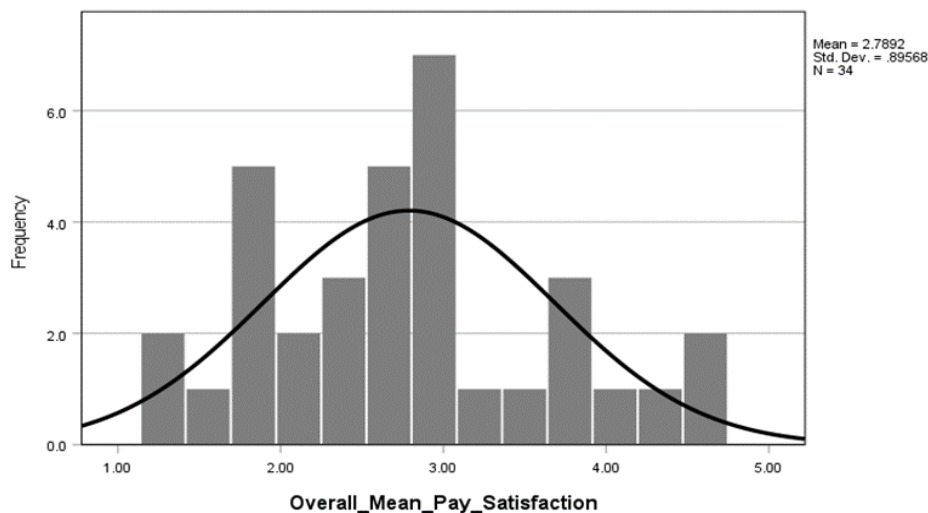
*Participant Licensure Status\*

*Licensure Status*

	N	%
Licensed	33	97.1%
Non Licensed	1	2.9%

*Note:* This table has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

I also calculated the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation for pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and turnover intention. Flexible work arrangements, a dichotomous categorical variable, was analyzed by frequency. Figure 2 shows a histogram distribution that represents mental health and addictions therapists' overall pay satisfaction. The height of each bar in this histogram indicates the number of participants with that response. The most common response was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with pay, followed by dissatisfied with pay. Most of the study participants fell in this range ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 2.7892$ ,  $SD = .89568$ ).

**Figure 3***Simple Histogram Overall Mean Pay Satisfaction***Simple Histogram of Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction**

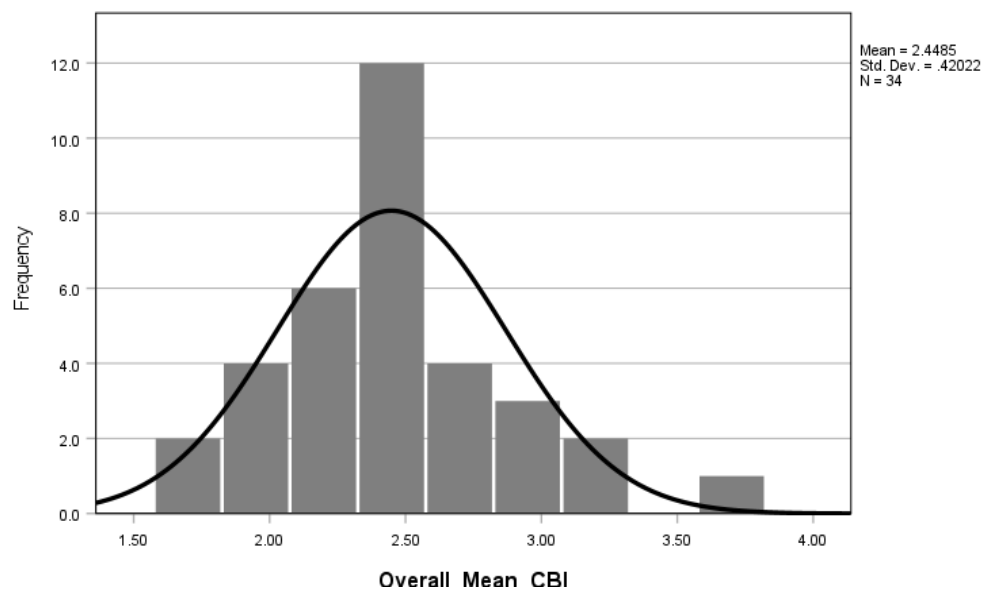
*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Figure 3 displays a histogram that represents counselor burnout among participants. The average score for the Counselor Burnout Inventory was 2.4485. Scores ranged from one to five with higher scores indicating higher levels of burnout, with two being rarely true and three being sometimes true. This histogram shows that most study participants fell within that range, suggesting that most of the therapists participating in this research study rarely or sometimes experienced symptoms of burnout, ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 2.4485$ ,  $SD = .42022$ ).

**Figure 4**

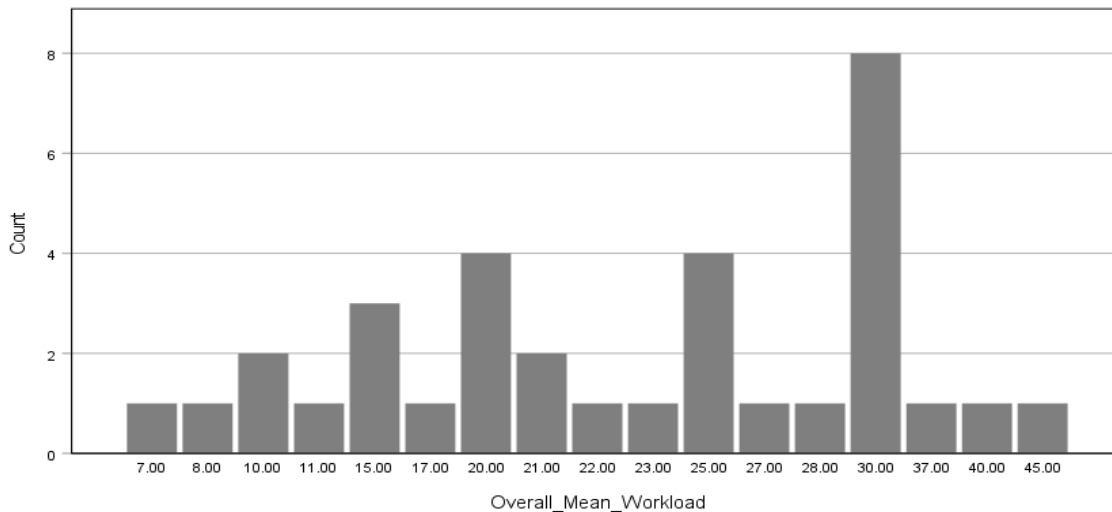
*Simple Histogram of Overall Mean Counselor Burnout Inventory*

**Simple Histogram of Overall\_Mean\_CBI**



*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

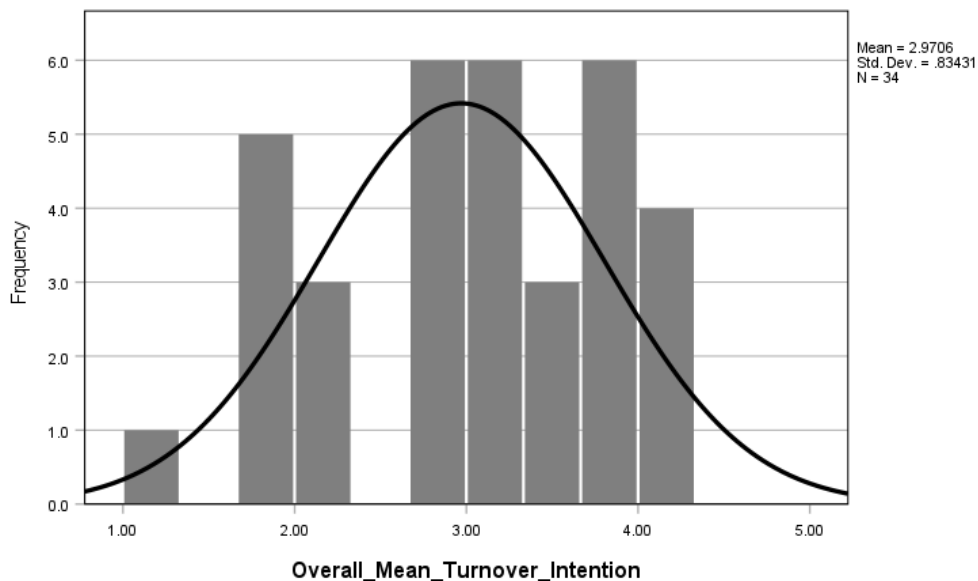
Figure 4 displays a histogram that represents workload. The minimum average number of clients seen per week was seven, while the maximum was 45, ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 23.2941$ ,  $SD = 8.96299$ ). According to this histogram, while the average was 23.2941, the mode was 30. This indicates that most therapists in this study saw an average of 30 clients per week.

**Figure 5***Simple Histogram Overall Mean Workload***Simple Histogram Count of Overall\_Mean\_Workload**

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

For this study, flexible work arrangements were defined by one yes or no question. Of the 34 study participants, 26 stated that their positions offered flexible work arrangements, like flexible scheduling or remote work. Eight study participants stated that their positions did not permit flexible work arrangements.

Finally, Figure 5 shows a histogram distribution that represents the overall mean of turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 2.9706$ ,  $SD = .83431$ ). The average or mean for this research study was 2.9706, with higher scores indicating higher turnover intention. Of the mental health and addictions therapists who participated in this study, 25 of 34 scored 2.5 or greater.

**Figure 6***Simple Histogram of Overall Mean Turnover Intention***Simple Histogram of Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention**

*Note:* This figure has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

### Study Findings

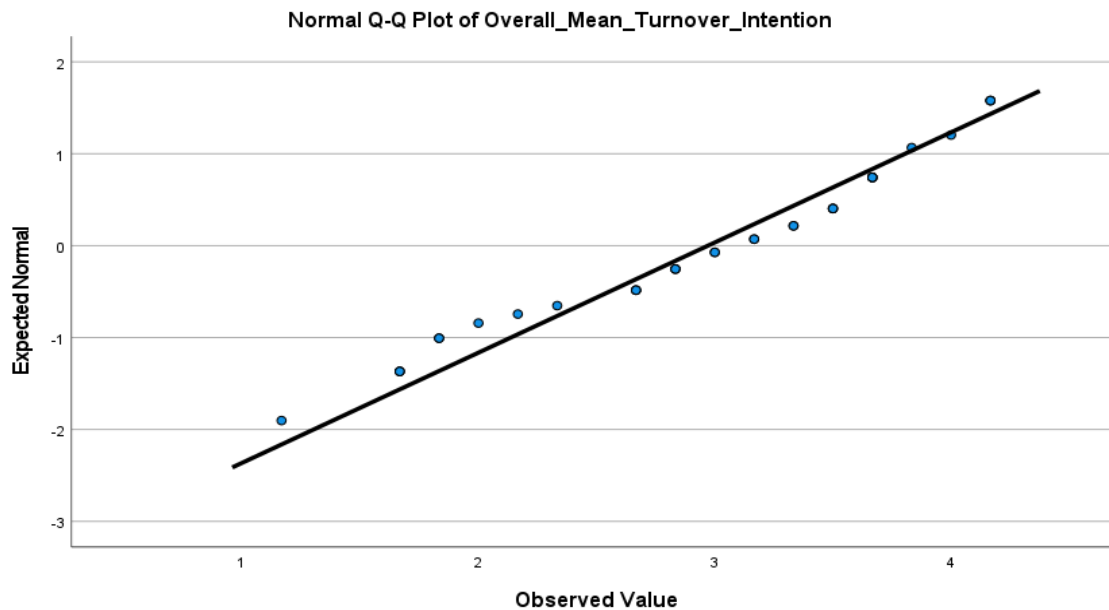
The first goal of this research study was to assess if a relationship exists between the independent variables of pay satisfaction, counselor burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements on the dependent variable, turnover intention among mental and addictions counselors. A second goal was to determine which independent variable had the strongest relationship to turnover intention.

Prior to running the multiple linear regression analysis, several assumptions were addressed to ensure the validity of the results. Firstly, regression assumes that variables have normal distributions. For this research study, a visual inspection of the distribution was used, the Q-Plot of regression (See Figure 7), and the Shapiro- Wilk test (See Table 4). Turnover intention

did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution (Overall mean turnover intention  $p = .077$ ).

**Figure 7**

*Q-Plot of Regression*



**Table 4**

*Tests for Normality*

*Tests of Normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Overall_Mean_Turnover_Intention	.119	34	.200 <sup>**</sup>	.943	34	.077

<sup>\*\*</sup>. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

<sup>a</sup>. Lilliefors Significance Correction

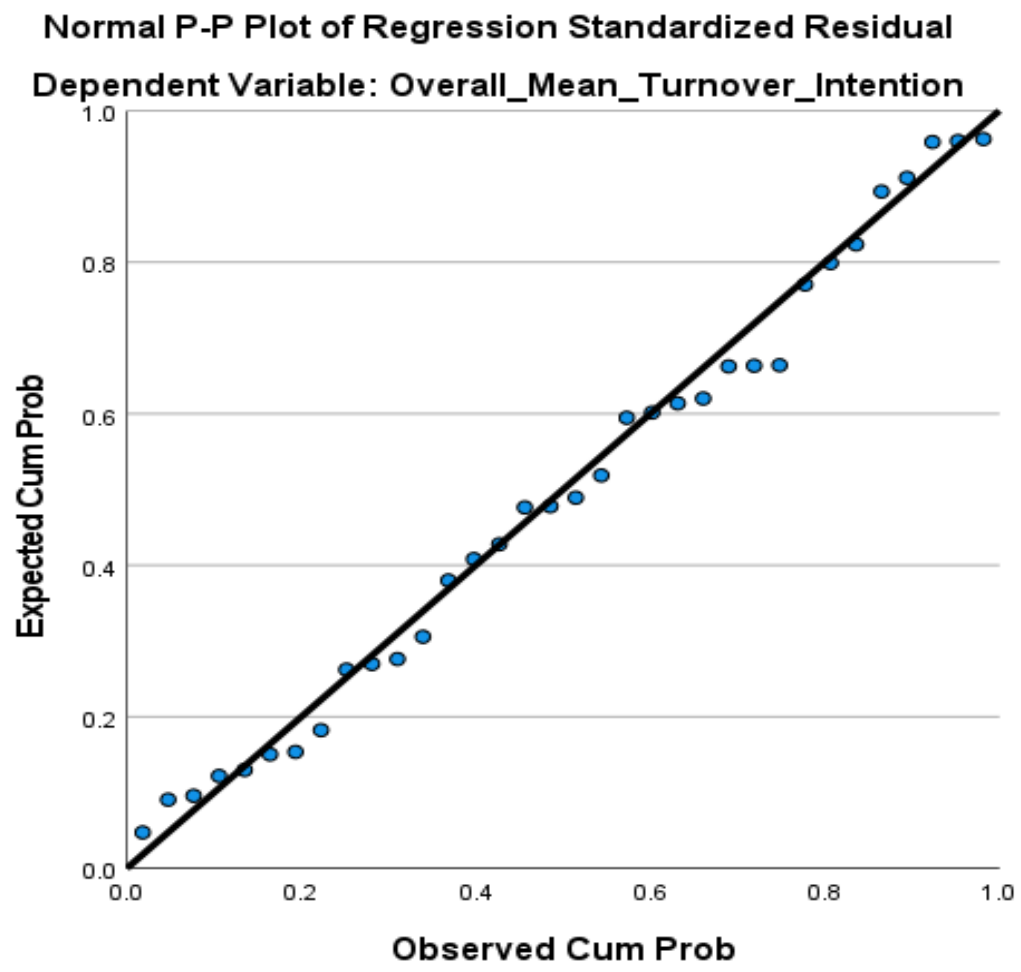
A second assumption that needed to be met was that the study has two or more independent variables, which must be either continuous or categorical (Yang, Tu & Chen, 2019).

All four predictor variables for this research study (pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements) were continuous or categorical, thereby meeting this requirement.

An additional assumption to be met was a linear relationship between the dependent variable of turnover intention and the independent variables, pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements, both individually and collectively. The normal P-Plot illustrates the assumptions of linearity between the observed and predicted scores on the turnover intention scale. If the relationship is not linear, the regression analysis may not depict a true relationship between the variables (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Scatterplots were created via SPSS Statistics, v. 28 to check for linearity. In the event this assumption was not met, a non-linear regression analysis would have been completed using SPSS Statistics, v. 28. This assumption has been met. See Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Scatterplot indicating Linear Relationship*

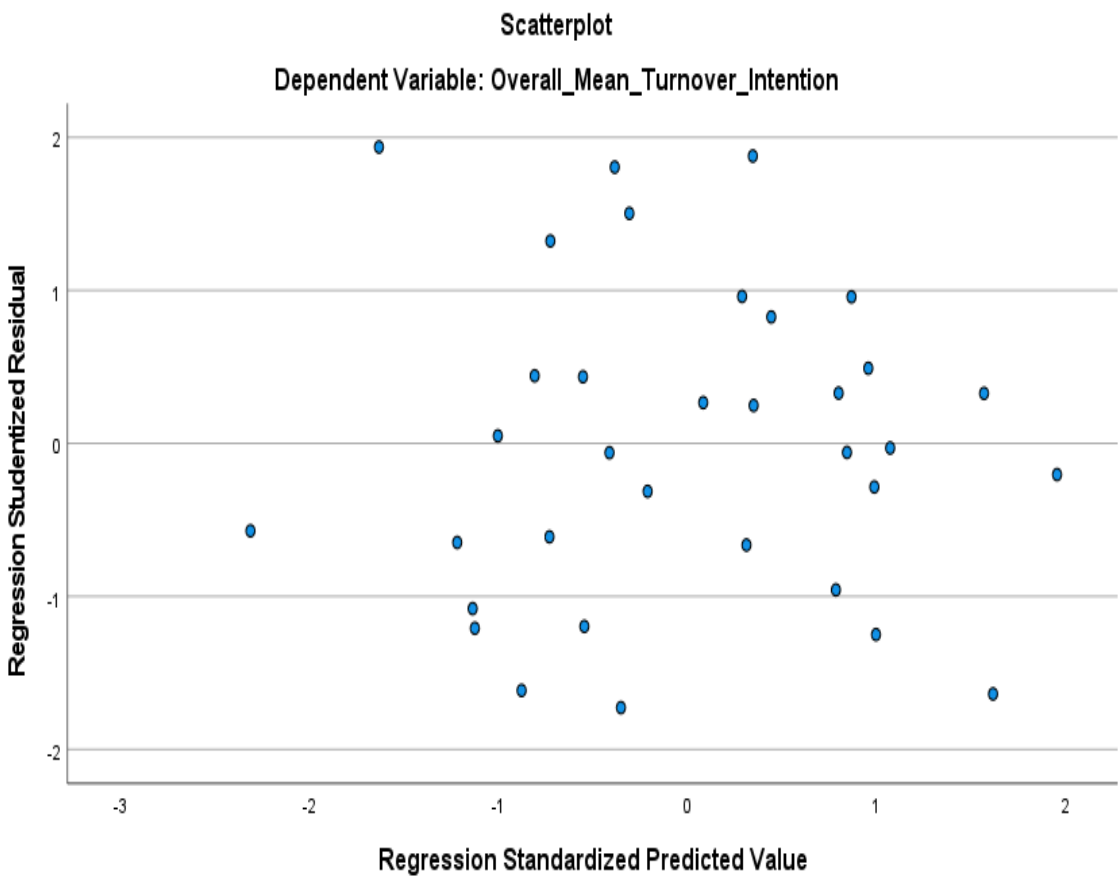


*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Homoscedasticity is another necessary assumption (Yang, Tu & Chen, 2019), that occurs when the residual variability is constant across a range of predictor variables. To determine homoscedasticity, SPSS statistics v. 28 will be used to produce a scatterplot of the residuals. The absence of a systematic pattern on the scatterplot supports the assumption of homoscedasticity (Yang, Tu & Chen, 2019). See Figure 9.



**Figure 9**  
*Scatterplot*



*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Also, the data must not show multicollinearity. This occurs when two or more independent or predictor variables are highly correlated with each other (Gordinsky, 2016). There are two types of multicollinearity, data or structural. If there were data multicollinearity issues, some of the highly correlated independent variables would have been removed. Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor, or VIF. VIF measures the inflation in the variances due to multicollinearity possibly caused by correlated predictors. In general, if the VIF value falls between five and ten, multicollinearity is present (Gordinsky, 2016). The results, (pay satisfaction, tolerance = .58, VIF = 1.71; flexible work arrangements, tolerance = .89, VIF = 1.11; workload, tolerance = .96, VIF = 1.04; burnout, tolerance = .63, VIF = 1.59) indicate that multicollinearity is not present.

It is further assumed that there should be no significant outliers (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). An outlier is a value that is distant from the other values. A scatterplot of residuals was used to visually identify outliers.

During the preparation phase of the analysis, cleaning of the data was required. This step allowed the researcher to determine potential problems, such as missing data or unanswered survey questions. Of the 50 study participants, 16 failed to complete all the survey questions. These study participants were removed prior to running the statistical tests. This reduced the dataset from fifty to thirty-four.

Individual responses were gathered from respondents on each of the questionnaires for this research study to run a multiple linear regression analysis. The research question and hypothesis are as follows:

Research Question: What is the relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention.

### Multiple Linear Regression Results

To test the hypothesis that a relationship existed between the independent variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and the dependent variable, turnover intention, the overall mean for each Likert based scale was calculated and a multiple regression analysis was conducted.

The analysis revealed that the predictor variables accounted for 62.9% of the variance in the levels of turnover intention,  $R^2 = .629$ ,  $F(4, 29) = 12.288$ ,  $p < .001$ . As such, the results were statistically significant, see Table 5. The null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 5**

#### *Model Summary of Overall Turnover Intention*

*Model Summary<sup>b</sup>*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.793 <sup>a</sup>	.629	.578	.54214	.629	12.288	4	29	<.001

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI, Overall\_Mean\_Workload, Flexible\_Work\_Arrangements, Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction

<sup>b</sup>. Dependent Variable: Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

The results of this correlation coefficient indicated that pay satisfaction ( $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = .89$ ) had a moderate negative correlation with turnover intention ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = .83$ ),  $r = -.57$ , while burnout ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = .42$ ) had a moderate positive correlation to turnover intention,  $r = .67$ . The predictor variable flexible work arrangements ( $M = .24$ ,  $SD = .43$ ) had a low positive

correlation to turnover intention,  $r = .30$ , and workload ( $M = 23.29$ ,  $SD = 8.96$ ) was found to have no correlation,  $r = .02$ . See Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Correlations Between Variables*

*Correlations*

		Overall Mean Turnover Intent ion	Overall Mean P ay Satisfaction	Flexible Work Arrangements	Overall Mean Workload	Overall Mean CBI
Pearson Correlation	Overall_Mean_Turnover_Intention	1.000	-.565	.301	.025	.673
	Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	-.565	1.000	.220	.171	-.574
	Flexible_Work_Arrangements	.301	.220	1.000	.029	.061
	Overall_Mean_Workload	.025	.171	.029	1.000	-.020
	Overall_Mean_CBI	.673	-.574	.061	-.020	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Overall_Mean_Turnover_Intention	.	<.001	.042	.445	<.001
	Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	.000	.	.106	.167	.000
	Flexible_Work_Arrangements	.042	.106	.	.436	.367
	Overall_Mean_Workload	.445	.167	.436	.	.455
	Overall_Mean_CBI	.000	.000	.367	.455	.
N	Overall_Mean_Turnover_Intention	34	34	34	34	34
	Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	34	34	34	34	34
	Flexible_Work_Arrangements	34	34	34	34	34
	Overall_Mean_Workload	34	34	34	34	34
	Overall_Mean_CBI	34	34	34	34	34

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

The analysis showed the pay satisfaction significantly predicted turnover intention ( $b = -.428$ ,  $t(29) = -2.887$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Flexible work arrangements were also shown to significantly predict turnover intention ( $b = .368$ ,  $t(29) = 3.081$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, overall mean workload did not significantly predict turnover intention ( $b = .095$ ,  $t(29) = .827$ ,  $p = .415$ ). Finally, counselor burnout among mental health and addictions therapists was shown to significantly predict turnover intention ( $b = .407$ ,  $t(29)$ ,  $p < .05$ ). See Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Collinearity Statistics*

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Standardized Coefficients			
	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.794	.083	-.241	
Overall Mean Pay Satisfaction	-.428	-2.887	.007	1.717
Flexible Work Arrangements	.368	3.081	.004	1.113
Overall Mean Workload	.095	.827	.415	1.041
Overall Mean CBI	.407	2.852	.008	1.594

*Note: This information was copied from SPSS v. 28.*

At the conclusion of the multiple linear regression analysis, a second linear analysis was conducted after splitting the variable of flexible work arrangements. Due to the dichotomous nature of this predictor variable, this analysis was conducted to compare the results of those with flexible work arrangements and those without flexible work arrangements. The variable was dummy coded with zero representing the presence of flexible work arrangements and one signifying no flexible work arrangements. The linear regression analysis revealed a statistically significant model for both flexible work arrangements ( $F(3,22) = 11.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (See Table 7) with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .61 (See Table 8), and the absence of flexible work arrangements ( $F(3,4)$

= 7.70,  $p < .05$  with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .86. According to Table 9, the significant factor for those with flexible work arrangements was pay satisfaction and the significant factor for those without flexible work arrangements was counselor burnout,  $p < .05$ .

**Table 8**

*ANOVA with Split Variable*

*ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

Flexible_Work_Arrangements	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
.00	1	Regression	10.060	3	3.353	11.456	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	6.440	22	.293		
		Total	16.500	25			
1.00	1	Regression	3.741	3	1.247	7.704	.039 <sup>c</sup>
		Residual	.648	4	.162		
		Total	4.389	7			

<sup>a</sup>. Dependent Variable: Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention

<sup>b</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction, Overall\_Mean\_Workload, Overall\_Mean\_CBI

<sup>c</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction, Overall\_Mean\_CBI, Overall\_Mean\_Workload

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

**Table 9**

*Model Summary with Split Variable*

*Model Summary*

Flexible_Work_Arrangements	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.00	1	.781 <sup>a</sup>	.610	.556	.54104
1.00	1	.923 <sup>b</sup>	.852	.742	.40234

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction, Overall\_Mean\_Workload, Overall\_Mean\_CBI

<sup>b</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction, Overall\_Mean\_CBI, Overall\_Mean\_Workload

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

**Table 10***Coefficients with Split Variable*Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Flexible_Work_Arrangements	Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
			B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
.00	1	(Constant)	2.086	1.224		1.704	.102
		Overall_Mean_Workload	.020	.012	.225	1.675	.108
		Overall_Mean_CBI	.626	.348	.330	1.799	.086
		Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	-.465	.175	-.487	-2.656	.014
1.00	1	(Constant)	1.969	1.278		1.541	.198
		Overall_Mean_Workload	-.038	.019	-.448	-2.004	.116
		Overall_Mean_CBI	1.114	.390	.590	2.860	.046
		Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	-.137	.184	-.174	-.743	.499

<sup>a</sup>. Dependent Variable: Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

Finally, a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was completed to confirm the results. In the first step, counselor burnout was added, the results were statistically significant  $F(1,32) = 26.54, p < .001$ . The second equation included pay satisfaction,  $F(2,31) = 16.882, p < .001$ . Finally, flexible work arrangements were added  $F(3,30) = 16.238, p < .001$ . See Table 11. This supports the multiple regression analysis that the null should be rejected. Workload was removed as it was not found to be a predictor of turnover intention, confirming the results from

the multiple linear regression analysis.

**Table 11**

*ANOVA for Stepwise Regression*

*ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.414	1	10.414	26.540	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	12.557	32	.392		
	Total	22.971	33			
2	Regression	11.976	2	5.988	16.882	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	10.995	31	.355		
	Total	22.971	33			
3	Regression	14.246	3	4.749	16.328	<.001 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	8.725	30	.291		
	Total	22.971	33			

<sup>a</sup>. Dependent Variable: Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention

<sup>b</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI

<sup>c</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI, Flexible\_Work\_Arrangements

<sup>d</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI, Flexible\_Work\_Arrangements, Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

A model summary indicated that the final model accounted for a 58.2% variance.  $R^2=.582$ . See Table 12. Table 13 shows the coefficients for the stepwise regression analysis.



**Table 12***Model Summary**Model Summary*


---

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673 <sup>a</sup>	.453	.436	.62641
2	.722 <sup>b</sup>	.521	.490	.59555
3	.788 <sup>c</sup>	.620	.582	.53929

---

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI

<sup>b</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI,  
Flexible\_Work\_Arrangements

<sup>c</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Overall\_Mean\_CBI,  
Flexible\_Work\_Arrangements, Overall\_Mean\_Pay\_Satisfaction

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

**Table 13***Coefficients**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.303	.644		-.470	.642
	Overall_Mean_CBI	1.337	.259	.673	5.152	<.001
2	(Constant)	-.345	.613		-.563	.578
	Overall_Mean_CBI	1.305	.247	.657	5.282	<.001
	Flexible_Work_Arrangements	.506	.241	.261	2.098	.044
3	(Constant)	1.816	.952		1.908	.066
	Overall_Mean_CBI	.832	.281	.419	2.967	.006
	Flexible_Work_Arrangements	.706	.230	.364	3.072	.004
	Overall_Mean_Pay_Satisfaction	-.376	.135	-.404	-2.794	.009

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Overall\_Mean\_Turnover\_Intention

*Note:* This has been copied and pasted from SPSS (Version 28).

### Summary

A multiple linear regression analysis was completed to determine if a relationship existed between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. This chapter describes the analysis and the findings.

The results of this study indicated that the predictor variables account for 62.9% of the variance in the levels of turnover intention. As such, the results were statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Each of the variables, except workload, was found to have a relationship to turnover intention. It was further determined that pay satisfaction had a moderate negative correlation with turnover intention, while burnout had a moderate positive correlation to

turnover intention. The predictor variable flexible work arrangements had a low positive correlation to turnover intention, and workload was found to not be correlated to turnover intention. While some of these results supported current research, the actual number of study participants was far less than the original power analysis indicated. The power analysis for a multiple regression required a sample size of 129; this researcher only obtained data from 34 respondents. A second power analysis was completed with a power level of .80 that indicated a sample of 30 was sufficient. The subsequent chapter will provide further interpretation of the study results and report on limitations, implications, and future research recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### **Overview**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed between the variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. This closing chapter includes a summary of this research study's findings, a discussion of those findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

The issue being explored in this research study was determining if a relationship existed between pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. It also sought to determine the strength of those correlations if they existed. Mental health and addictions therapists were contacted via publicly available email and invited to participate in the study. It was also advertised on two reddit threads and one Facebook page. This resulted in 50 respondents, of which 34 completed the survey in its entirety. The results of this study and SPSS output results were presented in Chapter four. The following section interprets the results of the findings.

Demographic data for this research study was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The ages of the study participants ranged from 27 to 54, and most of the participants were female. Only 20.6% of subjects were male and 2.9% identified as non-binary. A multiple regression analysis was completed to determine if a relationship existed between the predictor variables and turnover intention.

The results of this study found that the predictor variables accounted for 62.9% of the variance in the levels of turnover intention. The results further indicated that pay satisfaction had

a moderate negative correlation with turnover intention ( $b = -.428, t(29) = -2.887, p < .05$ ). This result suggests that while pay satisfaction decreases, turnover intention increases moderately. This supports past research studies that have found pay satisfaction to be negatively related to turnover intention (Siregar & Maryati, 2021; Bhatt & Sharma, 2019). Pay satisfaction was also found to have a moderate negative correlation to burnout ( $r = -.57$ ). This suggests that as burnout increases, pay satisfaction decreases. Additionally, burnout ( $M = 2.45, SD = .42$ ) had a moderate positive correlation to turnover intention, ( $b = .407, t(29), p < .05$ ). This indicates that as feelings of burnout increase, so does turnover intention. Flexible work arrangements ( $b = .368, t(29) = 3.081, p < .05$ ). had a low positive correlation to turnover intention,  $r = .30$ . Finally, the predictor variable workload ( $b = .095, t(29) = .827, p > .05$ ). was not found to be correlated to turnover intention,  $r = .02$ . As such, the results support the hypothesis that there is a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. No relationship was found between the variable workload and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The main conclusion of this research study was that pay satisfaction, burnout, and flexible work arrangements all have a relationship to turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Additionally, no relationship was found between workload and turnover intention. The predictor variable with the strongest correlation to turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists was pay satisfaction, followed by burnout and lastly, flexible work arrangements. Previous research, reviewed in Chapter 2, supports several of the findings of this research study.

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with pay is influenced by the disparity between what employees believe they should receive and what they actually receive in the form compensation (Sereqi, 2020; Jakel, 2019). The results of this study found that pay satisfaction was negatively correlated to turnover intention. This supports previous research studies that have also found pay satisfaction to be negatively correlated to turnover intention (Siregar & Maryati, 2021; Bhatt & Sharma, 2019). Additionally, an American study found that therapists in their sample had greater financial distress than two-thirds of the U.S. population (Adams et al., 2019). Based on this information, it is not surprising that, in this study, pay satisfaction was the predictor variable with the strongest correlation to turnover intention. Also, the findings of this study found that pay satisfaction was also found to have a moderate negative correlation to burnout ( $r = -.57$ ). This suggests that as burnout increases, pay satisfaction decreases.

Another predictor variable studied in this research study was burnout. Burnout is a phenomenon of psychological exhaustion caused by work. It often manifests as emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, reduced sense of personal accomplishment, and disproportionate psychological energy consumption, particularly for those who work in service of others (Song et al., 2020). Some research has identified burnout as the strongest predictor of turnover intention (Murphy & Kruis, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021). The results of this study found that burnout was positively correlated to turnover intention, indicating that as burnout increases, so does turnover intention.

For the study, workload was defined as the average number of clients seen per week. Some past research has found that workload does not significantly influence turnover intention (Wibowo et al., 2021), while other studies found that excessive workloads have been linked to turnover intention (Fukui et al., 2019; Azharudeen & Arulrajah, 2018; Luther et al., 2017). The

results of this study supported past research by Wibowo et al., (2021) and did not find a correlation between workload and turnover intention among mental health therapists.

Flexible work arrangements for mental health and addictions therapists may include remote work, work from home or flexible scheduling. Some previous research studies have found that therapists who perceived their jobs as more independent, particularly when related to flexible work arrangements, had a lower turnover intention (Tsen, 2020; Young, 2022). However, in other studies, the relationship between the constructs of turnover intention and flexible work arrangements has been found to vary in strength (Onken-Menke et al., 2018; Peretz, et al., 2018), while other research has found no relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention (Clark et al., 2017).

The equity theory of motivation was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study on turnover intention because this theory suggests that employees consider the fairness of their treatment relative to their perception of their worth and identifies that other factors may also contribute to those perceptions of inequity. Those factors may include pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, and flexible work arrangements. This research study found that there was a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. This study found no relationship between workload and turnover intention.

The results of this study contribute to the understanding of predictor variables of turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Additionally, this study suggests that increasing pay satisfaction and flexible work arrangements may reduce turnover intention. Also, based on the results of this study, implementing strategies to reduce burnout may assist in employee retention.

From a Biblical perspective, this research supports the Biblical foundations previously

reviewed in Chapter 2. According to Colossians 4:1 (English Standard Version Bible, 2001) state: “Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” This scripture is a command to treat workers fairly. It was a reminder to the masters that they are subject to a Master as well. This teaching is consistent with Luke 6:31 (English Standard Version Bible, 2001), “And as ye that men would do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” According to Scripture, Christian business leaders are advised: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so,” (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Proverbs 3:27) and “to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice,” (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Proverbs 21:3). These scriptures support equitable treatment of workers. Equitable treatment includes a living wage, strategies to mitigate burnout, work-life balance, and sustainable workloads.

### **Implications**

One implication of this research is that it adds to the body of knowledge of turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. This researcher found no research that explored the relationship between the variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements among mental health and addictions therapists despite evidence that these professionals are underpaid and overworked.

In practice, this research may have significant implications for organizations, as it highlights the importance of not only fair compensation, but work-life balance. Employers and organizations hiring mental health and addictions therapists may need to reevaluate compensation packages and flexible work policies to align more closely with employee expectations and needs. In doing so, organizations may decrease turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Finally, regarding the church, this research reaffirms the



importance of fair and equitable treatment of workers, in accordance with Biblical teachings.

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was the small sample size. The participant sample size needed for statistical significance was determined using an a priori analysis for a medium effect size  $f^2 = 0.15$ , an alpha level of .05, a power of .95, with four predictor variables selected as input parameters. Based on these parameters, the G\*Power software (version 3.1.9.6) calculated that a minimum sample size of  $N = 129$  was needed. However, adjusting the statistical power to .80 indicated a sample size of 30 was sufficient for this research study. The research study acquired 34 respondents. This sample of 34 mental health and addictions therapists limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of mental health and addictions therapists. Another aspect of this research study that limits generalizability is that the participants were from a non-random sampling. Additionally, with four independent variables, there is an increased risk of Type I errors, and it may be challenging to detect small effect sizes. This study design may also face limitations in controlling for confounding variables, which may impact the interpretation of the relationship between the predictor variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload, flexible work arrangements, and the dependent variable of turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Finally, limiting the survey to an online platform reduced participation only to those with computer access and comfortable with the survey platform.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

To examine the relationship between the variables of pay satisfaction, burnout, workload and flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists, my survey was collected via a non-random sampling with a small sample size.

Duplicating this study with a larger sample size may provide more accurate data. Future research could also include a case study of specific organizations, which may provide rich data in real-world settings. A case study may also inform researchers of possible extraneous variables. Also, a longitudinal study may predict the frequency at which turnover intention resulted in turnover among mental health and addictions therapists, for each predictor variable.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, the results of this research study found that pay satisfaction, burnout, and flexible work arrangements were related to turnover intention among mental health workers, while workload was not. Additionally, pay satisfaction was found to have the highest correlation. The results indicated that pay satisfaction had a moderate negative correlation with turnover intention, while burnout had a moderate positive correlation to turnover intention. Workload was not found to be correlated to turnover intention, and finally, flexible work arrangements had a low positive correlation to turnover intention. As such, the results indicate that there is a relationship between pay satisfaction, burnout, and flexible work arrangements and turnover intention and no relationship exists between workload and turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Additionally, the findings of this research study indicate that employers and organizations hiring mental health and addictions therapists may need to reevaluate compensation packages and flexible work policies to decrease turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

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## **APPENDIX A: Informed Consent**

### **Consent**

Title of the Project: Variables Predicting Turnover Intention Among Mental Health and Addictions Therapists

Principal Investigator: Deborah Milanek, Doctoral Student, Psychology Department, Liberty University.

#### **Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a full-time mental health and addictions therapist. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### **What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to determine which of the following: pay, burnout, workload, or flexible work arrangements best predicts intention to quit among mental health and addiction therapists.

#### **What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in an online survey with 46 questions that will take approximately 15 minutes.

#### **How could you or others benefit from this study?**

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include providing information for organizations to reduce turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on password-locked computer indefinitely.

**How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

**What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser.

Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

Deborah Milaneck  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the IRB. Our physical address is

Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations.*

*The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### **Your Consent**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. By clicking next, I consent to participate in the study.*

## **APPENDIX B: Recruitment**

### Research Study Participants Needed

ATTENTION: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Psychology degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to better understand variables predicting turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists. To participate, you must be a full-time mental health or addictions therapist. Participants will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey, which should take about 15-30 minutes. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click the link provided at the end of this post. A consent document will be provided as the first page of the survey. Please review this page, and if you agree to participate, click the “proceed to survey” button at the end.

### Researcher Contact Information:

Deborah Milanek

████████████████████

████████████████

### APPENDIX C: Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire

The statements below describe various aspects of your pay. For each statement, decide how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel about your pay, and put the number in the corresponding blank that best indicates your feeling. To do this, use the following scale:

1 Very Dissatisfied

2 Dissatisfied

3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

4 Satisfied

5 Very Satisfied

1. My take-home pay.
2. My benefit package.
3. My most recent raise.
4. Influence my supervisor has on my pay.
5. My current salary.
6. Amount the company pays toward my benefits.
7. The raises I have typically received in the past.
8. The company's pay structure.
9. Information the company gives about pay issues of concern to me.
10. My overall level of pay.
11. The value of my benefits.
12. Pay of other jobs in the company.
13. Consistency of the company's pay policies.
14. Size of my current salary.
15. The number of benefits I receive.
16. How my raises are determined.
17. Differences in pay among jobs in the company.
18. How the company administers pay.



## APPENDIX D: Counselor Burnout Inventory

### Counselor Burnout Inventory Counseling Program Korea University

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to measure the counselor's burnout level. There are no right or wrong answers. Try to be as honest as you can. Beside each statement, circle the number that best describes how you feel.

	1 Never True	2 Rarely True	3 Sometimes True	4 Often True	5 Always True
1. Due to my job as a counselor, I feel tired most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel I am an incompetent counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am treated unfairly in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am not interested in my clients and their problems.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My relationships with family members have been negatively impacted by my work as a counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel exhausted due to my work as a counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel frustrated by my effectiveness as a counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel negative energy from my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have become callous toward clients.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel like I do not have enough time to engage in personal interests.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Due to my job as a counselor, I feel overstressed.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am not confident in my counseling skills.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel bogged down by the system in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have little empathy for my clients.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel I do not have enough time to spend with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Due to my job as a counselor, I feel tightness in my back and shoulders.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do not feel like I am making a change in my clients.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel frustrated with the system in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am no longer concerned about the welfare of my clients.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I feel I have poor boundaries between work and my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX E: Flexible Work Arrangements and Workload Data**

## Flexible Work Arrangements and Workload

1. On average, how many clients do you see per week? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your workplace offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible scheduling? Yes or No. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: Turnover Intention Scale

### TURNOVER INTENTION SCALE (TIS)

Copyright © 2004, G. Roodt

Reproduced with consent of the author.

The following section aims to ascertain the extent to which you intend to stay at the organisation.

Please read each question and indicate your response using the scale provided for each question:

#### DURING THE PAST 9 MONTHS....

1. How often have you considered leaving your job? [OBJ]

Never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Always

2. How satisfying is your job in fulfilling your personal needs?

Very satisfying 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Totally dissatisfying

3. How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals? [OBJ]

Never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Always

4. How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs? [OBJ]

Never 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Always

5. How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you? [OBJ]

Highly unlikely 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Highly likely

6. How often do you look forward to another day at work? [OBJ]

Always 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Never

## APPENDIX G: Permission PSQ

**Milaneck, Deborah J.**

---

**From:** HERBERT G HENEMAN [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 3, 2023 11:58 AM  
**To:** Milaneck, Deborah J.  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: psq

Yes, you have my permission to do this.  
Herb

Herb Heneman III

On Jun 2, 2023, at 1:39 PM, Milaneck, Deborah J. <Deborah.Milaneck@va.gov> wrote:

Hello Herb,  
I appreciate you allowing me to use the psq in my dissertation, however, my reader requires that I get specific consent to use it and copy and print it in an appendix. I thought that was implied, but apparently it is not. So, may I use the psq and copy and print it in an appendix in my dissertation? Thanks again,

*Deborah J. Milaneck*  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
VA Butler Healthcare | VISN 4  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** HERBERT G HENEMAN [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 3, 2023 4:12 PM  
**To:** Milaneck, Deborah J. [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: psq

hello deborah,

you found the right person. you have my permission to use the psq in your dissertation work. good luck as you move forward.

herb

Herb Heneman III

---

**APPENDIX H: Permission CBI**

**From:** Sang Min Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 2, 2023 3:33 PM  
**To:** Milanek, Deborah J [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Re: [External] RE: [제목없음]

Sure. You have my permission.

-----Original Message-----

**Subject :** Re: [External] RE: [제목없음]

**Date :** 2023-06-02 08:44

**From :** Milanek, Deborah J [REDACTED]

**To :** [REDACTED]

**Cc :**

Hello Sang Min,  
Thanks so much for allowing me to use the CBI for my dissertation. My reader suggested I also ask for permission to print it and add it to the appendix. Is that something you would consent to?

Thanks again,  
Deborah Milanek  
PhD student  
Liberty University  
Virginia, USA

**From:** Sang Min Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 3, 2023 12:33 PM  
**To:** Milanek, Deborah J [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [External] RE: [제목없음]

[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content. ]

You have my permission to use CBI for your research.

Sang Min.

-----Original Message-----

**Subject** : RE: [제목없음]

**Date** : 2023-05-04 00:54:52

**From** : Milanek, Deborah J [REDACTED]

**To** : [REDACTED]

**Cc** :

Good morning,

I would like to request permission to use your counselor burnout inventory in my dissertation research on predictors of turnover intention among mental health and addictions therapists.

I am not sure if there is any information that you need, please let me know. Thank you!

Deborah Milanek  
PhD student  
Liberty University  
Virginia, USA

## APPENDIX I: Permission TIS-6

6/14/23, 3:37 PM

[External] RE: tis-6 - Milaneck, Deborah J - Outlook

[External] RE: tis-6

roodtg8@gmail.com [REDACTED]

Thu 5/4/2023 5:12 AM

To: Milaneck, Deborah J [REDACTED]

1 attachments (59 KB)

Turnover intentions questionnaire - v4.doc;

You don't often get email from roodtg8@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content. ]

Dear Deborah

You are welcome to use the TIS for your research (please accept this e-mail as the formal permission letter). For this purpose please find the TIS-15 attached for your convenience. The TIS-6 (version 4) consists of the first six items high-lighted in yellow. You may use any one of these two versions. The TIS is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The only two conditions for using the TIS are that it may not be used for commercial purposes (other than for post graduate research) and second that it should be properly referenced as (Roodt, 2004) as in the article by Bothma & Roodt (2013) in the *SA Journal of Human Resource Management* (open access).

It is easy to score the TIS-6. Merely add the item scores to get a total score. The midpoint of the scale is 18 (3 x 6). If the total score is below 18 then it indicates a desire to stay. If the scores are above 18 it indicates a desire to leave the organisation. The minimum a person can get is 6 (6 x 1) and the maximum is 30 (5 x 6). No item scores need to be reflected (reverse scored) for the TIS-6. Please note that there are items that need to be reverse scored for the TIS-15 (indicated by an R before the item number).

It is recommended that you conduct a CFA on the item scores to assess the dimensionality of the scale. We found that respondents with a matric (grade12) tertiary school qualification tend to understand the items better and consequently a uni-dimensional factor structure is obtained.

If you wish to translate the TIS in a local language, you are welcome to do so. It is recommended that a language expert is used in the translate - back translate method. I wish you all the best with your

about:blank

1/2

**RE:**

**[External] RE: tis-6**

roodtg8@gmail.com

You don't often get email from roodtg8@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Deborah

You have my permission to print the TIS and bind it as an appendix in your thesis with the strict condition that it should be clearly marked as copyright protected and that it may only be reproduced with the consent of the author.

I hope that this will help.

Best regards

Gert

Prof Gert Roodt