

Principals' Compassion Fatigue and Compassion Satisfaction: A Job Demands and Resources Analysis During the Post-Pandemic Recovery

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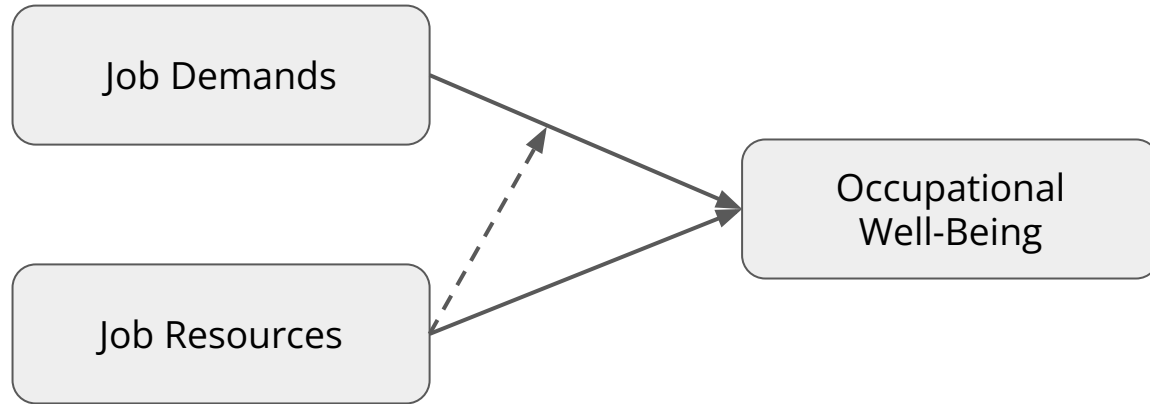
Background

- School principalship is often considered one of the toughest jobs in K–12 education (Reid et al., 2021).
- The advent of COVID–19 pandemic has further compounded their duties, such as shifting instructional modes, evolving health guidelines, resource disparities, and heightened mental health concerns among school members (Grissom et al., 2017; Kaul et al., 2021).
- These demands have escalated the looming crisis of principal burnout and turnover, which could lead to devastating ripple effects on the teacher workforce and student learning outcomes (Leven et al., 2020).

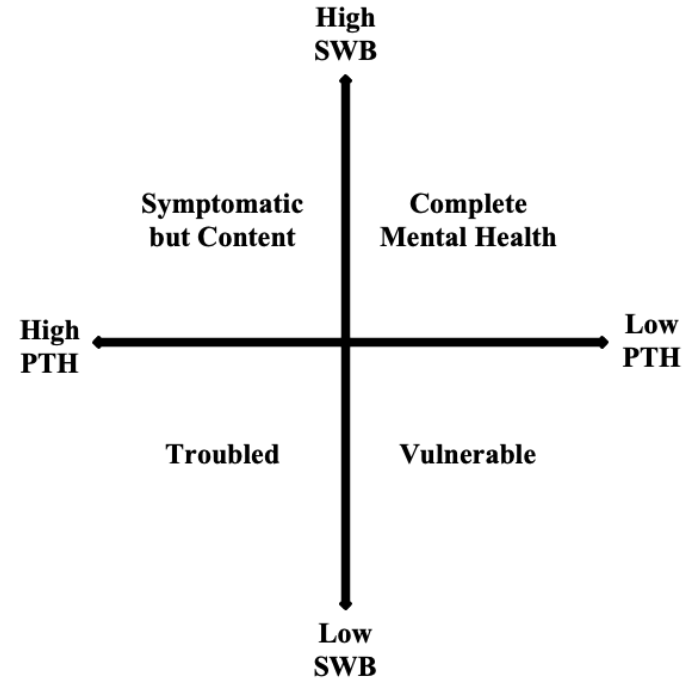
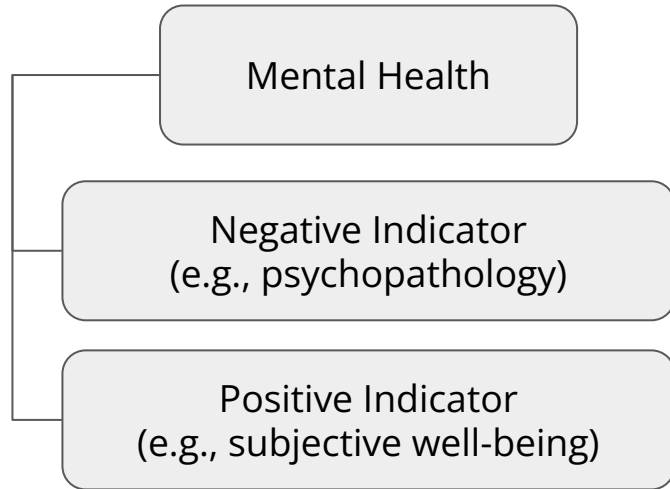
Research Gaps

- There are some empirical studies that explored risk and resilience factors for principals' mental health before, during, and after the pandemic (e.g., Collie et al., 2020; Katja et al., 2021; Kaufman et al., 2022).
- Mostly deficit-oriented approach to mental health $\Rightarrow$ Dual-Factor Model
- Mostly quantitative methodology $\Rightarrow$ Mixed-methods

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)



A Dual-Factor Model of Mental Health



A Dual-Factor Model of Mental Health

- **Compassion fatigue (-)**: A state of physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion caused by prolonged exposure to the suffering or trauma of others.
- **Compassion satisfaction (+)**: The positive feeling and sense of fulfillment derived from helping others.

Research Questions



RQ1: What are the main **stressors experienced by principals** during the post-pandemic recovery?

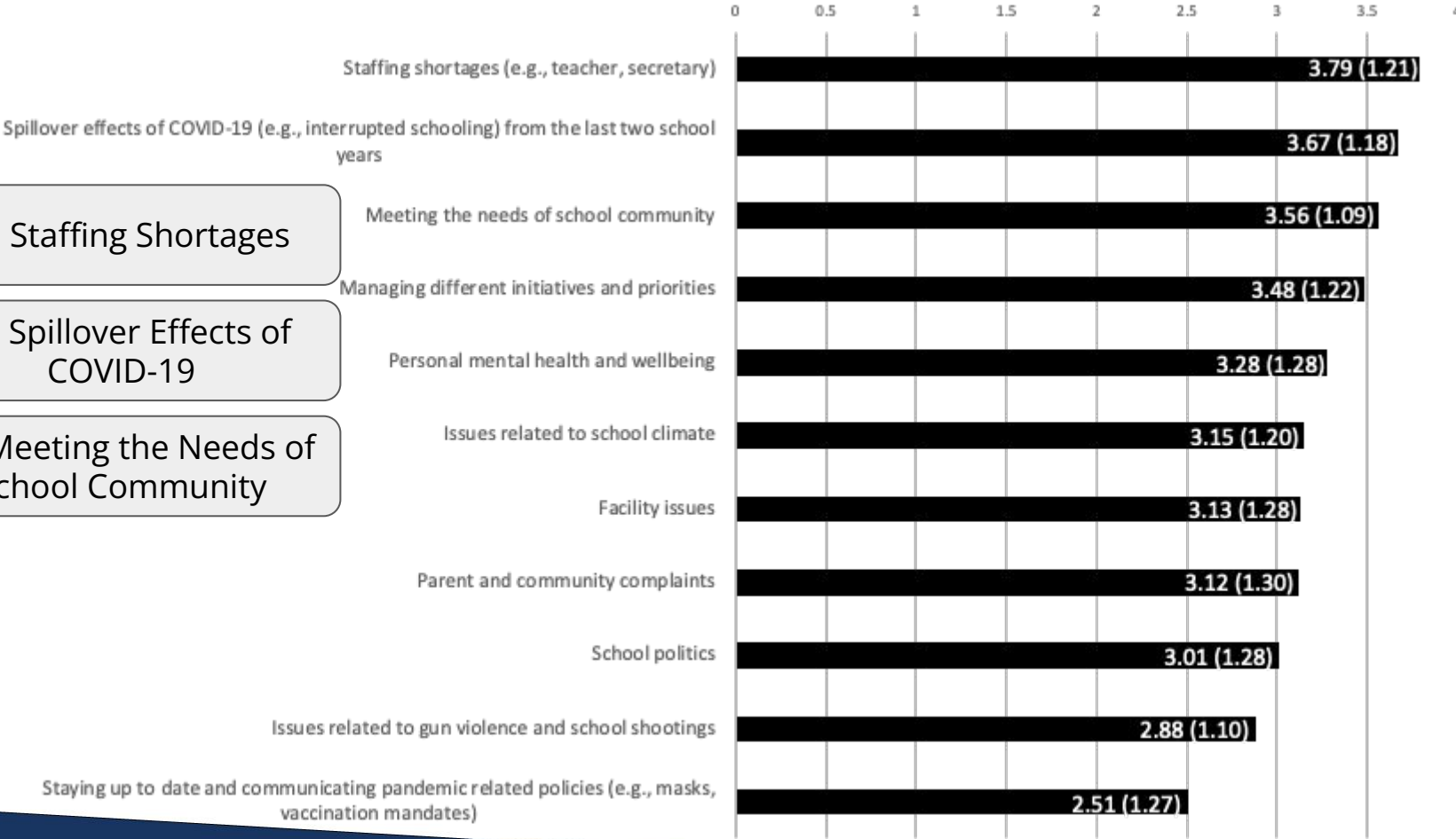
RQ2: How did the **main stressors and principals' perception of district connectedness, self- and collective efficacy, and professional support** concurrently influence their compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction?

RQ3: What are the **key elements for creating a system of support for principals** during the post-pandemic recovery?

Participants

- Participants:
 - 247 principals in California
 - Participants were predominantly female (67.2%), White (68.3%), and non-Hispanic (79.8%).
- Data collected in Fall 2022

- #1. Staffing Shortages
- #2. Spillover Effects of COVID-19
- #3. Meeting the Needs of School Community



Principal Stressors: Qualitative

The workload of principals is untenable. Principals talk about doing this short amount of time not for the duration of their profession. Additionally the **declining enrollment in our District has forced cuts which have added to admin's workload.**

– Male, Latin, Elementary School Principal

There is **no one to share responsibilities or talk with to help support you.** We **don't have a district to look to for support.**

– Female, White, K–8 School Principal

Themes of Additional Stressors

Workload
($n=35$; 22.3%)

Lack of Support System
($n=31$; 19.7%)

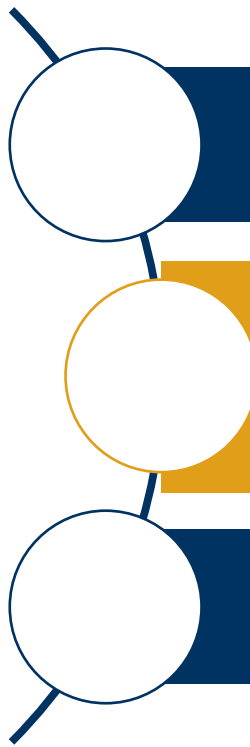
Insufficient Funding
($n=7$; 4.5%)

Loneliness
($n=5$; 3.2%)

Student SEL and Behavioral Problems
($n=4$; 2.5%)

Broken System or Systemic Inequality
($n=4$; 2.5%)

Research Questions

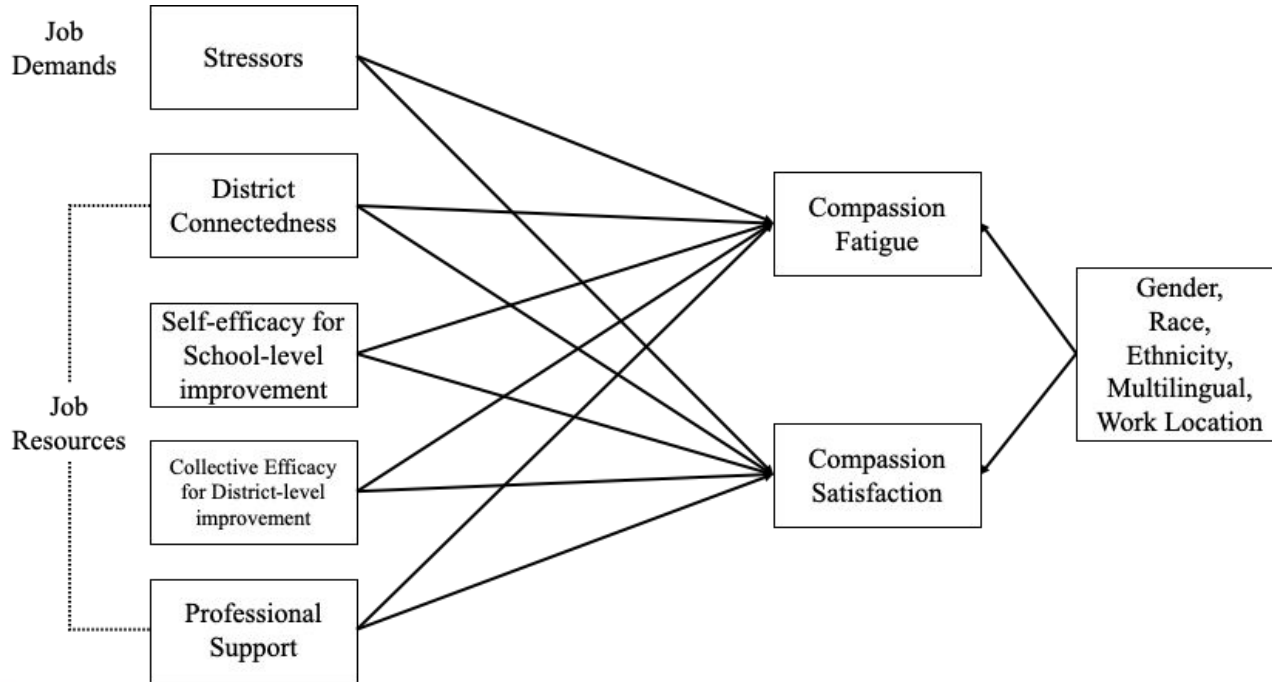


RQ1: What are the main **stressors experienced by principals** during the post-pandemic recovery?

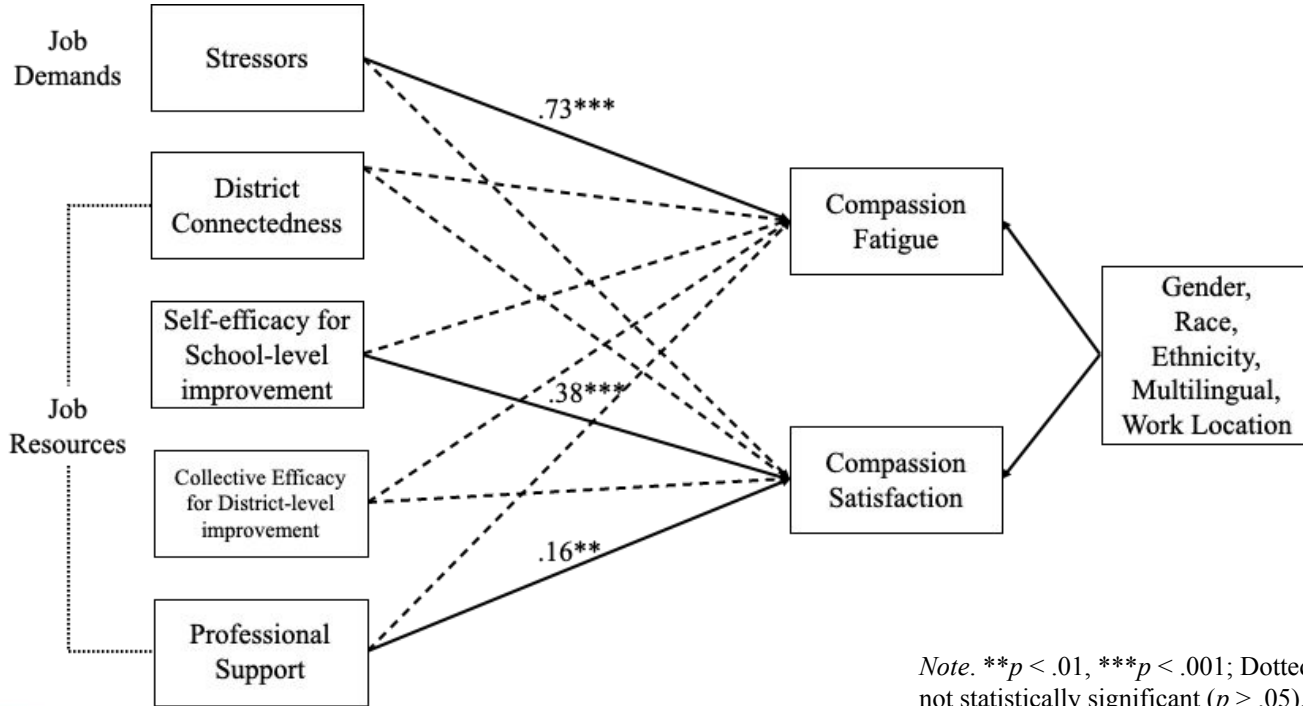
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Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)

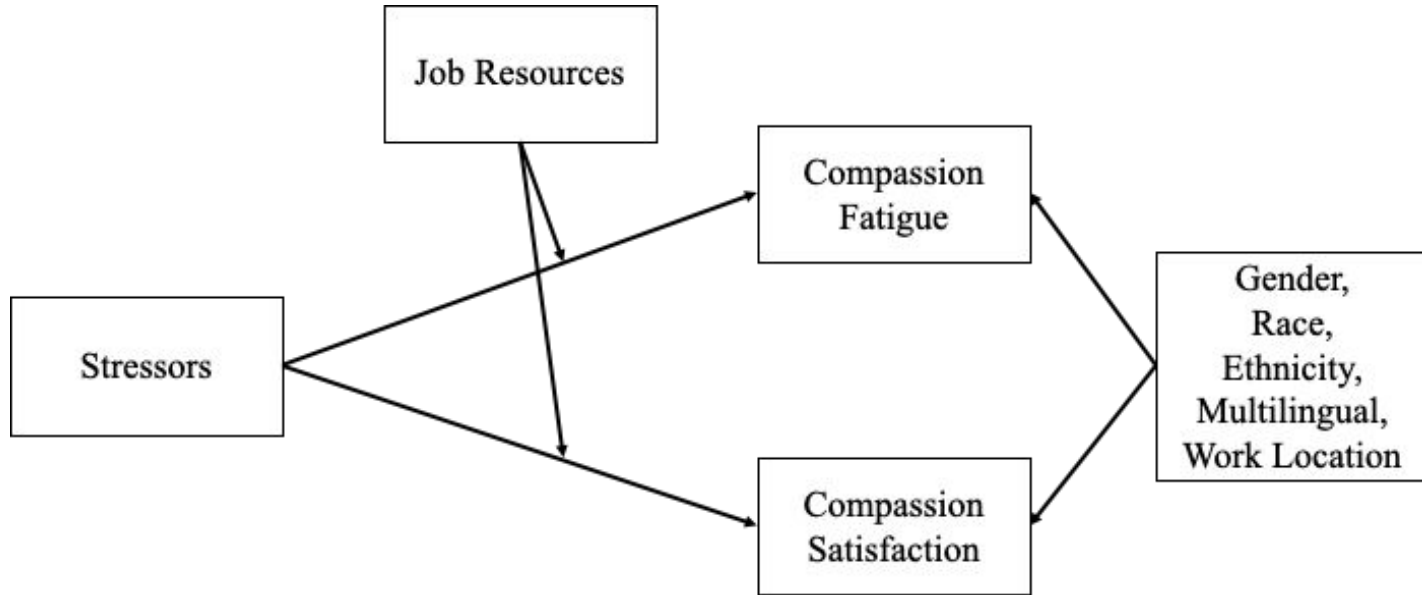


Path Analysis Results

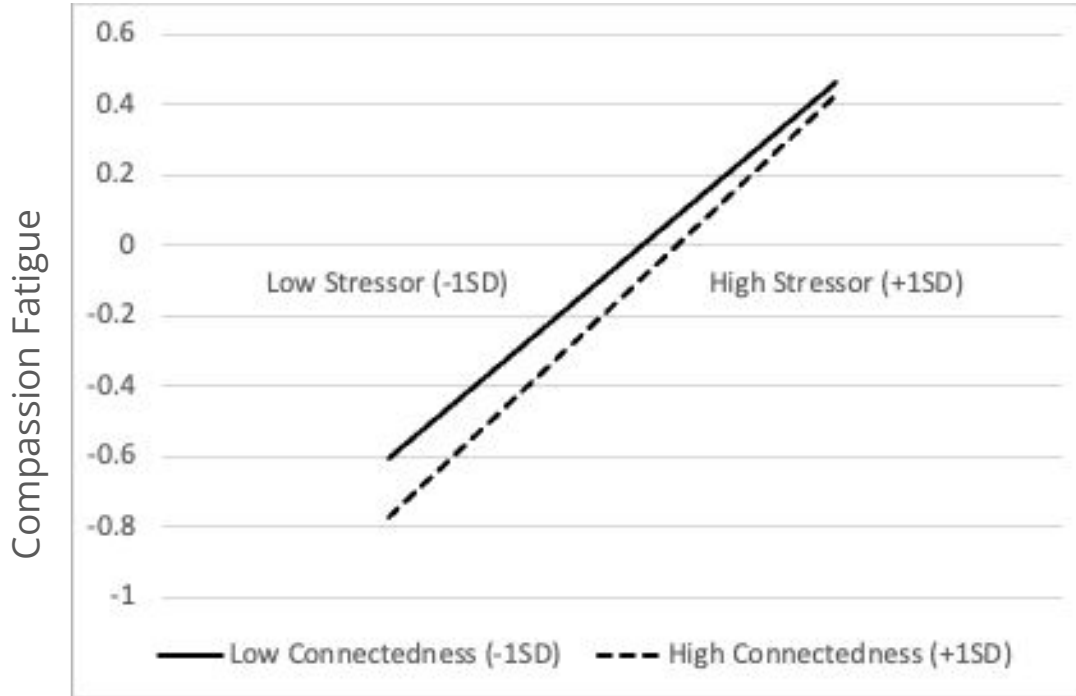


Note. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$; Dotted lines denote paths not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Moderation Analysis



Moderation Analysis



Summarization

- **Principals' Post-Pandemic Stressors**
 - Staff shortage
 - Spillover effect of COVID-19 (i.e., interrupted schooling)
 - Workload (*Qual*)
 - Lack of support system (*Qual*)
- **Influences of Job Demands and Resources on Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction**
 - Higher levels of stressors ⇒ Compassion fatigue
 - Self-efficacy & Professional Support ⇒ Compassion satisfaction
 - Stressor X Connectedness ⇒ Compassion fatigue

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