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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES USED BY CHURCH LEADERS TO MITIGATE
AND PREVENT BURNOUT AMONG CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Katie Donihoo

November, 2017

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Katie Donihoo

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation and my life are dedicated to Jesus. Abba Father, I love you.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39 New International Version).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thank you is for everyone who went through this long journey with me. I could not have done this without your love and prayers!

To my Mom, for always praying for me and loving me more than any daughter could ask for. I love you!

To my family, for always having my back, even though I left Texas!

To Ritchie and Sheila Pruehs, who did everything in their power to stick by me, believe in me, support me, and make sure I made it through this, even if it was by dragging me. I love y'all!

To Amanda Limonius, for being my best friend, encouraging me, and believing this would happen when I could not believe it myself. Taco stand illuminated in Italy!

To Andrea Karcher, for helping me out every chance she got and for being willing to go on the Duckboat tour with me!

To Gregory Davis, for sitting beside me when I felt like I could not push through. For not allowing me to give up and for making sure I was taken care of.

To my Pepperdine West LA Cohort and all the professors in the organizational leadership program – Thank you for your support.

To my committee – Dr. Farzin Madjidi, Dr. Lani Fraizer, and Dr. Gabriella Miramontes – Thank you for your genuine encouragement, availability, and personal investment in my success.

VITA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies implemented by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Volunteer training in the church must be set up for success relationally to create long-term sustainability. Burnout among volunteers and church leadership is common but effective training can help to prevent and mitigate burnout. The insights gleaned from the literature for preventing burnout can be incorporated into volunteer training programs within the church in order to provide long-term sustainability for volunteers. Armed with the findings of this study regarding insights gleaned from successful burnout mitigation and prevention programs used in churches currently, churches that are in need of these programs can become empowered to assist their volunteers with training.

Qualitative research provided this study with a flexible framework to encompass the dynamic relationships that existed between church leadership, church volunteers, and burnout mitigation and prevention. Data was collected from 10 church leaders in charge of volunteer training within the Southern California area. Nine semi-structured interview questions were formulated from the four research questions in order to gather burnout prevention and mitigation data from these church leaders. The findings have strong implications for those developing and implementing burnout prevention and mitigation programs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Volunteers are the foundation and representatives of the church. Their role is essential to the church's mission in the community and in the world. De Vries (2015) stated that Christians can embody the very spirit of Christ by giving their time regularly and faithfully to the service of others. De Vries explained that volunteering matters to Christians because Christ has called us to be active priests and to represent God to other people through service, prayer, and witnessing. Defining the Christian walk through this service aspect of faith is the crux of volunteer devotion. Biblically stated, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 New International Version) God calls believers to serve others. Volunteering in any capacity is fulfilling a part of the church's mission in the world.

The church's ability to recruit, train, and sustain volunteers is vital for the church's functioning. Churches could not commit themselves to making a difference in their congregations, communities, or the world without volunteers and their commitments to serve. According to Lawson (2014), developing skills is directly linked to behavioral learning. Volunteers need to learn the necessary skills, including ways to mitigate and prevent burnout, in order to serve their community and congregation effectively. Bays (2006) contributed to this thinking by adding that the church is its own community, relying on the service of its volunteers to keep all of its ministries running. Bays stated that the church has a call to empower its volunteers through training and support, in order for them to be able to foster their spiritual gifts and contribute to the body of Christ. Donihoo, Liberatore, Maybaum, and Simpson (2016) formulated that volunteers are essential to the vision and mission of the church. As Pastor T.

Gillespie explained, “Volunteers are the backbone and most important part of the church. Theologically, it assents to the priesthood of all believers, and functionally, it makes the church run” (personal communication, March 4, 2016).

Volunteers serving others for Jesus represent the body of Christ: many different parts functioning together as one. Each part is crucial to the overall success and health of the church (1 Corinthians 12:12–14 NIV). A hospitality volunteer plays a role of equal importance to the pastor in loving well and bringing people closer to Jesus. Donihoo et al. (2016) postulated that each volunteer is essential and must be regarded in this manner. Pastor T. Gillespie explained:

We not only need volunteers as a blessing to the church but as a blessing to the community at large. By simply being a presence in the community, and then by doing a great work as well, we are spreading the ethos and mission of Jesus Christ to the world one person at a time, but corporately. (personal communication, March 4, 2016)

Churches that support their volunteers in volunteer training/development have higher rates of sustaining volunteers and preventing burnout among volunteers and church leadership alike. Unruh (2010) suggested that organizations, especially religious ones, need to place the same value of care and support on their volunteers as they would the members of their congregation and the people they help. Unruh makes a point to state that the highest level of care a nonprofit or organization can give their volunteers is resources and training to assist in burnout mitigation and prevention. Stewart (2003) emphasized the extreme importance of training, equipping, and coaching volunteers in the church. Stewart explained that providing volunteers with adequate support at the beginning can prevent a crash or burnout down the road, and the concept is just “wise stewardship” (p. 1).

When volunteers are effectively trained and the church provides human and material resources, stress is significantly reduced and burnout can be prevented. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2014) found that “people tend to feel committed to a decision or activity in direct proportion to their participation in or influence on its planning and decision making” (p. 58). When choosing new leadership in the church, when creating different positions for ministries, and when providing adequate help for weekly services and community needs, volunteers are the go-to source.

Volunteer burnout is a hot topic due to the high turnover rates of volunteers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reported that volunteer rates for the year 2015 dropped 0.4%. The rising rates of volunteer dropout could in part be due to improper mitigation and prevention of burnout. Dodd (2013) equated 15 reasons good church volunteers leave, all directly linked to the burnout literature. When church volunteers find no return on their investments, do not feel appreciated, or believe that they are not making a difference, leaving their positions at the church becomes inevitable. Concurrently, Allen and Mueller (2013) postulated that volunteers experience burnout when there is a loss of resources (such as energy or emotional support) and when volunteers feel that they are not being significantly heard, or their feedback and ideas are not making a difference.

These feelings often leave volunteers with a decision to either leave their positions at the church or continue on with burnout. Both scenarios damage the church because the quality of work from the volunteer either diminishes or the church is left with a position to fill. Dodd (2013) explained that other reasons good church volunteers leave their roles include a personal vision that is not linked to the church’s vision, lack of personal buy-in, or the inability to change what they’re doing. Idzerda (2008) explored the notion that people don’t give valuable personal

resources like money and time to a religious organization because of necessity; rather, people give of themselves because they believe in the leadership, mission, and vision of the church. Marriner (2015) reported that compassion fatigue can happen to anyone, but most people don't notice the symptoms until burnout is already in full effect and feelings of anger and cynicism toward other people abound. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) outlined the process leading to burnout, stating that burnout is developed in primarily three stages: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Burnout among volunteers and staff is detrimental in maintaining long-term, productive workers. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) reported that job demands and a lack of key resources are the main and most common factors in burnout. Dodd (2013) stated that church volunteers who do not have personal connections or emotional attachments to the community are on the same road to burnout, which could cause them to leave their volunteer positions or the church for good. North Point Community Church (2017) pointed out that the application of what Jesus says happens best within the context of community and through relational connections. Örtqvist and Wincent (2006) explained that burnout most commonly follows a series of stressors, including role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict. These factors increase a person's chance for burnout due to an unclear nature of his or her role, and being overwhelmed with too many responsibilities and not enough time to complete them. These volunteers most often will feel as though they have a lack of resources or social support upon which to draw.

Davis (2010) postulated that burnout in the emotional exhaustion stage can present itself in the volunteer as withdrawing, feeling worn out, and seemingly being ineffective in one's position. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) stated that work overload, when one is asked to do too much without enough help and resources, greatly contributes to burnout. This often leads to the

perception that the person does not have control over the environment or the individual's work itself. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) listed some common signs associated with burnout: anger, frustration, exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of incompetence and failure. Maslach and Goldberg explained that burnout is most common among people who work or volunteer in people-focused jobs or positions. Many churches have a very few people doing the workload of many people. This is a significant factor that contributes to church volunteer burnout. Faulkner (2006) stated that a dedicated core of individuals makes up the majority of unpaid volunteer work, and postulated that overwork in these settings is what eventually leads to burnout.

Volunteers need to be supported through church leadership to mitigate and prevent burnout, in order to fulfill the mission of the church, by contributing to the body of Christ. Church volunteers are not only important to the mission and vision of the church's future, but also to the surrounding community. Yamasaki (2015), using several stories about his church members, pointed out that church volunteering directly affects the needs of the community. Yamasaki explained that many of his church volunteers work by faith to engage the community and help others in need. He identified three components that define the church's program for community outreach through their church volunteers: service, socialization, and support.

Yamasaki (2015) explained that service manifests itself through community connections and stewardship. In other words, he pointed out that how volunteers give their time and engage their talents to help others is what makes the life of the surrounding community possible. Yamasaki told the story of some volunteers in his church who serve their community and congregation well. Roberta, a senior adult and member of First Congregation Church, serves on committees and participates in community outreach programs and weekly fellowships with other members of the church. Jackie and LaVonne decided their talents were best engaged through the

community outreach programs, volunteering to assist kids and their parents through the St. John's Oasis after school program every Wednesday. A long list identifies the faithful volunteers who keep the church and the volunteer programs in their community alive.

The vital role of volunteers in the church, community, and world requires church leaders to support their volunteers in the mitigation and prevention of burnout. Vaters (2015) postulated that church leaders need to be able to listen to their congregations and volunteers more effectively. Church leaders should surround themselves with people from whom they can learn rather than seeking people to whom they can preach. Vaters said that listening effectively to the needs, concerns, and expertise of a congregation can create better leaders and more committed volunteers overall. Unruh (2010) explained that nonprofit leaders need to understand the impact of faith in motivating volunteers to service. Church leaders should view volunteers as whole persons who are also in need of spiritual and social nourishment. In this way, volunteering can be just as beneficial to the volunteer as it is to the organization, ultimately creating thriving volunteers who pump life into the organization and community.

Quality leadership in any organization is important but especially within the religious context. Idzerda (2008) expressed the idea that people put their time and money into religious organizations when they believe in the leadership and mission of the church. Leaders play a vital role in making sure the mission and the vision of the church is adequately communicated and aligned with that of the volunteers. Watts and Corrie (2013) explained that transformational leaders inspire their followers through motivation to align their own intrinsic motivations with those of the organization. Similarly, Cartwright and Baldwin (2007) postulated that a vision for the future of an organization needs to be shared in order for it to be effective.

An effectively shared vision can motivate, inspire, simplify, and focus the work. Robbins and Judge (2011) explained that authentic leaders understand themselves, know what their values and beliefs are, and follow these values and beliefs openly. Essentially, by being role models for volunteers, church leaders can either encourage and promote a healthy environment for creative learning for their volunteers or they can hinder it. Robbins and Judge (2011) reported that leaders of innovative organizations are willing to encourage workers to improve their skills by providing training; leaders also support and participate in the worker's new ideas. This inspires and encourages the workers to become more autonomous, confident, and committed to the organization.

Robbins and Judge (2011) stated that the transformative leader inspires others to look past their self-interests and to come together for the good of the organization. Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, and Rezazadeh (2013) reported that encouraging employees through motivation, intellectual stimulation, and speech are some of the inspirational methods used by transformational leaders. A good leader will also recognize the need for change within his or her church organization or culture. Senge (2010) discussed assessing an organization's limitations and suggested that the first step for a leader is to recognize the need for improved communication and learning within the organization. A leader first has to realize when needs are not being met or the functioning of the current system is not working. Senge (2010) wrote that after this first step of recognizing an issue, the organization can then move forward to address the need in a creative way. On the same note, Crother-Laurin (2006) stated that an effective leader sees the importance of systems, connections, and relationships when solving an organizational problem.

Leadership style can have a vast impact on the church and its ability to change in order to support its volunteers. Mei, Lee, and Al-Hawamdeh (2004) wrote about three vital factors for effective change in an organization. First, the senior leadership team must be committed; leadership must be fully involved and sold on the idea of the change for the betterment of the organization. This commitment allows for a buy-in and an authentic desire for change. The second factor is the type and intensity of the resistance to the change. The third factor is the overall culture of the organization and the change agent's knowledge and ability to implement the change. An agent of change could be an outside consultant or a leader within the organization who is working to change its current systems.

Statement of the Problem

Most nonprofit organizations' demand for volunteers outweigh their supply, even though worldwide about 360 million people serve as volunteers at any given time (Vantilborgh et al., 2013). According to Tuohy (2015), the retention of volunteers is critical for the organizations that rely on volunteers. In the United States, 25.3% of residents volunteer their time to serve others in some capacity or another (Corporation for National & Community Service, n.d.). Volunteers are therefore vitally important to the functioning of this country. Tuohy (2015) pointed out that burnout directly affects the rate of volunteer retention. Volunteers who experience burnout symptoms drop out and give up at high rates.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reported that volunteer rates dropped 0.4% in 2015. An estimated 62.6 million people gave their time to volunteer at least once between September 2014 and September 2015. Data was collected through a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) in 2015. When volunteer rates drop, the church suffers. The effect of volunteer burnout mitigation and prevention in the church is vital for sustaining long-term

volunteers. Volunteers are the hands and feet of the church (1 Corinthians 12:14-20 NIV).

Without volunteers, the church cannot complete its mission in the world. Volunteers are the foundation of the church and create a market of resources when properly supported.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) for the year 2015, most volunteers (33.1%) worked with religious organizations, followed by education or youth services settings (25.2%) and social or community service organizations (14.6%). The remaining statistics (27.1%) were made up of sports, cultural events, public safety, political, and environmental volunteering. The ability of church leadership to lead a process that mitigates and prevents burnout becomes vital when looking at the statistics of the people who volunteer and keep the church going.

Purpose Statement

Few resources in the literature provide information on church volunteering programs that incorporate burnout prevention strategies. A lack of research exists that directly links the church's ability to foster spiritual gift discovery and training with burnout prevention. Most churches do not have trainings to assist in discovering or growing spiritual gifts, and those that do have limited resources. Despite this lack of research and availability of resources, examples of churches can be found that have been successful in implementing training, coaching, and resources for their volunteers in such a way that burnout is far less prevalent. As such, the purpose of this study is to determine:

- The strategies and best practices used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers.
- The challenges church leaders face in supporting church volunteers to overcome and mitigate church volunteer burnout.

- How church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers.
- Recommendations church leaders would make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) guide this study.

- **RQ 1:** What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?
- **RQ 2:** What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout.
- **RQ 3:** How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?
- **RQ 4:** What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies implemented by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Volunteer training in the church is significant and essential in order to embody the mission and vision of the church, align the volunteers' values with that of the church, effectively organize and communicate with volunteers, and set up a system to receive constructive feedback from the volunteers. Volunteer training in the church must be set up for success relationally to create long-term sustainability. Burnout among volunteers and church leadership is common but effective training can help to prevent or deal with burnout. The insights gleaned from the literature for preventing burnout can

be incorporated into volunteer training programs within the church in order to provide long-term sustainability for volunteers.

Armed with the findings of this study regarding insights gleaned from successful burnout mitigation and prevention programs used in churches currently, churches that are in need of these programs can become empowered to assist their volunteers with training. The ultimate goal is to provide long-term sustainability for volunteers in order to complete the mission and vision of the church through serving others and showing the love of Jesus to the world.

Limitations and Assumptions

This research studied the effectiveness of church leaders' abilities to support their volunteers through successful burnout mitigation and prevention programs, in order to sustain long-term volunteers. Key assumptions and limitations of the study are outlined in the following section and have the possibility of impacting the studies outcome.

Key assumptions. The following assumptions were made while conducting the study:

- The outcomes from the interviews conducted are assumed to be congruent with the outcomes of the current research, which indicated that successful burnout prevention programs greatly impact volunteer retention and sustainability rates (Creswell, 2013).
- During the data collection process, all interviewees will provide authentic and honest responses to the research questions provided (Creswell, 2013).
- The inclusion criteria for the study will accurately provide a similar experience for all participants included in the research (Creswell, 2013).
- The qualitative research in this study is focused on the process (meaning-making and personal experiences) rather than the outcomes (the end result and right answers; Merriam, 1998).

Limitations. Possible limitations of this study are as follows:

- Participants in the study were purposely selected. The selection process may have an impact on the findings by being less generalizable to a larger sample.
- Participant responses may hold biases based on the area in which they live, their specific job roles, their cultural norms, or other unknown factors (Wargo, 2015).
- The gender and ethnicity of church leaders were not a factor in this research, which may have an unknown influence on the findings.
- A time limit for gathering the research may have impacted or prevented specific participants from contributing to the study. This could have an unknown effect on the scope of the study's ability to engage specific church leaders and their valuable experience in regard to successful burnout prevention and mitigation programs.

Definition of Terms

This select list of key terms is provided to offer definitions and further clarification on how these terms are used within this body of research.

- **Burnout.** Maslach and Goldberg (1998) stated that “burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment” (p. 65).
- **Compassion fatigue.** Elisha (2008) stated that this term refers to,
a condition of emotional exhaustion also called "burnout" that they attribute to frustrating experiences of being resisted or manipulated by irresponsible and unrepentant beneficiaries of charitable aid. Evangelical volunteers often cite compassion fatigue as a reason for their withdrawal, sometimes permanently, from social outreach. (p. 9)

- **Depersonalization.** Maslach and Goldberg (1998) explained that depersonalization follows emotional exhaustion and represents the interpersonal dimension of burnout.

- **Emotional exhaustion.** According to Maslach and Goldberg (1998), emotional exhaustion is the first of the three stages of burnout. Emotional exhaustion represents the stress dimension of burnout and presents as being overextended at work and being depleted of one's' emotional resources.

- **Millennials.** Individuals born between the years 1983 and 2000 (Sorenson, 2015).

- **Organizational culture.** Helfrich, Yu-Fang, Mohr, Meterko, and Sales (2007) stated that organizational culture is a shared relationship between members of an organization encompassing key values, beliefs, and assumptions.

- **Reduction of personal accomplishment.** Maslach and Goldberg (1998) reported that the feeling of a lack of personal accomplishment represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout.

- **Transformational leadership.** Transformational leaders inspire their followers to align their own intrinsic motivations with those of the organization through motivation (Watts & Corrie, 2013).

- **Volunteers.** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) defined volunteers “as persons who did unpaid work” (para. 2).

- **Volunteer work.** Thoits and Hewitt (2001) identified volunteer work as work done “in or for the community, where time and effort are given for the betterment of the community in general or for specific subsets of the community members who are in need” (p. 116).

Summary

Chapter one dealt with the importance and significance that volunteers bring to the church, the community, and the world. Chapter one provided the research questions regarding strategies and best practices used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers. Church leaders play a very important role in recognizing, setting examples, and reinforcing change within church organizations in order to support volunteers. Chapter one points out that development training for volunteers in the church can contribute to the prevention of burnout, and is vital for sustaining long-term volunteers. Volunteers are the hands and feet of the church; without them, the church cannot complete its mission in the world. In this chapter, the researcher explored the possibility that insights from the literature about burnout prevention could be incorporated into church volunteer training programs in order to enable churches to be more effective in sustaining long-term volunteers. Sustaining long-term volunteerism in the church is vital for the church's influence on the congregation, the community, and the world.

The function of volunteers is extremely vital to the life of the church and ultimately leads to continuing the work that Jesus laid out for the church, to spread his love and service throughout the world. Therefore, it is necessary that church leadership recognize, train, coach, provide resources, and support their volunteers. The influence of a process implemented by church leaders that mitigates and prevents burnout becomes fundamental when reviewing the statistics of people who volunteer and their roles in sustaining the church. Hence, the findings of this study regarding insights gleaned from successful burnout mitigation and prevention programs used in churches currently can influence churches worldwide that are in need of these kinds of programs, providing a framework for churches that can assist the leadership in implementing a new volunteer culture and promote a thriving and sustainable service ministry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The ability of church leaders to implement a process that deals with burnout prevention and mitigation among their church volunteers is paramount for the continued functioning of the organization (Callaly & Minas, 2005; Crother-Laurin, 2006; Karp, 2013; Robbins and Judge, 2011; Stanley, 2003). Churches experience high rates of volunteer dropout, due to role ambiguity, lack of support, unappreciation, being overworked, having the wrong position to fit their personality, not knowing themselves, and being unmotivated (Maslach, Wilmar, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). These overwhelming feelings and conditions, either lead to the volunteers dropping out or becoming apathetic and the quality of their work declining. The overall health of the volunteer contributes to the overall health of the organization (Gage, 1998). Without holistically healthy volunteers, the church cannot fulfill its mission in the world (Colson, 1992; Perry, 2014; Scharffs, 2009). There are many variables that contribute to the process of creating stability and sustainability for volunteers in the church, including: understanding the roots of burnout, volunteerism, church based volunteering, leadership, faith-based leadership, organizational change, and burnout prevention and mitigation strategies for church volunteers (Buys & Rothmann, 2010; Knowles et al., 2014; Loescher, 2001; Wilson, 2000).

Burnout literature that has emerged since the 1970's can provide church leaders an invaluable resource to understand the internal and relational dynamics behind volunteer longevity (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Rabinbach, 1990). Through this body of research, church leaders can become more familiar with specific dynamics that are identified and explained in the literature, enabling the development of effective volunteer training and retention programs (Knowles et al., 2014). Ultimately, the goal is to create a culture that permeates the church, allowing church leadership, volunteers, and the congregation to

explore their own core motivations and how these align with that of the organizations' leading to a purposeful and fulfilling experience of service for the body of Christ.

In order for church leadership to utilize the concepts taken from the literature on burnout prevention for their volunteers, they must first understand its origins (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Rabinbach, 1990). In understanding the roots of burnout, leadership will be able to better identify the core issues surrounding the problem, in order to effectively evaluate strategies to mitigate and prevent burnout. The next section outlines the emergence of burnout as a concept, as well as an identifiable, valid phenomenon. Drawing upon burnout research from a variety of sources will assist in integrating this interdisciplinary concept within the context of the church.

The Emergence of Burnout

The term fatigue started popping up in the early 19th century as a result of the industrial revolution's effect on the emotional state of workers. Rabinbach (1990) attributed the modern interest in fatigue as a direct result of the industrial revolution. He stated that the concept first began to appear when people started working longer hours, in assembly lines, and with boring tasks. Angerer (2003) explained that the modern idea of burnout is directly linked to work related stressors. Along the same lines, Angerer pointed out that the industrial revolution brought about a different dynamic of stress and hardship, which warranted people to unionize and create new laws to protect themselves against exploitation.

Maslach et al. (2001), explored the history of burnout in the United States. In the 1970's this term began to spring up when referring to the relationship between people's jobs and the difficulties they encountered emotionally within those positions. Maslach et al. (2001) explained that this term was often used to describe a person's loss of idealism, reduction in passion and

severe fatigue in regards to their work positions, especially within the human services field.

Maslach et al. (2001) pointed out that at the beginning of the emerging literature, burnout was viewed as “non-scholarly, pop psychology” (p. 398) and the term was not taken seriously.

This new burnout phenomenon was, from a bottom-up perspective, taking into account the real life experiences and perspectives of the everyday working folk. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that this fact made burnout controversial, mainly due to the fact that the research on the phenomenon between people and the workplace had previously been from a top-down approach, derived from scholarly theory. Maslach et al. (2001) explained that the theory began to gain traction and credibility after a theoretical model and empirical research for the phenomenon were established; today the term burnout is acknowledged as a credible psychological syndrome, encompassing the consistent interpersonal stressors people experience on the job.

The History of Burnout Research

The history of research on burnout has gone through many phases of development and change. According to Maslach et al. (2001) the pioneering phase and empirical phase have contributed greatly to the research surrounding the burnout phenomenon. The pioneering phase started in the United States in the 1970's and sought to name burnout, explore the basic concept of what burnout was, and normalize burnout as a common phenomenon among workers. The research was mainly based on studies done with individuals who worked in the human services and healthcare industries.

According to Maslach et al. (2001) and Angerer (2003), the main contributors to research during this pioneering phase were Freudenberger and Maslach, who focused their research on different aspects of burnout. Freudenberger, a psychiatrist working in the health field, focused on his own and his colleague's experiences of emotional exhaustion, lack of commitment and

motivation to their jobs. Maslach et al. (2001) explained that Maslach, a social psychologist, geared her research towards interviews done with people working in the human services field. Maslach aimed to discover how people coped with the emotional stress of their jobs, and how these coping mechanisms played into their professional identity and job behavior.

The roots of burnout literature are strongly grounded in the human services and care-giving industries due to the foundational research of Maslach and Freudenberger. Maslach et al. (2001) and Angerer (2003), similarly stated that common themes from their research indicated that the service industry is very demanding and emotional exhaustion was common.

Depersonalization also showed itself as a common coping mechanism among workers in the service industry, explaining that distancing oneself from the client was a way of dealing with the intense emotional distress that could disrupt their job. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that depersonalization, when taken to the extreme, presented itself as callous, uncaring, and excessively detached. Due to the concern with these responses, workshops and trainings began to emerge in order to provide awareness and prevention of burnout in these professions. The research often focused on the relationships between the caregivers, recipients, coworkers and their family members.

The empirical phase came about in the 1980's and shifted in favor of systematic empirical research. Maslach et al. (2001) explained that this shift introduced a quantitative approach, utilizing surveys, questionnaires and wrought the emergence of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Maslach et al. (2001) stated that the MBI was developed for the human service industry, but was quickly adapted to fit educational occupations, further spreading its influence. Along with this shift, came the development of greater understanding of the industrial-organizational psychology component of burnout.

Maslach et al. (2001) reported that this shift added scholarly credibility through standardized tools and research design, linking job stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover.

Maslach et al. (2001) explained that the empirical phase continued in the 1990's with the continued growth of burnout literature based on further research encompassing a wide variety of jobs and positions, further rooting itself in advanced methodology and statistical tools. Maslach et al. (2001) explored the connection between organizational factors and the 3 main phases of burnout, which led to the development of the main structural models used today in burnout literature. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that new insights from longitudinal studies show that burnout is a consequence between the interaction of the individual and their work setting. The key implications of this phase of research, allow for the researcher to view the possible influences and consequences concurrently. Maslach et al. (2001) pointed out that during this phase foci such as individual factors, situational factors, a theoretical model of person-job fit, and job engagement, became more prominent. The concept of burnout also gained traction internationally. These emerging areas of professional and scholarly endeavor can guide further research on interventions for burnout prevention and mitigation.

Characteristics of Burnout

There are three overarching categories for how people experience burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) focused on these three stages, deriving that burnout is experienced through overwhelming exhaustion, cynicism and detachment from the work, and feelings of being ineffective with a lack of accomplishment. The exhaustion phase demonstrates itself through feelings of doing too much, being overwhelmed and stressed. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that this stage represents a lack or depletion of an individual's physical and emotional resources. Likewise Bianchi,

Schonfeld, and Laurent (2015a, 2015b) reported that the emotional exhaustion phase, can be contributed to feelings of helplessness towards unresolved work conflicts.

Maslach et al. (2001) and Bianchi et al. (2015a, 2015b) explained that stage 2, depersonalization, manifests itself most often with cynicism and distancing. Revealing itself with a detached manner, apathy, and a negative attitude towards the job. Bianchi et al. (2015a, 2015b) reported that depersonalization can play itself out as a decrease or complete lack of motivation, withdrawing inwards, and cynicism towards their work and others. Bianchi et al. (2015a, 2015b) stated that their research has uncovered, that during this depersonalization stage, a person's increasing feelings of detachment are based on, and deepened by, the individual's perceived feelings of rejection. Galek, Flannelly, Greene, and Kudler (2011) pointed to multiple studies indicating that the confluence of interpersonal stress and institutional dysfunction is a particularly hazardous combination as an antecedent to burnout. When lack of appreciation begins to destabilize self-esteem, and their environment is devoid of validation, the volunteer may be tempted to exceed expectations. Galek et al. (2011) stated that if the occupational context does not change, which is likely, this striving may only exacerbate feelings of emotional disengagement. Eventually, continuing to work in an environment that exudes a lack of appreciation cannot be sustained and burnout is likely to ensue.

Maslach et al. (2001) then discussed stage 3 of burnout, which is the self-evaluation phase. During this phase individuals often experience feelings of being ineffective, not valuable, and unsuccessful at their work position. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that most of the outcomes from the burnout literature deal with job performance and health. When linked to job performance, burnout can affect the individual's intent to leave, turnover rates in the organization, lowered performance and productivity on the job, decreased job satisfaction, and

reduced commitment to the organization. Maslach et al. (2001) and Angerer (2003) both explained that burnout has detrimental effects on an individual's' health, and in particular, the exhaustion component of burnout.

This is also commonly linked to substance abuse as a coping mechanism. Maslach et al. (2001) mentioned that mental health and burnout go hand in hand, postulating that some experts have surmised that burnout is a form of mental dysfunction. More accurately, however, Maslach et al. (2001) stated that burnout causes mental dysfunction by its precipitating damaging effects, such as: anxiety, a loss of self-esteem and depression. Bianchi et al. (2015a) explained that burnout could mimic some depression symptoms, specifically in regards to feelings of intense negative emotions surrounding a person's perceived inability to cope with the stress.

Another school of thought that Maslach et al. (2001) explored, is the theory that people who have stable mental health are less likely to succumb to the tyranny of burnout, due to their ability to handle stress more effectively. Nevertheless, Maslach et al. (2001) succinctly stated that burnout is directly correlated with being overworked, experiencing role ambiguity, role conflict, having a lack of resources and a lack of social support. Exposed to these experiences, volunteers' motivation begins to wain. Huynh, Winefield, Xanthopoulou, and Metzger (2012) and Ross, Greenfield and Bennett (1999) have shown that volunteer exhaustion, in turn, breeds disengagement, lack of motivation, isolation, depression and withdrawal.

Additional research has begun to illuminate the chain of progression in which these negative outcomes are likely. Huynh et al. (2012) and Ross et al. (1999) reported that these mental health symptoms stem from a disconnect that occurs when the volunteers are unable to see an emotional payoff for their work. In other words, there is a lack of emotional rewards to balance out the work put in by the volunteer. Ross et al. (1999) postulated that when the

emotional investment is not refueling the volunteer, emotional exhaustion can occur, and then physical health problems are not far behind. Huynh et al. (2012) explained that when volunteers experience mistrust and a lack of appreciation from their organization, disengagement and apathy follow. This environment fosters a lack of motivation, due to the feelings of being unable to contribute or be successful regardless of personal engagement.

In addition, Huynh et al. (2012) and Ross et al. (1999) deduced that social connection and relationships have a part to play in the individual's drive and ability to effectively volunteer. These researchers have found that if a crisis in the volunteers' personal life occurs, this can hinder a volunteer's ability to effectively cope with other stressors. While these risk factors for burnout may be consistent across multiple volunteer settings, additional risks appear to be specific to volunteering within communities of faith. Research on pastoral burnout is particularly instructive. Cattich (2012) agreed that ministers are expected to function in a wide variety of roles in the church and to balance these roles with the roles they play within their own families. These researchers found that clear intentionality to establish congregant expectation and setting boundaries, both on the part of the clergyperson and their spouse, was necessary in order to prevent expectations of sacrifice. These expectations were common in communities of faith, and often lead to an imbalance in family relationships and neglect of self-care. Pooler (2011a) suggested that self-awareness, self-regulation and structural accountability are needed elements in maintaining safety for both pastor and congregation. Pooler (2011a) noted that an important boundary is for the pastor to make a clear distinction between work time, personal time and family time. When pastors don't manage time with clear boundaries, other boundaries may also become blurred.

Proeschold-bell et al. (2011) concurred that pastoral burnout is connected to the ever growing demands of the job, organizational administrators expectations and the congregational burdens. Proeschold-bell et al. (2011) pointed out that self-care is not highlighted in these systems to assist in mitigating these stressful situations, often leading to health issues as well as degradation of spiritual well-being. While this research was conducted specifically with pastors, it alludes to the concept that volunteers who serve in churches may encounter similar pressures and risks.

The next section describes the history of volunteerism in America. As well as the current state and importance of volunteerism in the United States. These sections highlight the dynamic relationship of mutual benefit between the volunteer, churches, the community and the individuals served.

Volunteerism

The American expression of volunteerism can be traced back to the beginning of the settling of the North American continent. Today, the American volunteer ethic continued to be strongly positioned in Protestant religious values (Elisha, 2008). According to Yarbrough (1982), in 1620 the Mayflower Pilgrims began settling the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. Nearly 10 years later Christians from the same congregation began settling in the Salem area and these settlers fell victim to an outbreak of scurvy (Yarbrough, 1982). It was then, according to Yarbrough (1982), that Dr. Samuel Fuller volunteered to travel from the Plymouth Colony to render aid to those in Salem. In a letter of gratitude the colonists outlined their perception of Dr. Fuller's motivation as "the outward form of God's worship" (p. 292). In this letter we see that the early settlers of America perceived worship for God as a core reason for serving humanity.

Through these service oriented experiences the American sense of self-identity began to form. Bradley (1999) noted that in 1840 Alexis de Toqueville described the United States as a society where volunteerism thrived. Scharffs (2009) quoted de Toqueville:

The Americans . . . are fond of explaining almost all the actions of their lives by the principle of interest rightly understood; they show with complacency how an enlightened regard for themselves constantly prompts them to assist each other, and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and property to the welfare of the state. (p. 67)

Ungurean (2013) explained that in his *Democracy in America*, de Toqueville divided the immigrants that made up the young American society into adventurers and spiritual idealists.

Ungurean (2013) quoted de Toqueville, pointing out that spiritual idealists were motivated by the “possibility of making a world in which things happen as they were designed, because it can be done what is intended, as there is the willingness to learn what cannot be done yet” (p. 195).

Here, de Toqueville painted a picture of the early American ethic of receiving, presumably from God, inspiration to bring into being a divine design that had not previously been brought forward in human terms, to “learn what cannot be done yet” (p. 195).

Ceaser (2011) argued that de Toqueville credited these shared “mental habits” (p. 223) as having a more important role in shaping American society than even America’s founding documents. Sanders (2013) further suggested that such collective mental habits were predominantly religious mores. According to Herold (2015), de Toqueville explained values such as volunteerism through the paradoxical Christian “desire to affirm and forget oneself simultaneously” (p. 523).

Volunteering continued to be a big deal in America. Perry (2014) stated that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 62.6 million Americans volunteered during 2013. In recent years the number of Americans who volunteer has ranged between 26 to 27%. Using a national sample, Kuskova (2010) found that there is a two-way relationship between volunteerism and life satisfaction, life satisfaction predicting volunteerism and volunteerism also contributes to life satisfaction. Likewise Binder and Blankenberg (2016) found that life satisfaction is improved more by altruism, than by personal motivations to volunteer. To reference de Toqueville's paradox it appears that the desire to "forget oneself" (Herold, 2015, p. 523), does the volunteer more good than the motivation to "affirm oneself." Furthermore, Kuskova (2010) discovered that higher levels of self-esteem made the causal relationship between volunteerism and life satisfaction more robust.

Nguyen (2014) stated that his passion for volunteering came from his dad who expressed his desire for the community in helping each other, and his mother who taught him to be grateful for everything. Nguyen (2014) talked about the value of volunteering, that everyone can make a difference no matter how small it is. He reported that volunteers can get something profound for themselves out of contributing their time, equating gaining such attributes as: gratitude, passion, learning efficiency, confidence boost, leadership skills, and a positive attitude. Findings by Hustinx (2007) demonstrated that when volunteers see themselves as being able to use their abilities to their full capacity, they are more likely to sacrifice other activities, even paid work, in order to prioritize their ability to volunteer. Binder and Blankenberg (2016) similarly found that volunteering more often, at least once per week, had a positive correlation with life satisfaction. But, as might be expected, this correlation is affected by how much volunteers work in paid jobs.

Breckenridge-Jackson (2013) talked about short-term volunteerism as it relates specifically to hurricane Katrina. He boldly stated that volunteers get more out of volunteering, than they give in volunteering. He practically runs the numbers, of the cost for volunteers to actually travel to places for crisis situations and shows the waste of resources. Breckenridge-Jackson (2013) reported that if volunteering was just for those who are receiving assistance, than we are doing it wrong. He postulated that if it just came down to the money, people could have contributed far more by just donating funds and staying home. Breckenridge-Jackson (2013) went on to explain that volunteers gain experience, skills, new perspectives, learn and develop so much from contributing, that its benefits outweigh its losses.

Bertram (2015) stated that communities around the world should take a look at the culture of volunteerism. Profound changes can occur when people are willing to donate their time and specialties to helping others. Bertram (2015) stated that in order to make your idea for a volunteer project happen you need to do five things: communicate your idea for your project, share your knowledge about your specialty, share your passion, and share the reason to volunteer and you can enjoy what you do. Bertram (2015) postulated that every individual has helpful information that would help others and that volunteers should share what they know. As little as it may seem, she stated it can have a big impact on other people. Bertram (2015) reported that our experience and knowledge is the most beneficial thing we can give to others, by sharing experience it is possible to bestow on others new skill sets, different perspectives and broaden each other's horizons.

Papi (2012) stated that traveling to another location to volunteer, the way it is currently looked at, is defective and inefficient. She makes the point that it is essential to learn before you help, otherwise you are causing more harm than good. When you send volunteers overseas to

help with a culture, and skills that they don't know how to do, this is not helpful. Papi (2012) reported that we need to take a learning stance when we volunteer abroad, instead of a teaching approach. Organizations that sponsor volunteer opportunities should tell youth to go abroad and learn, so that they can teach and volunteer more effectively in the future. This is in contrast to the teaching and hero complex that many volunteer trips offer. It is best to reframe these trips into learning development trips. Papi (2012) stated that reading, asking questions, learning from the culture around you, and placing emphasis on the learning aspect of volunteering is far more effective. Papi (2012) postulated that by reframing mission trips, as learning development trips, we can create a learning culture that will foster a long-term solution of contributing well.

In addition to learning new skills, volunteers are also able to develop relationships. Schanning (1999) stated that there are 3 main factors binding people to each other: the willingness of individuals to establish social groups, the necessity of interactions with other people, and the coercion and power involved in forming communal groups. Bloom and Kilgore (2003) found that volunteer retention is improved when volunteers feel free to develop friendships with those they serve. Krause, Bruce, Hayward and Woolever (2014) analyzed data from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey and found that people develop more friendships at church when they attend regularly and volunteer at church. The development of more friendships at church was shown to translate to a sense of greater social support. Krause et al. (2014) stated that social support is in turn a contributing factor in showing gratitude to God, which is a variable that predicts higher levels of mental health, physical health and well-being. Krause et al. (2014) found that the mental and physical health improvements linked volunteering at church, with a decreased risk of depression.

Volunteers in the later stage of life have been found to similarly benefit from serving others. Principi, Schippers, Naegele, Di Rosa and Lamura (2016), found that later in life, volunteerism is used as a pathway to increase self-esteem, make social connections and more effectively cope with personal problems. On the same note, Bradley (1999) found that a desire to learn new things was a key factor in the reasons why older adults choose to volunteer. Unlike, other groups of volunteers, older adults are more willing to volunteer because they have experienced hardships. Principi et al. (2016) showed that in older adulthood the tendency to volunteer is positively associated with experiencing hardships in one's personal life, such as divorce or the death of a spouse. This concept shows a direct correlation between a person's own experience of hardship, with a desire to volunteer and assist other people with their hardships.

While volunteerism remains a central value to American society, embraced by secular nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies, there still remains advantages to promote volunteerism among the faith community. The next section highlights the unique context churches provide for volunteers that are not generally touched by economic factors that often affect other secular organizations.

Society's need for church-based volunteers. Faith-based volunteers are the most prevalent among Americans. Indeed, Bradley (1999) stated, "only 29 percent of those who never attend religious services volunteer, compared to over 60 percent of those who attend more than once a week" (p. 46-47). Perry (2014) explained that the capacity of nonprofits to recruit, train, and care for volunteers has not recovered since the beginning of the recession. This may be another reason why church volunteerism is so important. In the current context, churches provide a different and perhaps more resilient kind of organizational infrastructure to support the nurturance of volunteerism.

Beyond the churches resilience against economic downturn, churches present additional advantages to society. Scharffs (2009) reported, “It is safe to say that charitable giving and volunteerism in the United States is enhanced due to the prevalence of religiously motivated humanitarianism” (p. 67). Colson (1992) highlighted the ability of church volunteers to do things in society that are very difficult to achieve, and it appears nobody has found a way to do it better. He pointed to the success of the Salvation Army in reducing criminal recidivism. Colson (1992) gave another prime example of society benefiting from faith-based volunteers in Florida. He stated that two-thirds of first-time offending prisoners, serving a six-year sentence in Florida, who receive service through the Salvation Army, did not re-offend. This is in direct contrast to those who were engaged by the criminal justice system only. One third of this group did not re-offend during the same period of time. Colson (1992) argued that to address moral issues in society, it requires that morality be modeled, not just taught. He argued that without the lived-presence of volunteers who embody morality, it is impossible to transmit values in ways that produce the lasting transformation of society.

Churches have the unique capability to provide society with the capacity to mobilize volunteers in a resilient and powerful way. One way churches do this is by participating in church life, which seems to predispose people to volunteer in their communities more than they otherwise would. Jeannotte (2003) illuminated the relationship between active participation in one’s local communal experience, such as attending a local church, and personal affiliation with shared values. Volunteer engagement appears to be dependent on the social cohesion evidenced by participation in the community. Bradley (1999) concurred that local social engagement fosters a civic volunteerism, especially, he points out, if that engagement is church-based. Haggard, Kang, Rowatt, and Shen (2015) found that the frequency of attendance at religious services was

predictive of community volunteering; whereas frequency of reading scripture predicted only volunteering within the church where one is affiliated.

This connection between church involvement and volunteering is even more pronounced among African Americans. Mottis et al. (2000) found that among African American men, when involvement with church activities increased, community volunteering also increased. While this correlation is consistent with findings of research with other populations, the extent of the predictive power of church involvement may be unique to African American men. Mottis et al. (2000) did not find that community or church volunteerism predicted social activism. Farmer and Piotrkowski (2009) found that comparisons of African American Women and Women of European descent did not yield differences in their volunteerism activities, whether in the community or in the church. The differences appeared in the style of social activism. In contrast to the findings about African American men (Mottis et al., 2000), African American women did engage in social activism, including attending political rallies and protests, and their engagement was found to be less formal than that of women of European descent.

The future of volunteerism in America will continue to thrive if the next generation of volunteers engage as effectively as past generations. Perry (2014) pointed to a strong interest in volunteering among millennials. Sorenson (2015) found that this interest can be turned into active volunteerism if millennials are able to reflect to themselves that they can make a real change for those individuals who are experiencing important issues.

The next section highlights the stages of burnout experienced by volunteers who are not receiving adequate emotional and physical support from their organizations. Likewise, the following section addresses some ways to effectively prevent and mitigate burnout within church organizations. These steps to prevent and mitigate burnout for volunteers provide crucial

training, internal and external resourcing, as well as different theories of effectiveness to sustain long-term volunteers.

Volunteer Burnout Prevention

Throughout the research experts have shown that training to prevent emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment is what can assist volunteers in preventing and mitigating burnout. Experts such as, Guinot, Chiva and Mallén (2015), Davis (2010), Knowles (2014) Lawson (2014), Larkin (2008), and Maslach and Goldberg (1998), surmised that the most important aspects of training should focus on internal resources for coping with stress, fostering personal connections and mentors, providing resources and specific job descriptions for volunteers, making sure that the position the volunteer is taking will be a good match, promoting spiritual gift discovery and growth, promoting spiritual practices and a strong relationship with Jesus, providing a clear and adult-learning focused onboarding program, a structured system, and volunteers with a passion for what they are doing. All of these factors were shown to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of burnout and provide a training environment that fosters growth and long-term sustainability for its volunteers (Davis, 2010; Guinot et al., 2015; Knowles, 2014; Larkin, 2008; Lawson, 2014; & Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Person-Centered approach to burnout prevention. Davis (2010) pointed out that a person-centered approach is the most common theory in preventing burnout. He relayed that it is easier to change a person, than an organization and focused on the intrinsic work that takes place within burnout prevention. Davis (2010) went on to state that secondary prevention and intrinsic work, focuses on changing the person's' reaction to the stressor, instead of altering the stressor itself. Davis (2010) continued by laying out some specific personal strategies that can be used to

alter the individual's' views on stress. He reported that developing coping skills, changing personal patterns, taking advantage of social resources, mindfulness exercises, and a healthful living plan, can greatly modify a person's' reaction to stress. Volunteer training programs that could facilitate learning intrinsic tools for dealing with stress, and provide resources for continual learning, stand a higher chance of sustaining their volunteers (Davis, 2010; Knowles, 2014).

Maslach and Goldberg (1998) surmised that changing one's reaction to stress, instead of changing the stressor itself can also be helpful. Most often these coping skills and self-improvements are more realistic because they are in the person's power to implement immediately. Davis (2010), however, also stated that external or situational variables are more strongly correlated with burnout than that above intrinsic factors.

Situation-Centered approach to burnout prevention. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) reported that very little research has been done on situational or organizational change to prevent burnout. Most places focus on changing the person to deal with the stress, instead of changing the system to better enhance the quality of work from the worker. The transformation of an organization, according to Guinot et al. (2015) is served by conceptualizing the organization as an individual. By anthropomorphizing the organization in this way, concepts such as “organizational learning” can be examined.

Some suggestions in the literature however, include giving the volunteer/worker more say in policies and procedures within the organization, training, job rotations systems, and assistance programs. Volunteer training programs structured to prevent burnout, and enhance the quality of work they get from volunteers could assist workers in giving back. Clear and concise onboarding and training programs can make all the difference when it comes to providing a

thriving environment for volunteers (Guinot et al., 2015; Knowles, 2014; Lawson, 2014; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Lawson (2014) emphasized the importance of an effective onboarding program for employees, and the same goes for volunteers. Lawson (2014) reported that onboarding should be sufficiently structured and convey a smooth integration plan for the worker into the organization. This training should include: the volunteers' specific role, communicate the organization's mission/vision, explain the importance of the workers' role to the organization, promote communication within the organization, provide motivation, and extend resources to assist the volunteer in thriving in their new position. Lawson (2014) explained the reasoning behind the need for an effective organizational structure. It is imperative for the volunteers' training and onboarding programs within the organization because the lack of structure can foster an environment that promotes volunteer burnout and exhaustion. Lawson (2014) stated that 25% of people leave their organization solely based on a poor onboarding program and that this directly contributed to poor employee sustainability.

Lawson (2014) pointed out that onboarding should not be boring and lecture focused, like most programs are. The reason so many training programs leave the volunteer overwhelmed and dazed is due to their focus on facts and figures. Lawson (2014) stated that volunteer training programs should be fun, provide an environment that will make the worker feel like they're contributing and that the worker's interactions are valued. There is also a need to integrate adult learning and/or experiential learning principles in order to fully assist volunteers in integrating the information needed to start their work within the church.

According to Knowles (2014) andragogy is the art and science of adult learning. He pointed out that individuals' absorbing knowledge from this adult learning model tend to be self-

motivated, self-directed, have a readiness to learn, apply personal experience to learning, and shift from subject centeredness, to problem centeredness. Knowles (2014) outlined the theory of adult learning as it directly related to long-term sustainability among volunteers, by providing a mode of knowledge integration that directly empowered the individual and highlighted their value to the organization.

Experiential learning is similar to andragogical learning and has paradoxical benefits. Lucas and Zilliox (2014) surmised that these concepts encourage long-term learning, by providing a different model of thinking for the learner, instead of the traditional regurgitation of information. This new way of learning allows the individual to draw from all their resources and life experiences, and apply the same concepts from one experience to the next. In this way, trainings can avoid ineffective onboarding programs, harvest the existing internal and external volunteer knowledge, and avoid the traditional way of teaching information that is generally quickly forgotten.

Preventing emotional exhaustion. According to Larkin (2008), volunteers get a lot out of serving as well. Stating that the research indicated that volunteers have better longevity, lowered depression, and better health all around. This research suggested that volunteering, when done correctly, can be emotionally and physically healthy for the individual. Gage (1998) stated that volunteering should benefit the individual as much, or more so than that of the organization. A volunteer should offer their time to something that they have a passion for and are good at, in turn this will maximize the volunteer's energy and time. Gage (1998) also pointed out that organizations will get a lot more out of people who are passionate and skilled at what they're volunteering for.

By aligning the church's mission and vision through training, with that of the volunteers', the church will gain long-term committed volunteers. Innstrand, Langballe, and Falkum (2011) explained that the feeling of value-congruence, autonomy, and help at work and home strongly correlate with burnout prevention. Lawson (2014) stated that training should provide the volunteer with the opportunity to embrace the church's values, culture, vision and philosophy, in order to align with that of the volunteers'. He also reported that the organization should show the worker what impact the volunteer will have on their community through service, and highlighting the volunteer's value. Wilson (2000) identified value systems as a highly individualized process. Personal volunteer values that align with that of the organization's are set up for a more successful outcome and long-term sustainability for their volunteers.

Reitman (2014) noted that it is generally good practice to reassess your work/career every year at least, to prevent burnout. By reassessing their role, an individual can see what is missing, what's working, and where they need to feel more challenged or acknowledged through their service. Volunteers should have the opportunity to explore different positions and commit to one role for a specific amount of time, and have the opportunity to move on. Volunteers should also be able to have very specific job descriptions, and not take on too many roles at once. Rosenberg (2014) stated that reducing one's' workload, sharing expertise among colleagues, and allocating work tasks can be a preventative measure for burnout. Spirituality is also shown to play a significant role in preventing burnout among volunteers and workers.

The mere fact that the volunteer training is for the church implies a certain level of commitment to God and spirituality. Marriner (2015) stated that spiritual practice is an important factor in burnout prevention. He explained that the people most likely to overcome fatigue and burnout are those who engage in spiritual practices, have a belief in justice and humanity, and

believe in the power of the human spirit. Loescher (2001) explained that prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to guide the process, is the most crucial element for any type of service. Spiritual emphasis and practice comes with the territory, but defining meaning and aligning this with that of the volunteers', creates resources for long-term sustainability among volunteers in the church.

Chandler (2009) talked about the spiritual practices of church leaders, and what a significant role it plays in preventing burnout. He went on to point out the process of spiritual development and personal growth is what distinguishes Christians from non-spiritual people. Chandler (2009) explained that individuals must have a strong relationship with Jesus, in order to produce the amount of strength and energy it takes to continue serving.

Handling depersonalization. Keeping feelings of anger and resentment inside can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Robbins and Judge (2011) noted that a worker's' emotional state directly affects the business or organization, by influencing consumer satisfaction. Providing quality customer service is demanding and can often lead to emotional dissonance, lowered job performance and dissatisfaction. Preventing depersonalization through volunteer training could emphasize the purpose of the individual through volunteer work, allowing them to better connect with those they interact with in their capacity, and creating a cohesive and productive environment in the church (Lawson, 2014; Lucas & Zilliox, 2014). This training should strongly outline that the work they're volunteering for is meaningful and purpose-filled. Caesar and Caesar (2006) described the importance of having a purposeful and destiny led direction for work, as a means to preventing fatigue and burnout. Volunteers who feel a deep sense of belonging and meaning strive harder to achieve and burnout less often.

Building connections and relationships should also be fostered and encouraged through the training process. Doolittle (2010) talked about enhancing relationships, seeking out mentors,

and pursuing activities regularly to protect against burnout. Likewise, Chandler (2009) stated that in mitigating burnout it is imperative to have social support systems, and stay away from isolation. Proeschold-bell et al. (2011) found that mitigating stressors through peer support systems could be accomplished best in a small group setting, in which confidentiality and vulnerability was emphasized. These findings highlighted that training could provide social support resources, such as small groups, and a mentor system to set the volunteer up for connections from the start. In this way, volunteers would have multiple people and resources to draw upon for guidance when needed.

Gilliam (2012) talked about the sharing of feelings and thoughts as a preventative measure for burnout. Building those connections and sharing one's views can assist the volunteer in identifying and handling stress effectively and immediately. Learning, commitment, and social connections, are important factors in the prevention of burnout. According to Buys and Rothmann (2010), it is imperative to provide growth opportunities to volunteers, in order to encourage long-term sustainability and take preventative measures against burnout. Key factors for preventative measures were, social support and job satisfaction. Buys and Rothmann (2010) pointed out that assuring that the individual and the position fit well together, while also having plenty of resources and social support to draw upon, is essential.

Managing reduction of personal accomplishment. Being able to contribute and make an impact on their environment is important to volunteer sustainability. Knowles et al. (2014) stated that, "people tend to feel committed to a decision or activity in direct proportion to their participation in or influence on its planning and decision making" (p. 58). Keeping volunteers connected to the community, engaged in the training, and staying committed, is important in order to succeed at long-term sustainability. Tyler (2013) stated, "Education is an active process.

It involves the active efforts of the learner himself [or herself]. In general, the learner learns only those things which he [or she] does” (p. 11). Volunteers who are active in their own learning and resourcing have deeper commitment levels. According to Krych (2006), studies indicated that teachers (volunteers) in the church are looking for connection, achievement and status.

Volunteers want to know that their contributions are meaningful and appreciated. She went on to encourage those recruiting volunteers to specify why each volunteer was chosen, that they’re going to be supported through the process, and that their contribution is valued.

Krych (2006) explained that the churches usually take anyone who volunteers (people who offer their time for free and/or offers to do something whether or not they’re qualified to do it), without screening or interviewing the individual. Loescher (2001) stated that an accurate assessment and selection process is vital to the church. He explained that church planters or leaders, should consider spiritual gifts, personality traits, and past behaviors to predict a person’s ability and proclivity towards the given job.

Krych (2006) pointed out that churches should be creating job descriptions for volunteer positions and interviewing applicants. Krych (2006) clarified that churches should also be thinking about individuals in their congregation who would be qualified for a given position and approaching them for help. Churches should not create an air of desperation for positions, but should instead find the right people to fill each spot. Krych (2006) mused that churches wonder why the same few people volunteer constantly, and pointed out it is from this lack of being prepared, asking the same individuals to volunteer, in large part due to their own anxiety to find anyone to fill the position. A more intentional approach is needed if churches wish to connect volunteers to positions of service that align with the volunteers internal motivations and foster a sense of lasting fulfillment (Loescher, 2001).

Leadership is an important factor in the prevention and mitigation of burnout. The next section will map out many of the leadership skills and strategies that are linked to effective and successful organizations. These skills and strategies are imperative to the successful prevention and mitigation of burnout among their church volunteers.

Mitigating and Preventing Burnout Through Effective Leadership

In order for an effective process, to mitigate and prevent burnout among church volunteers, to exist, we must first explore the role that effective leadership plays in this process. Leadership is the starting point for effective organizations (Senge, 2010); leaders can be a source of empowerment or a source of discouragement for volunteers and workers. Senge (2010) stated that an organization's ability to choose effective leadership is so important to the overall success of the organization, that it allows for the least room in making a mistake. Senge (2010) went on to say that leaders have the ability to invent, implant and stabilize the culture of organizations; therefore their role is the lifeblood and conduit for its overall success. According to Callaly and Minas (2005) Leadership is an art, encompassing a wide variety of both talents, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Callaly and Minas (2005) stated that these skills and talents evolve into effective leadership traits and strategies, which are the fundamental groundwork necessary for successful organizations.

Budhoo and Spurgeon (2012) argued that the coaching and transformational leadership style is often viewed as supportive and allows for personal development in this field. O'Connor, Ward, Newton and Warby (2005) stated that leaders who are committed to working on themselves, developing teams, sharing knowledge, and reflecting an openness to embrace new skills and approaches, will go far in this field. Goleman (1998) laid out a few key aspects for successful leadership: a leader's intrapersonal capabilities (self-awareness, self-development,

self-regulation), interpersonal capabilities (social awareness), and the leader's ability to respond and/or learn from various stimuli. In other words, providing leadership through self-mastery, leadership in crisis situations, leadership through culture, common language and groups, and creating a shared vision.

Leadership in crisis situations. Karp's study (2013) depicted individuals who have high self-confidence and emotional intelligence as those who are more likely to take on difficult tasks and crisis situations. Karp (2013) stated that handling these kinds of difficult situations could be the difference between effective and ineffective leadership. Within the realm of leadership, challenges will inevitably arise for any leader. This is why Karp (2013) pointed out that the way these challenges are tackled, fixed, and/or resolved can shed light on what type of leader that person is. Goleman (1998) clarified that self-awareness and self-growth is key for an effective leader. He stated that a leader also needs to engage in different processes and systems of defining situations to learn more about themselves and their organization. Through new situations the leader can heighten his/her self-awareness and actively learn through experience. Setting the groundwork for the continuation of learning about his/her own personality in order to be effective within leadership and personal relationships (Goleman, 1998; Karp, 2013).

Self-awareness is the first factor of emotional intelligence because it means that the individual understands his or her own feelings, motivations, strengths, weaknesses, and beliefs. Goleman (1998) stated that truly effective leaders have one main thing in common, they're exceedingly emotionally intelligent. Goleman (1998) summarized that strongly self-aware individuals have a unique balance: they are honest with others and themselves, yet they are not overly hopeful or critical. These aspects of self-growth and development are never ending for good leaders. Senge (2010) explained that self-mastery is an ongoing journey; people who are on

this journey understand their weaknesses, ignorance, and growth areas, yet they still have a profound sense of self-confidence.

Karp's (2013) theory suggested that through relationships and social interactions, an individual is defining their own character in difficult situations and experiences. An individual's ability to learn and respond to differing situations, profoundly impacts that person's ability to lead others. Karp (2013) stated that when an individual's beliefs, actions, principals, and desires are subject to others' criticism, it provides the individual an opportunity for growth. He pointed out that when leaders take advantage of those opportunities, and choose to respond in a healthy non-defensive manner, the more the leader can grow from the experience. This concept loops itself back to self-awareness and self-development. Karp (2013) explained that, "Some also argue that the self is not a stable inner core but a stream of actions, and that the comprehension of self-change is due to various situations and stimuli" (p. 4). A leader's ability to respond correctly or incorrectly to stimuli can define what kind of person and/or leader they are. These differing situations can bring up a leader's personal issues, or an aspect of themselves that they were unaware of. Karp (2013) postulated that challenging changing environments and situations can help a leader to define how they handle important situations through testing, practice and self-awareness. The defining characteristic of these situations is one's ability to learn from them. This involves the art of turning experience into self-development through a delicate combination of environment, self-awareness and relational strength.

Leadership through self-mastery and empowering others. Interpersonal and intrapersonal capabilities define the self-awareness and social aspects of leadership. The art of leadership comes from knowing and mastering one's own self; this concept brings to life how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us (Goleman, 1998; Karp, 2013). This concept is the

cornerstone for all other self-development, and hinges on the fact that we cannot change or accept what we do not know. Karp (2013) argued that the message to leaders through centuries of literature has been consistent: wise leaders see who they really are, the good and the bad, but fools do not. Therefore self-awareness is the first step in walking towards successful leadership. Karp (2013) went on to talk about self-awareness/development being the gateway for other important factors in leadership, such things as self-confidence, self-control and self-esteem. Senge (2010) explained that most companies want to build a successful learning organization, but often times do not meet this goal because there is a deficiency in effective leadership. Lincklaen, Wouter and Wehn de Montalvob (2013) stated that effective leaders see what is truly important; promote change and moving forward, they are people who fervently go the extra mile for others and their organization.

Karp (2013) stated “By leadership it is meant the process of influencing other people towards common objectives, in which endeavors a leader must take leadership and by doing so create followership” (p. 1). Callaly and Minas (2005) stated that consistency in the leader’s values and actions is what will obtain and maintain followers who trust and respect them. In other words, not just by words, but by their actions they are going to be dependable and esteemed; ultimately allowing these leaders to foster necessary change in a risky and unsure environment. Karp (2013) pointed out that individuals with personal and social intelligence are naturally drawn to self-growth and development. Leaders, who develop self-efficacy and awareness of others, tend to create environments that promote well-rounded and giving individuals. Karp (2013) endorsed the emotionally intelligent leader, stating that the regulation of their own emotions, setting aside a defensive attitude, and caring about those under their leadership, creates an environment full of growth opportunities. Guinot et al. (2015) stated that

when a leader adopts an altruistic posture, with sensitivity to the concerns and feelings of others, they are better able to navigate within the organization in a way that does not trigger interpersonal conflict and posturing. According to Guinot et al. (2015), this is a key factor in enabling creativity within an organization.

Strong relationships within organizations are essential for growth and improvement. Caesar and Caesar (2006) stated that relationships are indispensable in their ability to give you what you truly want out of life. Within the context of organizations, shifting the focus from solely the individual's goals and agenda, to one that aligns their personal values with that of their co-workers and the organizations. This type of system creates a dynamic and strong relationship, which is built on a firm foundation of mutual benefit for the worker and organization.

Maxwell (1998) defined his, "Law of the lid" (p. 1) leadership theory, which delineates the effectiveness potential of leaders. "Leadership ability is the lid that determines a person's level of effectiveness. The lower an individual's ability to lead, the lower the lid of his potential" (p. 1). Maxwell (1998) gave an example by demonstrating the point that wherever your effectiveness lies, on a scale from one-10 (one being the least effective and 10 being the most), you will attract other leaders below your own potential. If you are at an eight, you will attract other leaders below an eight. If you are at a five, you will attract other leaders below a five. Maxwell (1998) theorized that you will never attract better leaders than you are, therefore you need to be a highly effective leader in order to attract those same type of leaders to take your organization to the next level. His point alluded to the fact that self-growth is an important factor in the overall long-term effectiveness of an organization.

Stanley (2003) likewise, inferred that working in an organization where a worker felt that their skills surpassed that of the leader's, is generally short lived. People tend to gravitate towards jobs and organizations where they can grow and learn from leadership. Proving Maxwell's (1998) point, that effective leadership attracts other effective leaders and ultimately drive the success of an organization. Leaders who are able to focus their talents and grow their strengths can maximize their full potential and grow in an organization.

Stanley (2003) stated that leaders tend to do too much by themselves. Making the point that although sometimes this is necessary, it will limit the effectiveness of a leader in any organization. Stanley (2003) reported that there are two crucial secrets to effective leadership: "1. The less you do the more you accomplish. 2. The less you do, the more you enable others to accomplish" (p.17). Stanley (2003) pointed out that effective leadership is more about empowering others to do what they are great at, while specifically doing what you are great at. He stated that too often we have a tendency to focus growing the parts of ourselves that we are not good at, instead of focusing on the parts of us that we are good at. Increasing and growing our natural talents is a way to empower and strengthen organizations. This almost seems counter intuitive to our culture, but as Stanley (2003) portrayed, staying within our core competencies is the best way to give the most to your organizations. Specializing and focusing on your unique value to the organization you work for, generates the highest return value for the organization, as well as for you personally.

Stanley (2003), reported that when he decided to let go of the things he was not good at and let those fall to the side to focus on his talents, he noticed that others were picking up the slack and coming into their own giftedness in the areas he fell short. Ultimately, creating an environment of strength, focusing and allowing the empowerment of others and their talents.

Stanley (2003) expressed that as a young pastor he bought into the myth that a good leader needs to be good at everything. He told the story about his first eight years of his career in the church and how he devoted his time to becoming better at the things he was bad at and winging the things he was good at. Stanley (2003) looked back at this time as a learning experience and reports that growing the things we are good at enables us to become experts in specific areas. Stanley (2003) stated,

The majority of my time was devoted to tasks I was not good at. I was eight years into my career before I realized that my real value to our organization lay within the context of my giftedness, not the number of hours I worked. (p. 18)

Refusal of delegation may stem from a hero complex. Some volunteers are so passionate about their chosen social cause that they may adopt a warrior motif. Malmin (2013) pointed out that positioning oneself within the context of this warrior stance, can lead the volunteer to minimize and undervalue their own self-care. Often leading to the prioritizing of the demands of the battle, over that of their overall well-being. However, Malmin (2013) stated that if these concerns are addressed proactively, negative outcomes could be prevented. Stanley (2003) stated, “Only do what only you can do” (p. 19). He pointed out that focusing on two or three things that are the markers of success in your current position will create more success, and further surmised that narrowing those things down to the one thing that you are extremely gifted at, would continue to boost specialization.

Leadership through culture, common language and groups. The culture of an organization is like the underlying current that permeates the foundation of the structure. Leaders must be able recognize and flow with the culture in order to work with it, change it, or embody it (Crother-Laurin, 2006; Robbins & Judge, 2011). A leader’s ability to establish and work with a

culture is foundational to the health of the organization. Looking specifically at volunteer burnout prevention and mitigation, if the culture embodies these concepts and makes them common place, there will be a greater capacity for growth and freedom. Robbins and Judge (2011) depicted a positive organizational culture as assisting employees in their individual growth as well as their work life. Robbins and Judge (2011) deduced that the organization will get the best results out of employees who see themselves as a part of the company and not just a tool to be used when needed. In other words, employees who feel valued for the uniqueness they bring to an organization because of who they are, and not just their utility as a resource, will be more effective and motivated.

Crother-Laurin (2006) stated that an effective leader sees the importance in systems, connections, and relationships when trying to solve an organizational problem. Schein (2010) reported that the distinction between leadership and management is the concern with culture. Leaders start the cultural process and sometimes end up changing an already existing one. Schein (2010) continued by arguing that as organizations develop, their culture evolves. Leadership needs to leverage this process to influence cultural evolution to their purpose. Focusing their attention on the shifts of culture and managing multiculturalism within their organizations.

Bolman and Deal (2013) emphasized the importance of clarifying an organization's goals and roles for their workers. They made the point that defining and concentrating on the relationship between the environment and structure provides needed clarity for employees. Likewise, Walker and Floyd (2003) stated that the formal structure of an organization is very important in providing a clear understanding of what its purpose, objectives and values are. Bolman and Deal (2013) restated that within successful and effective organizations, people need to understand their responsibilities, as well as the impact of the contributions. Church

organizations need to create a culture that embodies and embraces the mitigation and prevention of burnout, in order for them to be successful in this realm.

Teamwork is also an important aspect of the culture of an organization. Schein (2010) referred to teamwork as a group effort, gathering a team's differences and using them to improve and develop all the team members. To create an effective team, Schein (2010) suggested that decisions must be balanced with the opinions of the team members, coupled with the members being open-minded and accepting of other's views. Senge (2010) defined a team as a group of people that share one purpose and move together as one body toward the same direction. Senge (1990) framed teamwork as the collaboration between individuals to reach the same point with the help of their personal functions. Schein (2010) explained that every group member has his or her own beliefs, goals, vision and skills and stated that an effective organizational group culture, is comprised of a shared understanding of their teams.

Creating a shared vision. According to Senge (2010) one trait of an effective leader is the ability to maintain and fix a shared vision and picture of what the future will look like for an organization. Senge (2010) stated that this idea of leadership has inspired organizations for decades and that effective leaders convey emotional appeals in order to provide meaning and value to their message. Senge (1990) explained that a shared vision introduces a picture of the future that many people can commit and buy into. Senge (1990) reflected that this leads to the aligning of the employees' personally held vision, with that of their organization's' vision and mission. Bolman and Deal (2013) argued that vision is the key ingredient for turning an organization's philosophy and purpose into a collaborative picture of the future.

Mitigating Burnout Through Organizational Transformation

Organizational change can be a difficult task to undertake, but as Senge (2010) pointed out, the successful implementation of this endeavor can be the difference between the life and death of the organization. It is vital for the leadership of the church to have a process of change to remain current with best practices, dealing with internal and external problems, mitigating and preventing burnout, and to allow for continued growth within the institution. Maslach et al. (2001) stated that research on the broader organizational context, as it relates to the contribution of burnout, is newly emerging. However, this component is vital in understanding burnout on a larger scale. Maslach et al. (2001) reported that these organizational characteristics can have a far-reaching effect on the people that make up the organization. This is especially important in regards to the way the organization handles fairness, how the organization's values align with that of the individuals', and how this affects the worker's' emotional and cognitive relationship with their organization.

Schein (2010) and Robbins and Judge (2011) surmised that the particular culture of an organization influences the entire body of the organization and has a profound effect on the workers, managers, leaders and consumers. The culture of an organization influences the workers and leadership alike. Robbins and Judge (2011) postulated that culture is the social glue that inevitably holds the organization together, through the normative standards it enacts, providing the employees with appropriate conduct and criteria in which to perform and behave. Culture is enacted over time and through embedded relationships; Schein (2010) stated that culture is a behavioral model that connects past and present generations in an organization through shared behavior.

There are many factors, which influence culture in organizations, including: organizational values, symbols and beliefs, clearly defined structure, shared vision, teamwork, high employee morale, and effective leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2011; Schein, 2010). Ultimately, these traits have been found to link many high achieving organizations and have been viewed as the groundwork to success. Yet, awareness of factors that influence organizational culture is not enough to produce changes within an organization that serve to create a context where volunteers can thrive; a process of transformation is needed.

Leadership is important to guide the initiation and development of such transformation. Elkington, Meekins, Breen, and Martin (2015) tied a leader's effectiveness in shaping the organization to using a non-hierarchical structure, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing all members that contribute to the organization, no matter which position they hold. However, Elkington et al. (2015) cautioned that the charisma inherent to the personality of some pastors may prevent the congregations from fully realizing the interdependence needed to function effectively as a system. According to Elkington et al. (2015) leadership is quintessentially about drawing forth and fostering the creativity of the whole. Canning (2011) has argued that a hierarchical posture that relies on the leader to deliver change from above is not as effective in actually bringing about change, as an approach that challenges each participant in an organization to invest themselves in the stewardship of the organization's development. Indeed, a top-down approaches render an organization vulnerable to systematic injustice that can remain obscure or invisible to those in positions of leadership. Canning (2011) asked the question regarding how an organization can fully embrace diversity without giving adequate voice to each of the human beings that make up that diversity?

van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) stated that when leaders allow their own training or bias to define for the group the way in which it should develop, they may be allowing cultural imperialism to obscure important dynamics inherent to the mix of participants.

If an organization is going to be effective in its efforts to evolve in a way that creates an organizational culture supportive of its volunteers, such change must involve visionary and consistent leadership as well as engagement in the process by those participating in the organization at all levels.

It is not enough to simply draw upon the diversity of the constituents of an organization. Maslach et al. (2001) postulated that the organizational culture is also inevitably molded by the larger societal, cultural, and economical context. Indeed, Leone, Wessel, Huibers, Knottnerusd, and Kant (2011) attributed burnout to societal changes and the struggle for workers to find meaning in what they do. Maslach et al. (2001) suggested that the societal context has a significant impact on the participants in an organization because it insinuates the need for reciprocity, a give and take of mutual investment. Without these reciprocal factors at play, the participant is much more susceptible to burnout and less likely to find purpose in their work.

The values shared by volunteers with the larger society are important for any church to consider as they collaboratively shape their church's culture. And yet, van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) pointed to the Holy Spirit as the most important catalyst, in the context of communities of faith. This perspective turns the assumption upside-down, that the organization will be likely to mirror similarly-situated organizations within civic society. van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) proposed that the unique intervention of the Holy Spirit, which is always responsive to not only societal realities but much more importantly an intention of God, which is likely to promote organizational development that would unfold along unexpected lines. This

pointed to the possibility that the organizational evolution of a church may actually seed new innovations within society that may not originate anywhere else. Innovations for burnout prevention and mitigation that arise in the context of churches may be unique in going beyond those revolutions that have arisen in other organizational contexts.

Mitigating and Preventing Burnout Through Volunteer Identity

Weiss (2013) noted that if any endeavor is going to provide a sufficiently profound solution to burnout, it must speak to the root of the problem. Elkington et al. (2015) provided biblical evidence (1 Corinthians 12:12–27) in support of the argument that Scripture points to a missional model in which individual freedom to adapt one's service to the unique and dynamic calling of God is maximized. Elkington et al. (2015) acknowledged that this is in contrast to the predominant top-down motif adopted by most businesses in Western society. However, Elkington et al. (2015) suggested that a radical orientation toward protecting a sense of volunteers' interdependence with each other and with God is most appropriate in faith-based communities and organizations. Elkington et al. (2015) stated that this environment fosters equality and allows for the freedom of each volunteer to self-define. This creates an aptitude for volunteers to serve with their own special capacity to give back to the organization.

Along these lines, Weiss (2013) stated that resolving the problem of volunteer burnout, using a phenomenological lens, requires that the inner psyche of the volunteer be reached; rooting itself in the volunteers' core sense of self-identity. Braganza and Piedmont (2015) presented a study that explained that when volunteers spend focused time, explicitly uncovering their core motivations, their well-being may be preserved or even improved. This evidence suggested that motivational clarification may be a beneficial strategy employed by churches to assist in the prevention and mitigation of burnout among volunteers. Bertram (2015) explained

that volunteering is about enjoying what you do and what you take away from it as a person, generally this intersection is where your experience, and knowledge, meet your passion. Operating from this stance can have a profound effect on changing the volunteer, as well as the individuals around them.

Guinot et al. (2015) postulated that when both organizational leaders and volunteers are enabled to deeply connect with the core spiritual motivators of their lives, they are free to transcend an ego-based orientation that positions self-interest and competitiveness as core motivators of success. Guinot et al. (2015) warned that self-interest and competitiveness are important antecedents to the creation of an organizational environment devoid of interpersonal connectedness and collaboration. Elkington et al. (2015) stated that the organizational “bottlenecking” (p. 8) that accompanies a concentration of hierarchical power can significantly inhibit organizational transformation. These researchers point out that in such an environment, the morphogenesis of the organization is inhibited and stagnation results. According to van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) this is not inevitable, if the church, as a “communicative field,” (p. 1) provides an active experience or intersection between the individual and the divine. In the context of the community of faith, one’s individual encounter with God becomes known through interaction and sharing within human relationships.

van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) explained that if an organization embraces the belief that the Holy Spirit is the mediator between God’s intention and desire for the expression of Himself through the volunteer, amazing things can happen. van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) stated that a dynamic can occur that fosters group cohesion, togetherness and a sense of mutual responsibility when God’s direction is sought. van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) explained that organizations can experience a powerful dynamic that shifts the weight of accountability to the

volunteers, making them personally responsive to God in the recognition and expression of their gifts. van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) pointed out that the Holy Spirit is the mediator of God's intention for the volunteers' function within the organization. This perspective can foster a vibrant environment of group interconnection and intimacy in profound ways. Niemandt (2015) likewise reported that the transformation introduced by the Holy Spirit, tends to emerge rather mysteriously from the edges of the organization inward. van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (2015) postulated that if allowed to emerge and dynamically unfold, each person's encounter with God becomes vital and energizing to the group's evolution. Such encounters become sustaining nutrients of the organic evolution of the organization. By referencing sustaining nutrients, Weiss (2013) highlighted the common-sense notion that there are always factors that are essential to sustaining a desired experience. In the absence of the sustaining nutrients the experience will wither away; with their presence positive growth and development is ensured.

The volunteer's personal encounter with God enables the discovery of their true motivational core that lies within their spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit brings about a level of immunity to burnout that is difficult to pinpoint academically and surpasses ordinary methods of preventing and mitigating burnout (van Rheede van Oudtshoorn, 2015; Weiss, 2013). Pooler (2011b) suggested that orienting volunteers to recognize that their value goes beyond their functional contribution to the organization enhances burnout prevention and mitigation. Pooler (2011b) explained that the volunteers' core worth is derived from what God says about the meaning of their gift. Therein lies an implicit overarching belief that God's intent and purpose for the expression of their gift is what gives everything meaning. Pooler (2011b) stated that the Holy Spirit's authority supersedes that of the individual or organization, theorizing that true fulfillment and purpose for the volunteer can be found in God's imagination and intention for

them. That drawing purpose and identity from God, is what establishes the basis for the deep fulfillment of the individual as they engage in their tasks as a volunteer.

Pooler (2011b) suggested that this identity perspective implies transcendence. He noted that this ideology goes beyond socially constructed role definitions of professional identity, and that success is measured by the unique signature of God on their life, and not performance evaluations. Furthermore, Pooler (2011b) reported that when an individual embraces the divine image in oneself, it transforms one's motivation for serving others by enabling the volunteer to perceive the divine likeness in the other and engage in a way that is specific to this recognition. Pooler (2011b) suggested that this enables the volunteer to be more specifically responsive to the individuals he or she is serving, rather than applying a role-defined one-size-fits-all approach. Guinot et al. (2015), also pointed out that when a person moves from their spiritual center, employing internalized values such as altruism, the rigid definitions of their expected role fade away, allowing the individual to be more creatively responsive and to bring a human touch into their communication with those they serve.

Creating a context where church volunteers are inspired to encounter and develop their own spiritual gifts can provide a path for volunteers to discover their fit within the organization and their motivational passion (Guinot et al., 2015; Pooler, 2011b). By incorporating and emphasizing spiritual gift discovery and growth, churches can help to set up their volunteers for success. "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, New International Version). Biblically explained, there are many different kinds of spiritual gifts, and each one is vitally important to the body of Christ and the church.

Volunteers knowing and embracing their particular spiritual gifts can be directly linked to burnout prevention. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) stated that burnout can be caused by a job mismatch. In other words, a job that does not suit an individual's personality or particular gifts, this is why volunteering in the right place, and utilizing your gifts is so vital in preventing burnout. Biblically stated,

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:27-28, New International Version).

This passage further emphasized the point that every gift is needed and necessary to the church, but also that not everyone is suited to every volunteer position. Galek et al. (2011) pointed out that when a church intentionally validates the unique contribution of volunteers in a way that supports and enables them to shape their sense of self, in reference to an emerging spiritual discovery of their God-given gifts, a context is provided where deeper levels of engagement are rewarded by increased social engagement and focused appreciation. Stanley (2003) stated that it is essential to leadership to be able to differentiate between passions and core competencies.

What Stanley (2003) pointed out is that we may love to do certain things but we also may not be gifted at those things. For leaders, as well as volunteers, it is essential that they focus on their strengths and not just what they want to be good at. Stanley (2003) stated, "It is important to know which of our passions are not in sync with our natural abilities" (p. 163-164). This more than anything else will contribute to the life, effectiveness and success of an organization.

The concept of figuring out who you really are, in order to serve most effectively in the world, is the most vital piece in burnout prevention and mitigation. McManus (2015) preached

that we are the only species who are confused about how to be who we are, as humans, in this world. He stated that animals, for example, never have a problem knowing what they are supposed to do or how to function in their role. Humans have a unique capacity to imagine, materialize the imperceptible, to choose and create something different than our current status. McManus (2015) explained that human beings have the capacity to imagine and create a future, a new self, to dream, to grow into something new. He stated that this very unique capacity to imagine can be a wonderful gift or a curse, that sometimes we experience a crisis of the imagination, when our potential and imagination don't align with the realization of our capacity to implement it. McManus (2015) reported, "There is no question if we will create, there is only the question of what we will create." Alluding to the point that we have the capacity to choose what kind of future we create, based on our beliefs, values, and the realization of our own capacity to do so.

McHugh (2013) stated that being yourself is the ability to uncover your true identity, which in turn provides the world with an irreplaceable asset. This seems to be one of the simplest concepts, "just be yourself" (6:06); this phrase has been repeated countless times. Nevertheless, this concept and the practical implementation of the concept, is truly complex and difficult to understand. McHugh (2013) stated that when individuals are really young and really old they are generally their most authentic selves. Equating this phenomenon with children not knowing how to be anything other than themselves, due to not being aware of how others perceive them or how they compare themselves to others. Similarly, with older people, they tend to be more authentic due to the realization of their own mortality, dropping their fronts because they're not so important to their societal standing anymore.

McHugh (2013) mapped out her “I complex” (9:54) theory, stating that there are three “I”s which can occur: superiority, interiority and inferiority. She explained that two of these represent a fragile ego, living at opposite ends of the spectrum. Superiority is thinking too much of yourself, having delusions of grandeur and manifests itself in a narcissistic fashion, this is not your true self. McHugh (2013) went on and explained that on the opposite side of the spectrum from superiority is inferiority, on this side you think too little of yourself, an over-modest disregard for your abilities and being. McHugh (2013) stated that the ego is what can stop you from being you if it is not recognized and put in check. She explained that individuals have spent their whole lives dealing with the ego, people need an ego to live, but it also needs to be balanced so it does not control you.

McHugh (2013) reported that an individual can find their true self, which is impervious to external surroundings, and a deep sense of humility through the interiority space. Likewise, Lewis (1952) stated that being humble does not mean beating up on yourself, or thinking of yourself poorly. Lewis (1952) rather postulated, that being too far into yourself or too far removed is a means to the same end, you’re thinking of yourself too much either way. Lewis (1952) stated that in God we find our center, though our feelings may change, God’s feelings for us never change. He explained the individual’s need to look to God for their purpose, identity, and foundation, for God is ever still. McHugh (2013) explained that living in interiority is a spectacular disregard for limiting your own abilities, and also a disregard for being the center of attention. She postulated that when an individual fully knows who they are, they start to see others as the center of their attention, instead of being worried that they are the center of attention, either positive or negative. Freedom follows.

McHugh (2013) explained that balancing the ego in a way that serves you and your long-term self-interest is where you can find a firm foundation, unaffected by crisis, other's opinions, good or bad days, praise or reproach. She stated that interiority is the middle ground, the space that is not comparative to others, that does not judge too generously or sparingly the individual's talents and contributions. McHugh (2013) reported that interiority is the only place in an individual's life where they have no competition, no one is better at being you than you are. Dr. Seuss (1957/1982) stated, "Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You" (p. 45). This old children's book demonstrates McHugh's (2013) point precisely, being who you were made to be, finding your authentic self, is the place where you can really find meaning and contribute to the world joyfully. McHugh (2013) stated that the job of any individual is to figure out how to be who they really are, and then continually get better and better at that each year.

McHugh (2013) further explained that basing yourself on someone else's opinion of you is the most tragic and debilitating thing a human can do. She profoundly stated that understanding how other's perceives you is still important, but giving up the need for their approval is key. McHugh (2013) postulated that understanding the perceptions of others is important, however there is a difference between being perception free and living under the tyranny of others perceptions, regardless of awareness. Being perception free means not basing your identity or worth on the perceptions of others, neither good nor bad, but instead allowing them to have their proper place. McHugh (2013) reported that her job is helping people discover and be themselves, not in a narcissistic, self-serving way, but in a way that serves the greater good. She stated that she believes social reformation starts with the individual, and so that is where she has found herself. McHugh (2013) explained that there is one common denominator in

the people who are living in this interiority space, and that is that they have discovered the unique gift that they were created for, and then put that at the center of their service.

McHugh (2013) reported that contrary to western society, many other cultures view a person as a spiritual soul attached to a body. McHugh (2013) quoted Gandhi, by saying, “my life is my message” (23:50). Making the point that we as humans have a unique purpose in life, that we are more than a conglomerate of thoughts, feelings and a physical body. McHugh (2013) emphasized that once an individual taps into their true self and is able to understand this unique purpose, their contribution to the world is not limited. Trespicio (2015) stated that our society has a faulty cultural imperative that stated that we must find one passion and pursue that all your life. She stated passion is not a plan, it is a feeling, and feelings change. Trespicio (2015) reported that you don’t generate your life first and then live it, you first live it and then design it. This idea aligns with the idea that McHugh (2013) explained when she talked about the one common denominator in the people who are living in this interiority space, and that is that they have discovered the unique gift that they were created for, and then put that at the center of their service. She emphasized that this does not dictate their job, but it does dictate how they choose to do that job. Knowing and being comfortable with who you are, is a liberating and free way to go through life.

Trespicio (2015) further broke down the concept of the word passion, as being a triggering and limiting term. She framed this idea as a limiting scope instead of a freeing one. She postulated that the idea that knowing who you really are does not limit your passion and feelings to one thing. She stated you should explore, work, create and just start doing things, and your passion will follow you. On the same note Todd (2015) stated that most research conducted on finding the right career focuses on the wrong thing. He stated that individuals should not

focus simply on their passion, but rather focus on service, and what is needed. Todd (2015) postulated that individuals need to focus on what makes the world a better place, not what your individual interests are. Todd (2015) stated that research shows that people who only follow their passions will most likely fail. Statistically speaking, most things like music, art and sports, that people are usually passionate about, there are only 3% of jobs available in these fields. Todd (2015) stated that this perspective is setting people up for failure. He reported that when it comes to making real career decisions the more important factors are what individual's skills and mindset are. Todd (2015) boldly stated that present interests are not a solid base to choose a career, but doing what is valuable is, mainly due to the ever-changing nature of people's interests. Hii (2013) pointed out that generation Y, anyone born between 1983-2000, are thought to be misguided and lazy due to the notion that they expect everything to align with their current passions.

Hii (2013) stated that generation Y can become a better generation and follow their passions, but cautions them to remember a few things. She stated that they should work hard, even if their job is not in their passion. Hii (2013) went on and explained that following passion without knowing what it is yet or having it all figured out is ok, and to never forget passion is a privilege and to have gratitude for it. Hii (2013) explained that it doesn't mean anything to follow your passions, unless it is in the service of others. Hii (2013) showed the need for an individual's passion to meet the needs of the community, therein meeting their own true potential. Hii (2013) stated that people must join their passion to a greater purpose within the community, in order for it to be meaningful and fulfilling. She reported that the idea of passion should not be thrown out altogether, but that it should be put in the passenger seat and the driver

should be a greater cause. This notion correlated with Todd (2015), who calls for an alignment of skill sets, growth and passion.

Todd (2015) stated that people should focus their attention on getting better at a specific thing, in order to contribute to the world; that helping others and being in the heart of service, is what is truly fulfilling and purposeful in life. He made the point that passion does matter in figuring out what an individual could cultivate in order to become an expert at something, to figure out where the individual's skills could have the greatest impact. Todd (2015) gave three steps of advice for those who are searching for their niche and want to find what they love to do: explore, invest in bettering flexible skills and solve present social problems. The key is to workout where the persons' specialty skills can be worked into the community in order to better the world and have the greatest impact. Todd (2015) explained that people need to look back on their lives and feel like they made a difference in order to have a fulfilling life.

Chapter Summary

Churches form an increasingly vital part of American society. With the shift from a society undergirded by welfare policy to a society wherein social ills are increasingly addressed through faith-based social initiatives, churches are expected to play roles in the community that are both diverse and demanding. Volunteers are needed in order for these initiatives to reach the level of sustainability that is required by the community. Yet, if volunteers regularly drop out of active engagement, the resources required by the church to sustain an initiative through the recruiting and retraining of new volunteers can become unmanageable. This chapter focused attention on aiding churches in addressing this vital concern.

When churches are empowered to envision and create a culture of active volunteerism, which calls church laity to discover their unique talents, accompanied by a clear sense of purpose

and calling surrounding these talents, they are enabled to provide their volunteers with the motivational core which significantly promotes engagement. When retention of volunteers is improved, church programs are able to establish roots within their community and be an important resource to that community.

In order for churches to continue their service within the community and world, acknowledgement and action against a serious threat to this must be addressed. Volunteer burnout is highlighted as perhaps the most serious practical problem inhibiting churches from fully realizing their spiritual ideals and shifting into a role seriously needed in American society. This chapter began by charting the history of how the concept of burnout began to gain influence at the time of the Industrial Revolution. The progression from being an idea largely dismissed within scholarly circles to a fully-embodied professional research agenda in the United States and around the world was described.

In this context, three specific areas of the burnout literature which are most vital to churches were brought into focus: (a) How churches can transform from being largely hierarchically-organized cultures where pastors are looked to for vision and direction, to dynamically self-organizing social organisms in which church volunteers collectively engage in shaping the endeavors of the church in ways that honor the diversity inherent in the congregation; (b) How church leaders can equip themselves with the needed awareness, vitality and skills to inspire the members of their church to become engaged in volunteerism; (c) How the volunteers that become involved can begin a personal journey of discovery that enables them to find the core of their motivations—a core that can not only sustain volunteer engagement but also form the basis for the evolution of social programs in ways that are impossible whenever

solutions are handed down from the top, detached from the lived experiences of the people being served.

The next chapter of this study will articulate a research procedure, which engages church leaders to describe programs in which volunteer engagement and retention is already working. Findings drawn from interviews of these leaders will form the basis for revisiting the literature presented in this review. It is hoped that the contribution of this study will form a basis for an ignition of vision wherein communities of faith will be empowered to embody the ideals of service to which they have been called by Jesus Christ. We need passion to drive us, but we also need the gifts behind the passion. When volunteers and leaders are able to find the narrow intersection of passion, God given gifts, and service, the result becomes an unstoppable force to the world. Providing the individual and the organization with an irreplaceable and powerful contribution. This narrow intersection is where the researcher desires to contribute to the broader body of research. Spiritual gift discovery and training can provide church organizations with a powerful life giving force to the individual, organization and community. Imagine a world full of churches, communities and individuals who are living in the intersection of passion, purpose, skill and service. The researcher postulated that an individual living within this context, surrounded by a community striving for the same result, can have an unstoppable positive impact on the world through micro and macro levels.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The discussion presented will pertain to the research methodology used in this study to gather and analyze data. The research methodology will provide a framework for the development of the study pertaining to the relationship between church leadership and their ability to assist church volunteers in the prevention and mitigation of burnout. Research questions and interview questions will be presented, as well as the nature and overall design of the study. Participant selection, human subject consideration and data collection will be thoroughly described to show the detailed process and protection of the participants selected.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

The following four research questions (RQ) guide this study:

RQ1: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?

RQ2: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?

RQ3: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?

RQ4: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

Nature of the Study

The framework used to approach this study is a qualitative process. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative research is utilized when a problem or issues needs to be explored, discoveries need to be heard from those who might otherwise be silent, and variables in this

relationship need to be identified from a population or group of people. Creswell (2013) further explained that qualitative research is meant to empower, provide understanding, and deemphasize the power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee. Stake (2010) stated that, “By *qualitative* we mean that its thinking relies primarily on human perception and understanding” (p. 11).

Strauss and Corbin (2015) outlined some of the reasons researchers choose to implement a qualitative versus a quantitative methodology to their study. They stated that when a researcher is looking to explore the inner experiences of the interviewees, how meanings are created and transformed, to uncover uncharted areas of research, to seek out variables that can be looked at later through quantitative methods, and to holistically and thoroughly approach the study of a particular phenomenon, a qualitative method needs to be implemented. Stake (2010) proposed that science has an important qualitative side that works with the quantitative, and expresses itself through intuition, experiences and skepticism, refining the theories and experiments in important ways.

In addition, Strauss and Corbin (2015) pointed out that, “qualitative researchers are drawn to the fluid, evolving, and dynamic nature of this approach as to the more structured designs of quantitative methods” (p. 5). Strauss and Corbin (2015) made the point that qualitative researchers are looking for something different in their study; they’re looking for the unpredictable human response, the ability to discover new things, and framing this in the complex nature of relationships. Qualitative research provides this study with a flexible framework to encompass the dynamic relationships that exist between church leadership, church volunteers and burnout mitigation and prevention. This dynamic relationship has the ability to lead to undiscovered and uncharted territory when it comes to retaining and sustaining long-term

volunteers in the church. The methodology on achieving a specific skeletal structure, and to study these relationships in social situations, is outlined in the following section.

Strengths and weaknesses. Qualitative research boasts some strengths that make it a unique research method. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative research is done in a real-life setting instead of other kinds of research, which may be done in labs or by surveys. This style of research allows for an uncontrolled environment and conditions that make it unique to other styles. Johnson and Christensen (2013) stated that a qualitative researcher is, “A researcher who focuses on the exploration, description, and sometimes generation and construction of theories using qualitative data” (p. 18). Creswell (2013) explained that a qualitative design allows for the researcher to see patterns, themes, and to interpret the data by engaging with the participants in an intense and concentrated way. Creswell (2013) explained further that the open-ended style of interviews and research information allow for important historical information to be included. The flow of the interview questions in qualitative research can be steered to prompt insights and perceptions that are vital to the research project and would not appear in other forms of research.

Even though there is evidence and emphasis on qualitative researches strengths regarding the immense detail and the inclusion of the individual’s real-life experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), there are also limitations to this research approach. Creswell (2013) postulated that one limitation is that the data from the interviewee is being presented through the lens of the interviewer’s experience of them. This type of conveyance is subjective and may not fully depict the entire experience of the interviewee. On the same note, the interviewer may be the one picking out the place of the interview and so this further subtracts from that real-life experience of the interviewee. Creswell (2013) and Johnson and Christensen (2014) continued to show the flip side of the strengths by the statement that the interviewee may not be able to

understand or respond to the open-ended questions asked. Likewise, the mere presence of the interviewer or researcher during the interview process may elicit biased or false answers from the interviewee during the process.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is the qualitative grounded theory approach. Creswell (2009) stated that, “Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Grounded theory qualitative research aims to develop a theory based on the data. Strauss and Corbin (2015) stated, “A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (p. 15). Strauss and Corbin (2015) reported that, “Description plays a part in theory development by filling in the details once the theoretical structure is given form” (p. 12). Strauss and Corbin (2015) explained that grounded theory is a form of qualitative research, originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, in a hope of creating a theory that could be based in data. This form of qualitative research is applicable across disciplines and accomplishes several things, including: “identification of general concepts, the development of theoretical explanations that reach beyond the known, and offers new insights into a variety of experiences and phenomena” (p. 6).

Strauss and Corbin (2015) reported that grounded theory was developed because of the influences of students who enjoyed the mental challenge, who wanted a more flexible and open approach to data collection and analysis, the hope that their work would have relevance beyond academia to the practical life situations of people, and there is a sense of absorption and devotion to the research process, and offers explanations to people’s experiences. Creswell (2009) stated

that grounded theory provides a different conclusion, in which researchers seek to discover a theory that is based on information from the participants. Strauss and Corbin (2015) postulated that grounded theory methodology has an advantage to other qualitative approaches because it has been around for so long, and provides many foundational procedures to constructing theory through data. Strauss and Corbin (2015) further explained the difference between theory and descriptive, reporting that, “description tells about an event or happening while theory offers explanations for why events or happenings occur” (p. 12). Grounded theory is most appropriately applied to this study due to its foundation in the human experience, social interactions and dynamics.

Structured process of grounded theory. The qualitative approach of grounded theory follows a process that the researcher actively creates. Charmaz (2014) gave examples of nine things the grounded theory researcher would do:

1. Conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process
2. Analyze actions and processes rather than themes and structure
3. Use comparative methods
4. Draw on data (e.g. narratives and description) in service of developing new conceptual categories
5. Develop inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis
6. Emphasize theory construction rather than descriptive or application of current theories
7. Engage in theoretical sampling
8. Search for variation in the studied categories or process
9. Pursue developing a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic (p. 15).

Charmaz (2014) concurred and explained that different researchers invariably choose varying points at which to draw the line of grounded theory. Hood (as cited in Charmaz, 2014) stated that the common criteria for grounded theory is the theoretical sampling. Reporting that development of the theory is the goal, and that the outline at the end should reflect an analytical product and not just a descriptive account.

Appropriateness of grounded theory methodology. Creswell (2013) explained that grounded theory's unit of analysis is, "studying a process, an action, or an interaction involving many individuals" (p. 104). Whereas, narrative researcher's unit of analysis is studying 1 or more individuals. Grounded theory is useful in this research study, due to the desire to understand the relationship between the social interactions of leadership, volunteers and the internal and external phenomenon of how burnout prevention and mitigation is handled in the church.

Strengths and weaknesses. The main basis for using grounded theory is derived from the fact that this method has been tested over a long period of time, holds validity across research disciplines and subjects, is the most widely used qualitative approach, and offers specific foundational procedures to constructing theory through data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Bryant and Charmaz (2007) specified some more strengths of grounded theory, by showing how this theory encourages the consistent interaction with the data, remaining constantly involved in the researcher's emerging analysis, and the streamlined process that this pattern forges. Grounded theory method has the potential to capture context and complexity in social action and to highlight emerging or existing topics, which in turn makes it valid to the people being researched. This lends itself to the ability of the research to then be applied to a

practitioner audience and to benefit the population involved (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Although grounded theory boasts many strengths it also has limitations. Schiellerup (2008) criticized Glaser and Strauss' (1967) approach to grounded theory, describing it as too rigid in its approach. However, Schiellerup (2008) stated:

The codification of the data analytical process that can be found in the grounded theory literature seeks to articulate something about the cognitive functions of the mind that we do spontaneously: attributing meaning to experience. We cannot help ourselves. Part of the difficulty is that the apparatus of grounded theory sometimes gets in the way of the very process it is meant to facilitate. (p. 168)

The point being that the very process itself and the researcher's own biases, can get in the way of the subjects intentions or actual meaning. Schiellerup (2008) explained that because of grounded theory's emphasis on openness and constant development it becomes difficult for the researcher to know when to stop, as well as to know when to stop ascribing meaning to the data. Therefore, closure for the researcher becomes an important part of the grounded theory approach of knowing when to let go.

Research Design

This study employed a grounded-theory-based research design (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 2015) in order to map the practices churches employ in their efforts to prevent and mitigate volunteer burnout and to conceptualize why certain practices are effective in modifying the internal experience of burnout among church volunteers. A research design capable of both describing the common practices employed across churches, organizing these

practices by theme and producing a working theory of effective practices, is needed. Strauss and Corbin (2015) argued that a grounded-theory-based research design is capable of doing both.

While this study aims to describe the common practices employed across churches to prevent and mitigate volunteer burnout, description is not its end goal. Morse (2004) pointed out that the relevance and implications of practices cannot be evaluated without being understood through the lens of theory. Thus, a research design is needed that will not only yield accurate descriptions of a social phenomenon but also produce a theoretical construct capable of explaining the phenomenon presented.

Analysis unit. The ideal candidate, analysis unit for this study is a church leader who is directly involved in the training, prevention and mitigation of burnout, among their church volunteers. These candidates would be male or female, within the age range of 20-80, and have at least one year of experience in their position. The population for the study includes 15 church leaders in the Southern California region.

Sample size. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) explained that when choosing the sample size for a grounded theory approach the “study needs to be representative, but it’s unnecessary and perhaps defeating to collect huge amounts of data” (p. 117). Likewise, Charmaz (2014) stated that grounded theory sampling size should therefore be based on saturation and a lack of new data being brought in by the interviews, instead of an arbitrary number. Strauss and Corbin (1998) reported that for a qualitative study it is useful to use the criteria for saturation as a sample size guide. Accordingly, a sample size of 15 participants was selected for this study.

Participant selection. Purposive or purposeful sampling was used to select the participants in this study. Merriam (2009) pointed out that purposive sampling could identify archetypal individuals who can directly speak to the experience the researcher is looking for to

fulfill the purpose of the study. Likewise, Richards and Morse (2012) described purposeful sampling as a widely used qualitative approach, aimed at identifying and selecting information-rich participants who are willing to reflect on the questions being researched, recognize the required information, and have the time to contribute to the study.

Sampling frame to create the master list. The search for participants was a multi-step process involving compiling a master list of participants, narrowing down the master list by applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and then if the participant list is still greater than 20, applying the criteria for maximum variation.

The researcher started online with googling *The Hartford Institute*:

1. The search engine resulted in a list of 10 hits on the first page.
2. From this list, the researcher selected the second link: <http://hirr.hartsem.edu/>, which led to, *The Hartford Institute for Religion Research*, website. This website contained an extensive public database of churches in the United States, sorted by religion, denomination, orientation, gender and number of attendance. The website also contained the churches public website information.
3. The researcher then clicked on the link for each church and obtained the email and phone number contact information for the churches that fit the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
4. The researcher used this publicly accessible list of churches to create the master list of potential participants. The inclusion, exclusion criteria and maximum variation were used for this rigorous selection process.

Criteria for inclusion. The selection process for this study filtered church leaders through the inclusion criteria to find possible matches. Participants who were then selected for

the study were asked to verify that they met the inclusion criteria before participating in the research. The outlined inclusion and exclusion criteria is listed below:

- Participant is employed by a church within a 200 mile radius of the Loma Linda area.
- Participant must have served as a leader in the church for at least 1 year.
- Participant agrees to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- Participant must be available to be interviewed face-to-face.
- Public contact information was available for the potential candidate through the church website.

Exclusion criteria. The criteria for the exclusion of participants for this research study is as follows:

- The church's congregation size is under 1000 members.
- Participant is employed by a Church outside of the 200 mile radius of the Loma Linda Area in southern California area.
- Participant does not agree to sign the informed consent form.
- Participant does not acknowledge that they meet the inclusion criteria.

Maximum variation. Creswell (2013) reported that maximum variation in participant selection can be incorporated as a selection strategy, in order to account for diverse cases and multiple perspectives. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) pointed out that maximum variation is a way to select an assorted sample of varying experiences, from a variety of participants, settings and groups. If the sample is greater than 25 participants after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the criteria for maximum variation will be implemented as follows:

- Preference was given to those church leaders who had been in their position longer than 1 year.
- Population was representative of both genders.
- Population was representative of varied ethnicities.
- Population was based on the urbanicity (Urban and Rural).
- Population was based on an educational spectrum.

Human Subject Consideration

This study used human participants to interview and gather data for the research project. In the event that human subjects are used for study, Pepperdine University has specific ethical and legal guidelines to protect the interviewees. According to Pepperdine University's Human Subject Research page (n.d.) all the research done with human participants must be, "conducted in accordance with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research and that all such research must be approved by one of the university's Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)" (para. 1). All of the participants involved in the study were adult professionals and did not meet the standards for an "at risk" or "vulnerable" population. Pepperdine University's Human Subject Consideration page (n.d.) "The primary goal of the Pepperdine University IRBs is to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects. A secondary goal of the Pepperdine IRBs is to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations" (para. 2).

Pepperdine University follows the guidelines to protect human subjects through the Belmont Report, found in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website (2016), which stated that the National Research Act was signed into law in 1974. Their mission was to pinpoint ethical principles that would guide behavioral and biomedical research in order to

protect human subjects. The Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016) conscripted the following list of considerations by the commission to consider when developing such principles:

(i) the boundaries between biomedical and behavioral research and the accepted and routine practice of medicine, (ii) the role of assessment of risk-benefit criteria in the determination of the appropriateness of research involving human subjects, (iii) appropriate guidelines for the selection of human subjects for participation in such research and (iv) the nature and definition of informed consent in various research settings. (para. 1)

First, a proposal outlining the details and procedures of the study was submitted for review to gain permission to conduct the study through the Internal Review Board (Creswell, 2013). Before any participants were recruited, the Pepperdine IRB department confirmed that this research project met the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations that oversee the protection of human subjects (see Appendix A). Second, the participants were reached initially through email, using the recruitment script (see Appendix C) and followed up with a phone call 24 hours later. Potential participants were given the information regarding the nature of the study, the ability to accept or decline the invitation to be apart of the research project, Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) informed consent form (see Appendix B), and a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix E).

It was important that the participant be aware of the following information in regards to informed consent that was significant to this research study. Creswell (2013) stated:

- the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time;
- the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection;

- the protection of the confidentiality of the respondents;
- the known risks associated with participation in the study;
- and
- the signature of the participants as well as researcher (p. 153).

While using this grounded theory methodology, Creswell (2013) reported that it was import to not only gain permission from the participants, but that the researcher should have also gained rapport with the human subjects, “so that they will disclose detailed perspectives about responding to an action or a process” (p. 154).

Data Collection

The researcher emailed possible participants by sending out the IRB approved script (see Appendix C), and then researcher confirmed by a follow-up phone call 24 hours later. Once the participants were selected the researcher proceeded to send Pepperdine University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) informed consent form (see Appendix B), and a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix E). Once the participants had agreed to be interviewed, the researcher met with the participants at their respective church offices or at an alternative neutral location, such as a coffee house. The participants were asked nine research questions in the span of their 60-minute interview. The researcher asked follow up questions when appropriate and remained silent while the participant gave their answers. Once the interview was complete, the researcher obtained the participant’s verbal consent to call them back with any questions the researcher may have after the interview.

The researcher conducted 60-minute audio-recorded interviews, using the 9 approved research questions. The researcher obtained signed consent to audio-record the interviews, and for those who wished to remain anonymous, used pseudonyms for the participants to protect

their confidentiality. Audio recordings were captured on two mp3 flash drive recording devices. To mitigate further risk, the audio-recordings done on the handheld devices were stored in a lock box at the researcher's residence. In addition, the researcher personally transcribed the audio-recordings and stored the transcriptions on the same mp3 flash drive, to maintain strict confidentiality. The audio files will be destroyed after a three year waiting period, as instructed by the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools IRB (n.d.).

Interview techniques. According to Strauss and Corbin (2015), there are three types of interviews for qualitative research: "There are unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and, structured interviews" (p. 37). Structured interviews were considered for this study but discarded due to this style being the least effective means of data collection in grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (2015) reported:

This is because the topics that are covered are those deemed important by the researcher and perhaps are not the issue or problems important to participants. This goes against the whole nature of grounded theory, which is based on grounding the theory in the concerns and problems of participants. It has been our experience that participants usually respond only to the questions that are asked (p. 39).

This style of interviewing would not aid in the type of research the study was looking for. Unstructured interviews were also considered because they allow the interviewee to have the most flexibility, control over the flow, pace, questions, and direction of the interview. However, this style can be hard to master and does not give enough consistency for this particular study (Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

Semi-structured interviews were ultimately chosen for this study, in order to maintain some consistency of topic, but also give the freedom to ask or say something that is not listed,

but may be relevant to the study. Semi-structured interviews allow for the same topics to be covered in each participant's interview but also allow for additional questions or comments at the end, that the participant deems relevant to the study (Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During the semi-structured interviews, specific interviewing techniques were utilized.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that, "Interviewing for research purposes is a systematic activity that you can learn to do well" (p. 107). The most common form of interviews are done face-to-face and look much like a conversation with a purposeful mission. There are many types of interview styles, which are picked based on the structure of the interview chosen (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam (2009) stated that asking good questions is essential but takes some practice. She explained that trying the interview questions out beforehand, through a staged interview, can shed light on what questions will be the most helpful and which may be poorly constructed. The wording to questions must be clear and specific to the person being interviewed. Strauss and Corbin (2015) made the point that in a grounded theory guided interview it is important to leave some room for the interviewee to bring up things naturally that are important to them.

The researcher met with the interviewee at the predetermined location and started the interview with light small talk to ease the situation. The researcher clarified the purpose of the meeting, got verbal consent to audio-record, reiterated the length of time needed to complete the interview, and clarified the possible positive impact that this may have on church volunteer training for burnout prevention and mitigation in the future. Strauss and Corbin (2015) reported that the interviewee has the right to stop if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unable to continue and the researcher made sure the interviewee was aware of this. After the interview was

concluded the interviewee was thanked for their time and asked for verbal consent to call them back if the researcher had any further questions.

Interview Protocol

There is a lot of the interaction during an interview that is not expressed through words. Silverman (2011) stated that, “The content of this non-verbal interaction also challenges common assumptions about the researcher's and participant's relative power to control the interview” (p. 299). He explained that interviewees may have stories to tell, but that they also have the possibility of sidestepping sensitive topics or steering the interview to avoid certain painful subjects. At the same time a “silent dialogue” can emerge about the interview itself (Silverman, 2011, p. 299). This often surfaces when sensitive topics arise, the interviewee perceives the interviewer as thinking of them negatively, or the interviewer looks disturbed or uninterested in what the interviewee is explaining. Silverman (2011) stated that interviews are retrospective accounts that explain and rationalize behavior; however, there are ways that the research participants can reflect on the past, and link it to their present and future situations in new developing ways. It is the researcher's job to be curious about the interviewee's situation and story.

Charmaz (2014) explained that the grounded theory researchers can learn to use intensive interviewing skills, meaning that the researcher is looking to guide the interviewee in sharing their personal experiences that pertain to the research topic. Key characteristics of intensive interviewing are as such:

- Selection of research participants who have first-hand experience that fits the research topic
- In-depth exploration of participants' experience and situations

- Reliance on open--ended questions
- Objective of obtaining detailed responses
- Emphasis on understanding the research participants perspective, meanings, and experience
- Practice of following up on unanticipated areas of inquiry, hints, and implicit views and accounts of actions (p. 56).

Interview questions. Many grounded theorists rely on the intensive interviewing process heavily, due to it being the most common source of qualitative data (Charmaz, 2014). The following questions are used to gather data surrounding the best practices and strategies used by church leaders to assist in the mitigation and prevention of burnout among their church volunteers:

IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?

IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program?

IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?

IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?

Relationship between research and interview questions. Our experiences shape our view; we see things through the lens of our own life occurrences, beliefs, attitudes and environment. The researcher will likewise see the participants, interview process, and trajectory of the study through this filter. Tracy (2013) stated that, “The mind and body of a qualitative researcher literally serve as research instruments—absorbing, sifting through, and interpreting the world through observation, participation, and interviewing” (p.3).

Reliability and validity of the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that all researchers are concerned with finding valid and reliable results in their research. More specifically speaking about internal and external validity and reliability. “Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 237).

Prima facie validity. This term refers to that which is observed at first sight. *Prima facie* validity as an adjective means “sufficient to establish a fact or case unless disproved” (Hill & Hill, 2009, p. 330). There were nine original interview questions designed to elicit responses related to the research questions and those are outlined below in their *prima facie* form:

RQ1: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?

IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?

IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

RQ2: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?

IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program.

IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

RQ3: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?

IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

RQ4: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?

IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?

Peer review validity. The next level of securing validity for the study involved peer review validity. Creswell (2013) stated that peer reviewing provides an external check of the research processes. Merriam (2009) pointed out that, on some level, all doctoral students have

this phase built into their dissertation. She stated that peer reviewing is about, involving other outside sources who are knowledgeable on the topic, to review the researcher's raw data and to determine if the findings are plausible based on that data.

For this study three fellow Doctoral students from Pepperdine University's Education in Organizational Leadership program were selected. These students reviewed the raw data and then made suggested changes to the research questions. Each student peer reviewer was vetted and understood the process, based on this research project, as well as having experience in similar fields. Each student was given a copy of the interview questions and asked to address each question individually, and to write down their suggestion to keep the interview question, delete it, or modify it, based on their knowledge of the subject area.

Expert review validity. The dissertation committee members reviewed the development of the research questions and corresponding interview questions to make sure that all aspects of the validity process were achieved and expert review validity was established. The dissertation committee reviewed the prima facie validity of the research questions and their interview questions, to construct and compare the recommended modifications from the peer reviewers. The dissertation committee offered guidance, recommendations and development of the research questions that implemented prima facie validity, peer review validity, and expert review validity that are outlined below.

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ1: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?	<p>IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?</p> <p>IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?</p>
RQ 2: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?Q	<p>IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program?</p> <p>IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p>
RQ 3: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?	<p>IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <p>IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?</p> <p>(continued)</p>

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
RQ 4: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?	<p>IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <p>IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?</p> <p>IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?</p>

Interview techniques. Creswell (2013) stated that for grounded theory, each participant needs to give consent to be studied, and the researcher needs to build rapport with the participants to get their honest perspectives on the research questions presented. Grounded theorists first start with a standardized sample of participants with the same steps and process.

Statement of Personal Bias

Personal biases related to research are inevitable; Creswell (2013) suggested that a statement of personal biases, related to the research study, be implemented as a validity strategy. Highlighting personal biases serves as one strategy for refining the ability to evaluate the accuracy of the research findings. Personal biases on the part of the researcher may exist due to the researcher's background within the church setting and as a Marriage and Family Therapist. The researcher acknowledges that this background may have influenced on her ability to correctly interpret and comprehend the data. In order for the researcher to mitigate these personal

biases from infiltrating the study and influencing the analysis, the researcher exercised the strategy outlined below.

Epoche

This term is used interchangeably with the term bracketing. Creswell (2013) stated that bracketing is a term used to identify holding back or suspending preconceived ideas and prejudices of the researcher that may carry into the study. The ability for the researcher to set aside her previously acquired knowledge and personal theories through the research project is vital through collecting and analysing the data. This bracketing can be achieved through writing down any preconceived notions in a memoing format (Richards & Morse, 2012). The researcher took this information and applied some interview technique principles to achieve the suspension of bias. Creswell (2013) reported that bracketing is a difficult thing to achieve but that, “I see researchers who embrace this idea when they begin a project by describing their own experiences with the phenomenon and bracketing out their views before proceeding with the experiences of others” (p. 80). LeVasseur (2003) surmised that bracketing or epoche might need a new definition; one which would embrace the idea of suspending the researchers understanding in order to reflect long enough to develop an environment of curiosity.

Data Analysis

Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015) outlined the 4 components of the analysis process of grounded theory: theoretical sampling, data collection, data analysis and theoretical saturation. Diving into theoretical sampling, Rose et al. (2015) explain that this method is geared toward supporting theory development. Meaning that the sampling is not fixed and is adjusted based on what emerges from the theory, allowing for an open approach that can flow with the course of new developments. Rose et al. (2015) stated that data collection can include in-depth interviews,

observations and rich data gathered from underneath the surface of life. Rose et al. (2015) then explained that the data analysis portion lends itself to deriving and developing concepts that emerge from the data collected. This data is then coded and these coded concepts become the foundation and build up the developing theory. Rose et al. (2015) described the final stage of the analysis process of theoretical saturation. In which, the cycling data that has been collected yields no new insights or discoveries. Rose et al. (2015) reported that throughout this process the researcher is constantly flowing back and forth between data and the emerging theory. This constant comparison leads to finely tuned and precise concepts and aids in the reducing the researcher bias by constantly challenging the researcher with new data.

Reading, memoing. Rose et al. (2015) stated that the research should capture thoughts and ideas about the concepts coming from the data and the future direction desired. Memos are a creative process of theorizing and understanding what is perceived from the data presented. Rose et al. (2015) reported that it is wise to carefully keep the memos so they can be looked at later in the process, as they can link the interviews, theory development and final written report, together.

Describing, classifying, interpreting (coding). For stage one, open coding, Strauss and Corbin (2015) explained that open coding is the beginning process of grounded theory analysis. Sprenkle and Moon (1996) stated that the first interaction with the interview transcript gives the researcher the opportunity to ask questions of the participant by approaching each response to the questions that the researcher has posed with open-minded curiosity and simply asking what the response is really about. Throughout the open coding process the researcher works to suspend preconceptions and ensure the conceptual categories that emerge are true to the source document (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007), by utilizing a stance that Morse (2002) identified as

bracketing. During this state the researcher should engage in memo writing in an effort to identify sources of bias and to keep the researcher mindful of their effort to stay true to the source documents (McGhee et al., 2007). The focus is on seeking out common ideas, comparing these ideas and staying true to the source documents across interviews. Through this process, themes begin to emerge that are representative of the diversity of ideas found in the interviews. Coding categories are created, at this stage, to represent each emerging theme.

For example, if the researcher were reading through the following hypothetical statement: In my church, we have an associate pastor who, as a part of his job description, takes care of our volunteer Sunday School Teachers. This pastor develops relationships throughout the year with the members of the church who would be good candidates to teach on Sunday. Then, once a year, we recruit the teachers for the coming year. We never know, though, who God might “tap on the shoulder” and “who might respond,” several coding categories might emerge. This statement might be coded under the category, “Caring for volunteers seen as part of the pastor’s job.” It might also precipitate the creation of a category such as, “The tension between divine and human initiative in the recruitment of volunteers.” Open coding is an attempt to map the richness of the ideas presented in the interviews in ways that capture the character of the underlying data.

For stage two, axial coding, the emergence of theory happens during the process of axial coding. At this stage, according to Strauss and Corbin (2015), the researcher links the initial coding categories in ways that create an explanation of the complexity observed in the raw data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed that this is a process of constant comparison, in which the researcher works to identify which ideas relate to the others. The relationship between ideas is

arranged in terms of overarching themes which are accompanied by subordinate ideas that explain and give meaning to the higher-order ideas, while accounting for variation in the data.

The axial coding stage allows the researcher to impose organization onto the data. The researcher embraces creativity in their conceptualization of the relationships between the coding categories (McGhee et al., 2007). Strauss and Corbin (2015), suggested that it is at this stage that bracketing is suspended and the researcher begins to allow for the consideration of ideas that go beyond those found in the interviews. Morse (2002) proposed that the literature be used as a scaffold framework, which enables the researcher to use the existing knowledge of a phenomenon, that has been drawn from the review of the literature, in order to better understand the ideas uncovered during open coding.

Stage three, selective coding, is the final stage, which produces a coherent theory that is applicable in other similar settings to those being studied. Here, the researcher moves further back to view the research data in terms of themes of major importance. According to Uri (2015), the researcher may ask, “Why do certain things connect? Why were they important? Why were some items isolated? What points or considerations provided the major landmarks?” (p. 139). The researcher is not intent just to provide a complete description, but rather to weave the elements of description into an explanatory narrative that has meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Often a central theme emerges that can make a significant contribution if applied appropriately to the problems being investigated.

Interrater reliability and validity. Interrater reliability and validity is achieved by two or more individuals who evaluate the same project and give the same feedback and judgments (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A three-step process was implemented in order to achieve interrater reliability and validity. Step one, involved the researcher coding and interpreting the data

through memoing, read throughs and identifying themes (Creswell, 2013). Through the coding process the researcher was able to see major themes surface in the data from memoing and several read throughs.

Step two involved two other doctoral students from Pepperdine University's doctoral program in Organizational Leadership, who were familiar with the study and process, to co-rate the corresponding transcripts. Co-raters then agreed or modified the coding protocol and the coding revision recommendations are included. If the researcher and co-rater could not come to an agreement on the protocol, then the dissertation committee was the tiebreaker and had ultimate say.

Step three included using the results from step two in order to code all 15 interviews. After coding was completed, the co-raters and researcher then separately identified leadership themes throughout the coding and compared findings to ensure accuracy and interpretation of data. After findings were compared to ensure accuracy of the data, all co-raters deleted or properly destroyed the files.

Representing, visualizing. Creswell (2013) reported that visualizing and using representation is the final state of data analysis. This study utilized visually represented data through bar charts to provide further validity and illustrations. Participants were provided with copies of the transcribed notes of audio-recordings, and each participant approved the visual representation of their data that was represented in the findings section.

Summary

The discussion presented in this chapter aimed to understand the research methodology used to gather and analyze data for this study. The research methodology of the qualitative, grounded theory approach, provided a framework for the relationship between church leadership

and their ability to assist church volunteers in the prevention and mitigation of burnout, to be studied. The prevention and mitigation of volunteer burnout in churches is imperative to the continued service of the church. This study provided a grounded theory design to capture the human experiences and relationships fundamental to understanding the phenomenon of burnout among church volunteers, and the process in which church leadership played in tackling this issue.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies and practices employed by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Burnout prevention and mitigation systems are essential for volunteer retention, and sustaining long-term volunteers is imperative for the continued functioning of the church. The following questions sought to gain insight into how churches are currently empowering their volunteers through informal or formal processes:

- **RQ 1:** What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?
- **RQ 2:** What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout.
- **RQ 3:** How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?
- **RQ 4:** What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

Interview Questions

Grounded theorists view the intensive interviewing process as the most used source for key data in the qualitative approach (Charmaz, 2014). Nine semi-structured interview questions were given to ten church leaders who were directly involved in volunteer training through a face-to-face interview process. The following questions were asked in order to provide data on the best practices and strategies used by church leaders to assist in the mitigation and prevention of burnout among their church volunteers, stemming from the participants personal and lived experiences. Two experienced and qualified interrater reviewers, and three expert reviewers,

evaluated and validated the following research questions:

IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?

IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program.

IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?

IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?

Participants in the study must have served for at least one year as a leader of any volunteer ministry within the church. These leaders gave first hand accounts of their experiences working directly with volunteers and dealing with burnout. Participants were able to provide insight into the prevention and mitigation of burnout among church volunteers and contributed to the continued sought after church volunteer retention goal. The themes gathered from these

insights, a brief look at the participant's profiles and an analysis and results section of the ten semi-structured interviews were examined throughout this chapter.

Participants

Purposive or purposeful sampling was utilized to select the participants for this study. Purposive sampling is a widely used qualitative approach used as a means to identify a representative population who would be able to speak directly to the experience of the research being studied, provide the time needed to participate and recognize the information in a meaningful way (Merriam, 2009, Richards & Morse, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the following criteria were developed for the unit of analysis:

- Participant is employed by a church within a 200 mile radius of the Loma Linda area.
- Participant must have served as a leader in the church for at least 1 year.
- Participant agrees to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- Participant must be available to be interviewed face-to-face.
- Public contact information was available for the potential candidate through the church website.

Gender. Ten (100%) of the research participants were observed to be either male or female by the researcher. Gender demographic data of church leaders or volunteer coordinators in charge of volunteer training who participated in the study is illustrated in *Figure 1*.

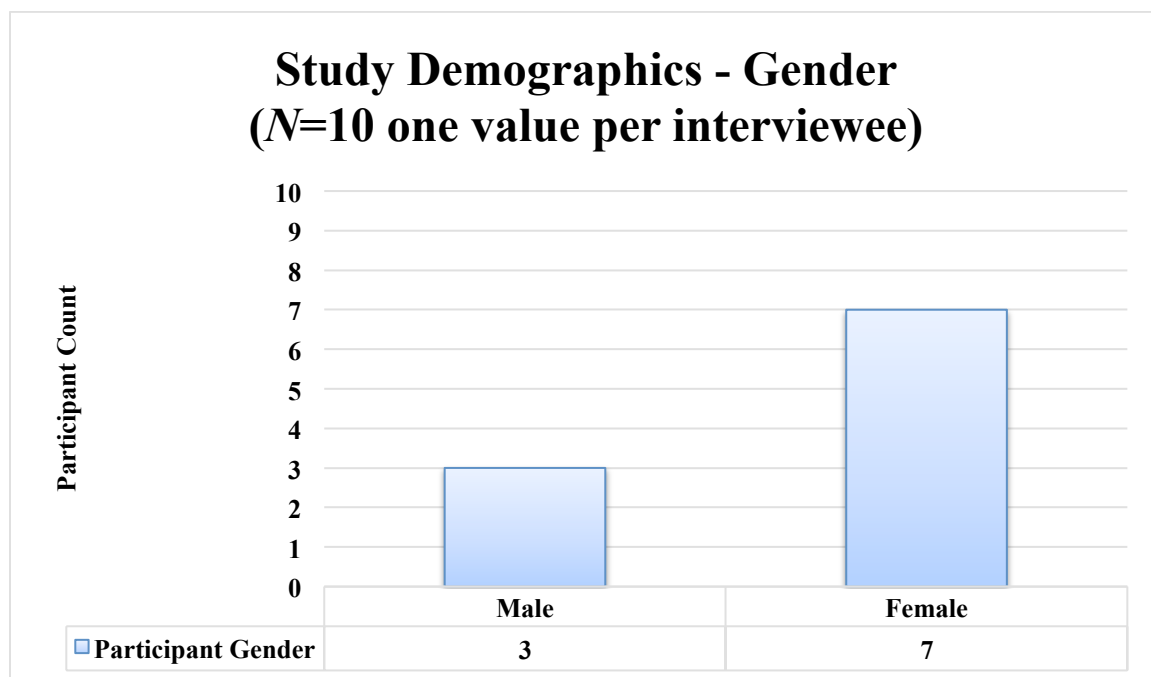


Figure 1. Participant demographics by gender as observed by researcher.

Ethnicity. Observations of ethnicity were noted for the ten (100%) research participants. Ethnicity demographic data of church leaders or volunteer coordinators in charge of volunteer training who participated in the study is illustrated in Figure 2.

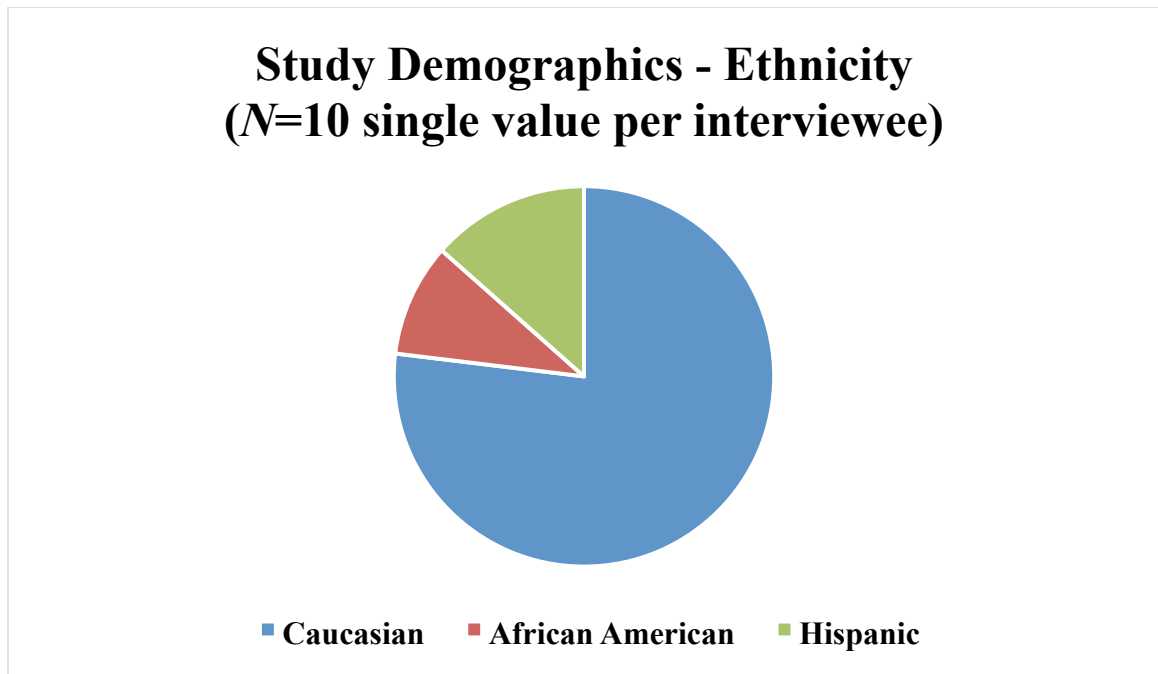


Figure 2. Participant demographics by ethnicity as observed by researcher.

Data Collection

The researcher emailed possible participants from the church website by sending the IRB approved script (see Appendix C) followed by a phone call 24 hours later. Once a participant agreed to be apart of the study, the researcher emailed a copy of Pepperdine University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) informed consent form (see Appendix B), and a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix E). Then once an interview time and location was selected, the researcher met with the participants at their respective church office or at a coffee house. The researcher recorded the participant as they answered the nine research questions within a maximum time span of 60-minutes. When the researcher felt it was appropriate, some follow-up questions were asked and the researcher remained silent while the participant answered. The researcher asked for the participant’s verbal consent to call back with any further questions after the interview was concluded.

The researcher proceeded to conduct the 60-minute maximum timed, audio-recorded interviews, and asked the nine approved research questions. The researcher obtained a signed consent form to audio-record the interviews, gave a copy of the consent form to each participant, and used pseudonyms for the participants to protect their confidentiality. The audio recordings of the interviews were captured on two mp3 flash drive recording devices and then stored in a lock box at the researcher's residence. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher transcribed the audio-recordings and stored the transcriptions on the same mp3 flash drive and stored in the same location. The researcher will destroy the audio-files and transcriptions after a three-year waiting period, as instructed by the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (n.d.). The dates on which the interviews were conducted are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Dates of Participant Interviews

Participants	Interview Dates
P1	March 22, 2017
P2	March 23, 2017
P3	April 2, 2017
P4	April 3, 2017
P5	April 3, 2017
P6	April 4, 2017
P7	April 4, 2017
P8	April 5, 2017
P9	April 5, 2017
P10	April 5, 2017

Data Analysis

The data analysis portion lends itself to deriving and developing concepts that emerged from the data collected. This data was coded and these coded concepts became the foundation for and built up the developing theory. Rose et al. (2015) described the final stage of the analysis process of theoretical saturation. In which, the cycling data that has been collected yields no new insights or discoveries. The data analysis process began during the semi-structured interviews by which the researcher witnessed the reporting of life experiences by these church leaders and volunteer coordinators.

Once these interviews were transcribed into separate Word Documents, the researcher read through the transcriptions and utilized recent memories of the interviews to memo early observed patterns and first impressions of the data. Any potentially identifying information in the transcripts was either omitted or altered in order to protect confidentiality during the peer review process. The researcher then organized an Excel spread sheet to begin the initial coding process. Throughout the open coding process the researcher worked to suspend preconceptions and ensure the conceptual categories that emerged were true to the source document (McGhee et al., 2007), by utilizing a stance that Morse (2002) identified as bracketing.

The Excel sheet contained one column for each participant with lower page tabs for each research question. Coded data from the transcripts were used to fill the columns appropriate to the interview question and participant. The researcher then memoed and created boxes in the Excel sheet to represent themes within each interview question. Data corresponding to a theme were color coded for easier recognition and frequencies of themes were tallied.

The next level of securing validity for the coding process involved peer review validity. Creswell (2013) stated that peer reviewing provides an external check of the research processes.

Merriam (2009) pointed out that, on some level, all doctoral students have this phase built into their dissertation. She stated that peer reviewing is about involving other, outside sources who are knowledgeable on the topic to review the researcher's raw data and to determine if the findings are plausible based on that data. Based on these sources, two doctoral students with academic experience in qualitative research provided inter-rater reliability to ensure the validity of the codes. Each reviewer reviewed the transcripts and compared them to the coded data from the Excel sheet. No personal information of the participants were shared with the reviewers. During the review process, the following recommendations were made in regards to the codes:

- IQ1 - Themes of "Rotation" and "Taking Breaks" was combined into "Serving Limits and Expectations."
- IQ1 - "Risk Factors" was removed due to the nature of the question and reframed into language consistent with "Serving Limits and Expectations" category.
- IQ2 – Categories of "Servant Leadership," "Transformational Leadership," and "Leadership Modeling" were combined into "Leadership Styles."
- IQ3 – "Rigid Systems" was reworded to "Leadership Style" due to consistencies with previous data.
- IQ5 – Added theme "Effective Volunteer Recruitment" as distinct from the theme of "Retention."
- IQ6 – "Feedback from Leadership" was simplified into "Personal Informal Feedback" and "Personal Formal Feedback."
- IQ8 – Added "Formal Process of Onboarding"

Data Display

The four research questions used in this study provided the organization and the basis for data reporting. Forty total themes emerged in the data across nine interview questions. The themes are displayed below in correlation with the appropriate research question. Data was verified by participant quotes and researcher's reflections of interviewee's lived experiences. Participants are referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, etc., in order to protect confidentiality and maintain consistency.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers? To answer RQ1, the following two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees:

- IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?
- IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

Interview question 1. What formal or informal process is used for the burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers? Six overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 1: (a) serving limits and expectations, (b) personal fit, (c) relational connection, (d) spiritual growth, (e) meaning making, and (f) leadership role modeling. (see Figure 3)

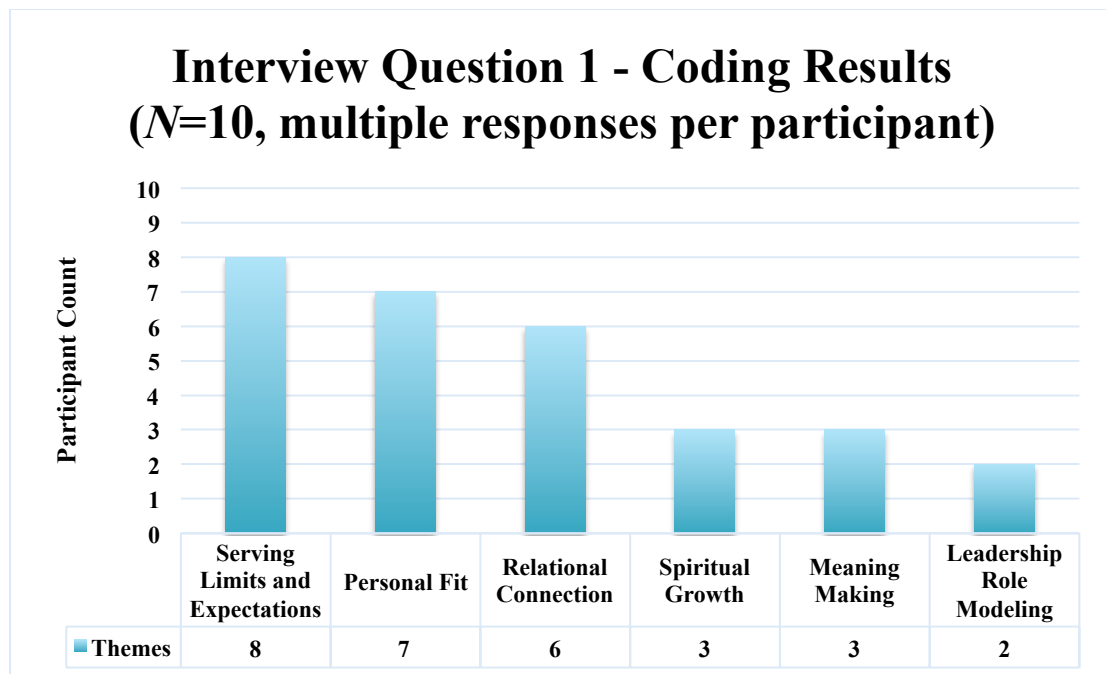


Figure 3. Themes that emerged from IQ1: What formal or informal process is used for the burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?

Serving limits and expectations. Eight of the participants discussed serving limits in some capacity. The participants focused on the idea of a rotation system that would allow for volunteers to serve at alternating times and take breaks frequently. P1 stated, “So one of the things is putting in a rotation, and trying to encourage them to take time off from serving, like serve every other week” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). The themes were about serving and then participating within the church and being able to have adequate time off to enjoy their community. P7 explained, “We tell them to rotate and to make sure they’re taking a break if they need to” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). In addition to normal rotations some participants mentioned an extra yearly or seasonal rotation. P8 reported, “They work off that calendar and then at that point they ask them to take a break and they force the idea of let’s take a break. So then we have a whole other group of people who come in and substitutes through the summer” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Two participants mentioned setting clear expectations at the beginning so that their volunteers understood what they were getting into. P9 reported, “I think expectation. If someone knows what needs to happen...I think just clear communication, being able to, just so that they know what’s expected in a life-giving way” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). P10 stated, “We try to be really clear about the process and we don’t let, or we encourage people not to serve every week” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). The participants were talking about making sure that their volunteers have a clear picture of what it will be like and what will be expected of them once they are placed in their position.

Personal fit. Seven participants spoke about finding the right fit and position for a volunteer 23 times during this question. P4 talked about using a website called Church Community Builder, where volunteers have filled out questionnaires on what things they were interested in and wanted to pursue. P4 stated that when choosing volunteers they look at, “The Church Community Builder. So when they fill out the profile, it also says my fit” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P3 similarly explained that finding the best fit for a volunteer, a position that they feel they enjoy being in, is the best burnout prevention. P9 ended with, “So you want to make your volunteers feel as comfortable as possible. I think that’s the main one” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

P8 spoke in depth about their process of intentionally seeking out volunteers for specific positions, and the process to finding the right fit for them from the very beginning. P8 explained a process of personality assessments, spiritual gift tests, and community affirmations of those gifts based on written assessments. Once this process is completed, P8 stated:

Then you come back to an appointment with a pastoral team member and they’ll sit down with you and they’ll take your answers and compare them with the three people who

know you best, and find out exactly where your passions, your giftings, and talents line up and then they offer you - these are the places we feel you would be most successful for you and for us. So there's a lot of that that happens so that we're plugging them in to the right place (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

This process is an in-depth, committed event that places volunteers in a position of strength and prevents burnout from the very beginning by incorporating several layers of support, connection and purpose.

Relational connection. Building strong relationships with each other was an integral process in the prevention and mitigation of burnout. Six participants mentioned relational connections 24 times during the interviews. There was an emphasis of building these relationships both in and outside of the church setting. P6 reported that she would check in and say, "how's it going, I haven't checked in with you. Not just have it be all about their volunteer position. Cause I've noticed the people that I do know, that I've had consistent time with and I'm able to see these are the things that would be meaningful for them, then it's good" (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Similarly, P5 stated, "...so we really focus on building a relationship with each and every one on the team, including volunteers and people who are even on staff and stuff. We really focus on building relationship and doing fun things, so like doing outings and bowling and stuff like that" (personal communication, April 3, 2017).

The same six participants also pointed out that the volunteer is more important to them personally than the position they fill at the church. P2 explained that, "The volunteer and the person is more important than the position to us" (personal communication, March 23, 2017). Participants focused on checking in with the volunteers personally to see how they were handling things both in their life and in their volunteer positions.

Spiritual growth. Three participants mentioned how supporting the volunteer's personal spiritual growth was extremely valuable to the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout. P1 stated, "trying to always highlight that their relationship with God is primary and ministry and serving is secondary" (personal communication, March 22, 2017). P1 also highlighted that, "The goal would be that all of this is stated up front, that our care first and foremost, for their spiritual growth and personal growth and care, during the process" (personal communication, March 22, 2017). Likewise, P10 detailed a Life Track program they implement that offers an entire class devoted to the spiritual habits of believers. P10 stated, "Talking about the Life Track program, the second class is the habits of a believer, so like what we think about reading your Bible and daily prayer and tithing and all those details" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Meaning making. Three participants outlined the process of having a purpose greater than themselves to create meaning out of their service as an important aspect to the prevention and mitigation of burnout. P2 explained, "We want people to know they're doing something grand; it's a vision. That keeps them from burnout, and then the idea that they're serving something larger than themselves" (personal communication, March 23, 2017). Participants were postulating the idea that when volunteers feel like they're serving altruistically, for God, and that they are able to see the impact they are having on other people's lives, they burnout less. Similarly, P3 stated, "I believe that what best prevents burnout is when a person is working in an area of passion and is able to see some positive impact on those he serves" (personal communication, April 2, 2017).

Leadership role modeling. Two participants heavily focused on the importance of leadership role modeling the process of burnout prevention and mitigation, six times throughout

this question. P8 stated, “We are highly proactive and it is from leadership down” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). These participants focused on how they see their leaders being the example for the volunteers, by going through these processes themselves continuously. P10 reported that the volunteers, “go through a shadowing process where they learn about what the team actually does, and they can see it, and follow somebody around” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Seeing the behaviors and shadowing allows the volunteers to see how leadership role models what they want to see from them. P8, while talking about leadership’s role in modeling the process, stated, “I couldn’t find anybody who’s dealing with burnout and those kinds of problems, because of the intentionality of supporting it and preventing it.”

Interview question 2. How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout? Six overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 2: (a) relational connection, (b) leadership styles, (c) identity development, (d) providing resources, (e) expression of appreciation, and (f) personal fit. (see *Figure 4*)

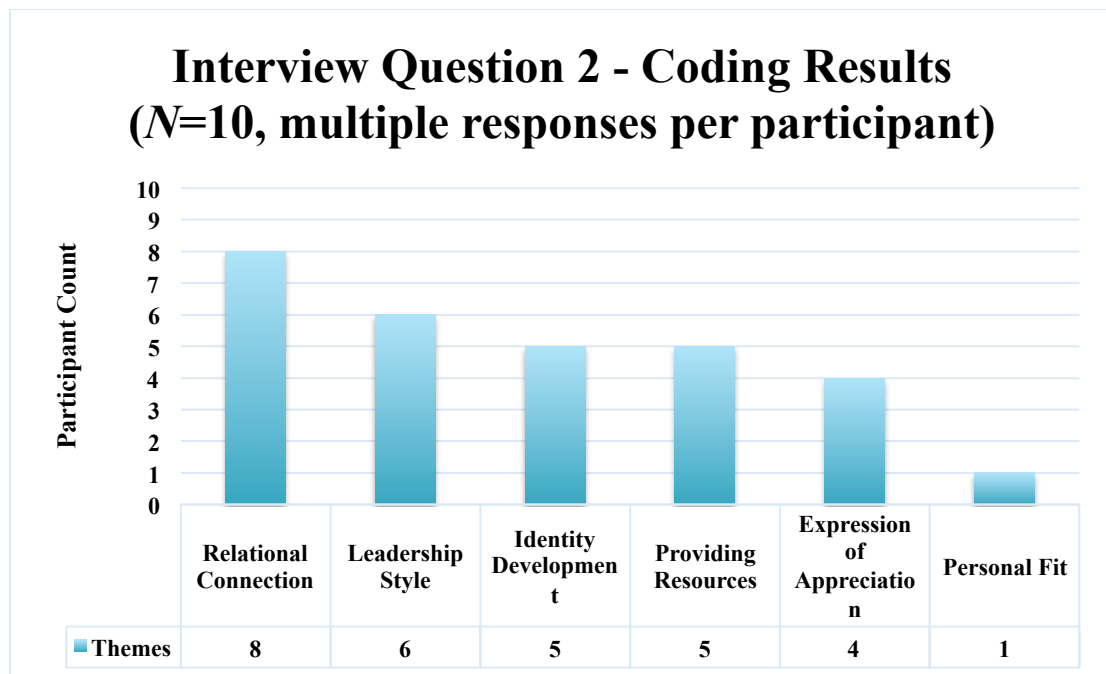


Figure 4. Themes that emerged from IQ2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

Relational connection. Eight participants stated that they supported their volunteers through a relational connection of some kind. P1 explained a process of trickle down communication, leading to building relationships, “those leaders have a lead and then a team captain for each team and then they’re looking at maybe 10-15 people that they’re checking in with during the week, that they know what’s going on with” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). P5 spoke about care groups to assist each other relationally, “So these care groups are to take care of each other and let you know, hey, yes it’s all volunteering and serving ministry but at the end of the day it’s all about us, about us communicating and interacting with each other, too” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Building relationships was foundational to these participants in supporting their volunteers with burnout prevention and mitigation.

P4 emphasized the personal connection in supporting her volunteers through burnout, “If someone came to me and said that they were burned out I would say to just cut back and I would

try to help” (personal communication, April 3). Similarly, P2 emphasized the personal connection and what he or his staff would do if a volunteer dropped out suddenly, “staff person would say, ‘man I’m sorry that this didn’t work out. Where’s the kid? Do you have the number? Can I follow up? Let’s walk through this together. Are you okay?’” (personal communication, March 23, 2017). In agreement with this concept P5 stated, “That’s just how I build my relationship with them. So they don’t think I’m just having them do things for the team but they know I care for them and I appreciate them and they know that I’m here for them if they need anything. I’m just not their leader but I’m here for them as a friend” (personal communication, April 3, 2017).

Leadership styles. Six participants stated that a particular leadership style that encompassed certain values was more effective in supporting their volunteers through burnout prevention and mitigation. All six participants emphasized collaborative, flexible, empowering, and intentional leaders, who role modeled the behaviors they wanted to see in their volunteers, as supporting the process. P8 heavily emphasized role modeling as an effective style of leadership that supports the burnout prevention and mitigation process. P8 stated that whenever something is happening at church that requires volunteers, the leadership will likewise be there doing the same thing along side them. Leadership would not ask the volunteers to do something that they would not do. P8 reported, “If there’s a weed-pulling day at the church, and you’ve seen how big the facility is, they’ll be there. They’ll be there, as far as leadership goes, they model it” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). P7 likewise agreed, “I think that from a leadership, senior leadership level, they will support whatever the direct ministry leader will do” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Flexibility of leadership was also emphasized as something that could make or break volunteer retention. P2 talked about an inflexible leader who needed to be in control of everything and stated, “This impedes the process and the outcome, the volunteer thing just doesn’t work cause they pound on their volunteers and say ‘you’ve got to do it my way, blah blah blah,’ And so the better staff person to have is less controlling, the more effective, the more flexible team” (personal communication, March 23, 2017). What several participants pointed out is that there needed to be flexibility within their leaders in order to enjoy their jobs. Being able to have guidelines for a position but flexible ways of accomplishing those from leadership was supportive.

Identity development. Five participants stress the idea of supporting their volunteers with burnout prevention and mitigation by assisting them in uncovering and discovering their identities through differing methods. Participants 1, 2, 5, 6 and 9 talked about ways they empower their volunteers to draw their identity in Christ and not just through service or their job. Differing methods include: small groups, community, service, attending (instead of just serving at) church services consistently, and knowing they have a greater purpose. P1 gave an example and said,

What we say is that we have three key environments that we move people towards: discipleship and growth. And their relationship and that attending consistently on the weekend, being part of a group, and serving on a team. So what’s really been on my heart lately is that we say that, that serving a team is helping them grow closer to Christ.
(personal communication, March 22, 2017)

Providing resources. Four participants spoke about supporting their volunteers through providing resources to assist in preventing and mitigating burnout. Participants 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7

mentioned different resourcing tools provided for volunteers, including: devotionals, encouraging the use of volunteer recruiting websites to help with their projects, prayer guides, recruiting guides, encouraging time spent alone with God, and money to purchase materials or food for themselves. P3 stated, “I’m sure that if I felt that a particular book or some other resource would be helpful to me or to one of my volunteers, I’m sure they would be willing to pay for it” (personal communication, April 2, 2017). Also, P1 explained, “some thing that we are starting to do now is put together different exercises, things to read, devotionals for them to use, like a repository” (personal communication, March 22, 2017).

Expression of appreciation. Four participants highlighted that showing appreciation for their volunteers, through various forms, was a key way that leadership tangibly showed their support to their volunteers. Participants 1, 3 and 6 stated they showed some appreciation through providing food or beverages. P6 explained, “Anytime I ask them for money to do things for my volunteers that’s not an issue. So I think that’s probably how they’re supportive. So like feeding them before things, and taking them out for coffee” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Another form of appreciation discussed was verbal, written, or gift acknowledgments of a volunteer’s service. P1 stated, “We choose a couple of volunteers and we will provide gift cards or just writing a note, which, you know, being encouraged and affirmed helps you not to feel as burned out as well” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). Likewise, P9 explained, “I mean we love, I think loving on your team members is a big one and just showing them that they’re appreciated in what they do makes a difference” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Personal fit. Only one participant highlighted assisting the volunteer in finding a personal fit in the leadership support process, but it was heavily emphasized and therefore is being mentioned. P6 spoke in depth about how she as a leader was trying to get to know her

volunteers personally, including knowing their love languages and passions, in order to find the best spot for them. P6 explained, “and then I get to know them a little bit more, what they like to do outside of this particular interest, what they have in common. So I think that that’s burnout prevention instead of, well this is the need you have so I’m gonna fill it, let’s actually find something that you’re excited about, something that you want to do” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). P6 gave another example of how she supports her volunteers by personally assisting them in finding a good fit for their skills and giftings. P6 stated: “Anytime a volunteer wants to volunteer I get face time with them before to figure out...for example: they might have signed up to help out to be a teacher but then it turns out that they actually are really organized in they’re a type-A person. Okay, so then how about if you would rather organize the resources and be a part of this particular thing, or maybe that is a better fit” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Research question 1 summary. RQ1 asked: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers? To answer RQ1, two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees: IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers? IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout? Six top strategies and practices emerged from the data (a) serving limits and expectations, (b) relational connection, (c) personal fit, (d) leadership style, (e) expression of appreciation, and (f) providing resources.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout? To answer RQ2, the following two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees:

- IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program?
- IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

Interview question 3. Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program? Five overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 3 (a) leadership style, (b) false identity, (c) no resistance, (d) resistant to change, and (e) unengaged. (see Figure 5)

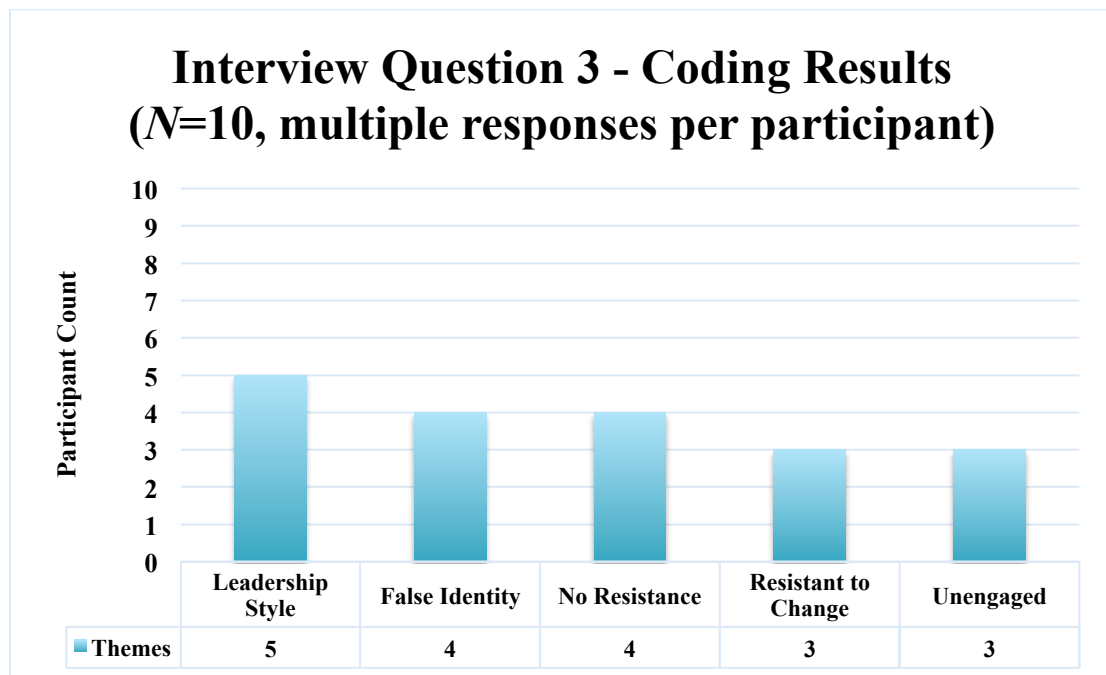


Figure 5. Themes that emerged from IQ3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program?

Leadership style. Five participants mentioned rigid, inflexible and task-valued over relationships, leadership styles, as something that volunteers and staff resist when changes are implemented. P2 spoke about a volunteer consultant who came into their organization and tried to implement change but it failed because of the consultant's inflexible and rigid guidelines. P2

explained that there was no collaboration with volunteers or desire to learn about the culture of their organization before jumping straight to orders. P2 expressed, “She was like, there’s only one way, and if you’re a volunteer this is how it works, in every ministry and in every time, until Jesus comes back. And so it was almost this draconian organizational chart where you took round pegs and just pounded them into the square holes and, man, did we fail, we failed twice at that (personal communication, March 23, 2017).

Participants who spoke about previous failed attempts were also able to recount the successful leadership styles which some were able to implement later on. For example, P1 talked about how they now intentionally hire agile and flexible people in order to bypass many of those past failed leadership styles. However, they do not require that volunteers be agile and flexible. P1 recounted a story of how she handled resistant volunteers and staff successfully in the past and stated that when she was first put in her leadership position she set up meetings with some of these resistant but key people in the church. P1 reported that in these meetings she was able to listen and get input from one particular resistant key volunteer, and this individual volunteer then in turn introduced her to the rest of the volunteers and aided her in getting everyone else involved. P1 expressed that a key component of getting this volunteer onboard was that she listened and genuinely cared about his feedback, and then was able to mutually bounce off ideas, creating a collaborative environment where the volunteer was valued. P1 stated, “So looking at how do I honor what they’re doing, and so, um pulling in key people, identifying who they were, and introducing it to them first, getting their feedback, getting their buy-in, and then slowly rolling it out. And introducing each part, partnered with the vision and the “why,” that helped for a lot smoother role out and the resistance is much less (personal communication, March 22, 2017).

False identity. Four participants listed volunteers being resistant to burnout prevention and mitigation methods because of their identity being wrapped up in their position instead of God. P1 explained that the most resistance comes when a volunteer perceives their identity as the same as the position they hold and so if they're asked to take a break they feel hurt. P1 stated,

It's the strength and the challenge; they have the strength of wanting to serve, but if that gets unhealthy, like if they're serving for recognition, or they're serving for their identity being in that...And so when they get too tied up in their identity being their role, and any time you start to change it, of course, it is like someone telling me to change who I am.

So, that's a struggle (personal communication, March 22, 2017).

Along the same lines P9 reported that he has seen people in service who just go and go but that he had to talk with them about their service goals. P9 stated that he had to explain to these people that just because they are not serving every week, it did not mean that they weren't fulfilling their purpose. P9 expressed that he conveyed to these volunteers that their identity is in Christ and that serving on a rotation would not hinder the fulfillment of their service through ministry.

P9 made the point that people can get too caught up in their identity and purpose being tied to one particular position or to ministry and then they don't know how to let go sometimes. This concept of a false identity being wrapped up in a position, lends itself to the inability of burned out volunteers to take breaks. P7 made the same connection between volunteers not wanting to take breaks because they don't know who they would be if they weren't in that position, especially among the "older" generation. P7 summarized that these volunteers view it like, this is something they have always done and they wouldn't know who they would be without it.

No resistance. Four participants said that they did not really experience any resistance among their volunteers throughout their process. P3 recounted, “Certainly not from church leadership and not really from my volunteers either” (personal communication, April 2, 2017). Likewise P7 stated, “Nobody takes offense to taking a break, they just do what they do. They’re not mad. Not really any resistance” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). P8 reported, “Not that I’m aware of” (personal communication, April 5). These participants stated that they were unaware of any resistance but some also stated perhaps they weren’t aware of it.

Resistant to change. Three participants reported that volunteers are very resistant to change and this has been a struggle for them. P4 explained this as a personality style, “I think if they are an A-type personality they just want to get it all done. I have another volunteer, I mean she’s an A-type and she complains how overwhelmed she is and I say you do not have to do it all, but she still does it” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P8 and P1 view this resistance in a different way. P8 stated, “Where we would struggle with volunteers is change. Because they’ve been doing some of these things for so long even if they just do it for season, they’re very set” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). P1 also talked about their requirements for volunteers are different and therefore you will get ones who are resistant to and don’t like change. P1 and P8 normalized this resistance to change in some people and talk more about the process they use to handle this resistance.

Unengaged. Three participants discussed unengaged volunteers and leadership. Participants 2, 5 and 6 discussed how volunteers become unengaged when they don’t show up to meetings, aren’t really involved or get bored. P2 correlated unengaged volunteers with being placed in the wrong position. P2 stated, “So we kind of see it as our responsibility to find and slot people into places they’re comfortable. And then they don’t get burned out, too” (personal

communication, March 23, 2017). P6 spoke about just not knowing how to engage volunteers or forgetting, “The only resistance is it’s just hard to – there’s so many that I’ll try to pursue one and it isn’t working out and something will come up and I’ll forget, oh yeah, that’s right I was trying to get together with her” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Interview question 4. What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process? Four overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 4 (a) lack of mentoring, (b) resistant to change, (c) lack of volunteer development, and (d) unengaged. (see Figure 6)

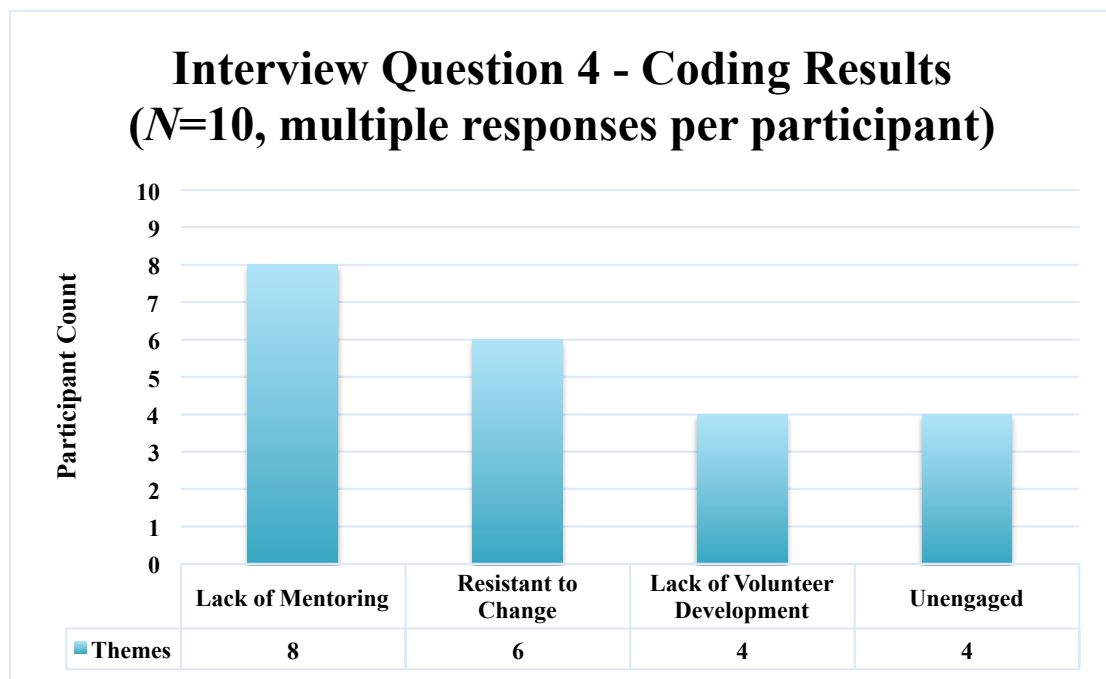


Figure 6. Themes that emerged from IQ4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

Lack of mentoring. Eight participants spoke about various facets of a lack mentoring. P3 discussed how many of his volunteers push themselves too hard in the beginning and then just fade out, and a lack of mentoring for a volunteer like this is detrimental to retention. P4 explores similar thought processes, by giving an example of a volunteer who had to do everything herself

and that no one teaches or shows volunteers that it is ok to have help. P4 explained, “But she just wanted all of it under control. And I think it was too much and she doesn’t talk to me anymore. Then they’re just so burned out they just leave” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P7 explored mentoring as an avenue to set up expectations for volunteers and help them know what they’re getting into. P7 explained, “I think that they don’t realize how much work it is. I think they just think oh we’re just volunteering at church. I mean even the physical part of it; our greeters are standing all the time. So I think that people don’t actually know until they get in” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Resistant to change. Six Participants identified a challenge with volunteers wanting to change or allowing change to happen. P8 talks about the challenge of a volunteer’s resistance to changing their routine or taking breaks. P8 explained, “Convincing them to take breaks can be hard, although we’ve seen it over and over again the benefits of it” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Likewise P9 reported, “the resistance of guys wanting to serve all the time and resisting the implementation of rotation” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). P4 explained that it is challenging trying to get volunteers to change and allow help or give up their control over their position. All six participants expressed similar challenges with volunteer’s not wanting to take breaks, challenges with allowing other’s to help them, and challenges with allowing change to their positions.

Lack of volunteer development. Four participants, 2, 4, 5, and 7, stated that there is a trend of challenges that look like a lack of volunteer development. P2 talked about how caring for and loving on a volunteer helps to develop them personally, but that it is hard to get some volunteers to emphasize relationships above tasks, so very little mentoring happens.

P7 focused on recruiting as a challenge, that they never have enough people, “I think the biggest challenge for us is recruiting. Recruiting so that we can have enough people so that they can rotate” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Similarly P4 explored how difficult it is to find people who specialize in a certain area and how it is hard to get those volunteers to then mentor others into their roles. P4 stated, “Finding another right person for that ministry, that would be a challenge, too” (personal communication, April 3, 2017), when discussing what happens when a volunteer leaves and their spot is not filled.

Unengaged. Four participants stated that it is a challenge when volunteers are unengaged in the process. For example, P5 stated, “I guess you could say people showing up to meetings on a consistent basis, but that would just be with me too. I focus on what am I doing to keep them here, you know, keep them coming to the meetings” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P5 struggled with knowing how to keep volunteers engaged or from getting bored. All four participants 2, 4, 5 and 6 shared similar examples of volunteers not showing up, dropping out, or not making the time that was required.

Research question 2 summary. RQ2 asked: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout? To answer RQ2, these two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees: IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program? IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process? Three commonly occurring challenges emerged from the data (a) lack of engagement, (b) resistance to change, and (c) leadership style.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers? To answer RQ3, the following two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees:

- IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?
- IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

Interview question 5. How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process? Five overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 5 (a) close community, (b) volunteer retention, (c) finding the right fit, (d) effective feedback, and (e) effective volunteer recruitment. (see Figure 7)

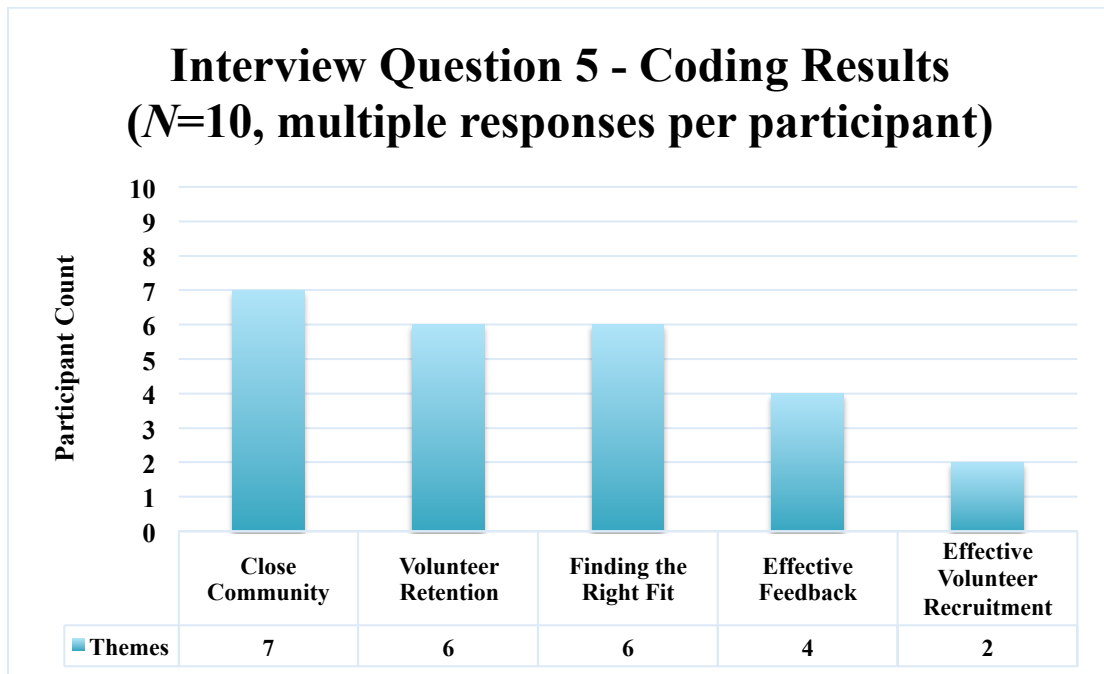


Figure 7. Themes that emerged from IQ5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?

Close Community. Seven participants related success of their burnout prevention and mitigation program as having a close-knit community of people who cared about and valued each other. P7 explained, “I believe it also is why they stay and they come every Sunday because they feel like it’s the fit and because a ministry becomes your family” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Likewise P5 stated, “making them feel that they’re important and that they’re not just here just to hang out they’re here for purpose, for relationship, and to grow” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). In addition participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 all spoke about genuine, caring, valued and close relational bonds, as signs of success of their program. P2 added, “I think that’s success. I think putting work connected through relationships that lead to having conversations before someone’s burned out. Failure is when someone just fades away” (personal communication, March 23, 2017).

Volunteer retention. Six participants defined success of their burnout prevention and mitigation program by how many long-term, happy, volunteers they sustained. P1 explained, “Well we’re trying to do a better job now at measuring our retention of team members” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). P3 reported, “I would say that my efforts to prevent burnout are successful if my volunteers are continuing to serve and are continuing to enjoy what they are doing” (personal communication, April 2, 2017). P4 similarly stated, “By not having so many burned out volunteers. And it really is just really make sure that you don’t overuse them” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P7 reported that, “If I could really see a rotation” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Finding the right fit. Six participants stated that finding the right life giving positions for their volunteers was a key sign that their process was a success. P3 stated that he knows it will be a success, “...if my volunteers are continuing to serve and are continuing to enjoy what they are

doing” (personal communication, April 2, 2017). P8 talked along the same lines by adding, “So if they’re in the place that they’re supposed to be in, I think that makes a big difference” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

On another note P6 talked about not just keeping volunteers but keeping people, even if they don’t volunteer anymore. P6 stated, “Or if they decided to volunteer in another capacity that there wasn’t this – cause often what happens at least what seems to happen is people get burned out and then they leave the church completely” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). P6 emphasized success as finding the right place for volunteers but also not losing the relationship or people leaving church because of it.

Effective feedback. Four participants reported that they would define success of their burnout prevention and mitigation process as having effective feedback. P1 explained that “Long term retention of our volunteers and good responses on the surveys, positive responses” (personal communication, March 22, 2017), would help her define it as a success. P6 similarly talked about being able to get feedback from volunteers and keep up with communication. P6 stated, “What I think would be a successful thing of prevention is somehow being able to keep up communication” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Participants 1, 5, 6 and 7 all expressed that their program would be a success if they saw their volunteers being able to express their needs, as well as their successes.

Effective volunteer recruitment. Two participants heavily emphasized successful recruiting of volunteers as a sign of their process being successful. P5 stated, “That there would be more volunteers coming in” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Likewise, P7 reported “That there would be more volunteers and there would be different people working every Sunday and I wouldn’t see the same people doing the same thing every Sunday. Also, we have enough

volunteers so that people don't get overwhelmed and burned out" (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Interview question 6. What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them? Three overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 6 (a) personal informal feedback, (b) personal formal feedback, and (c) survey feedback. (see Figure 8)

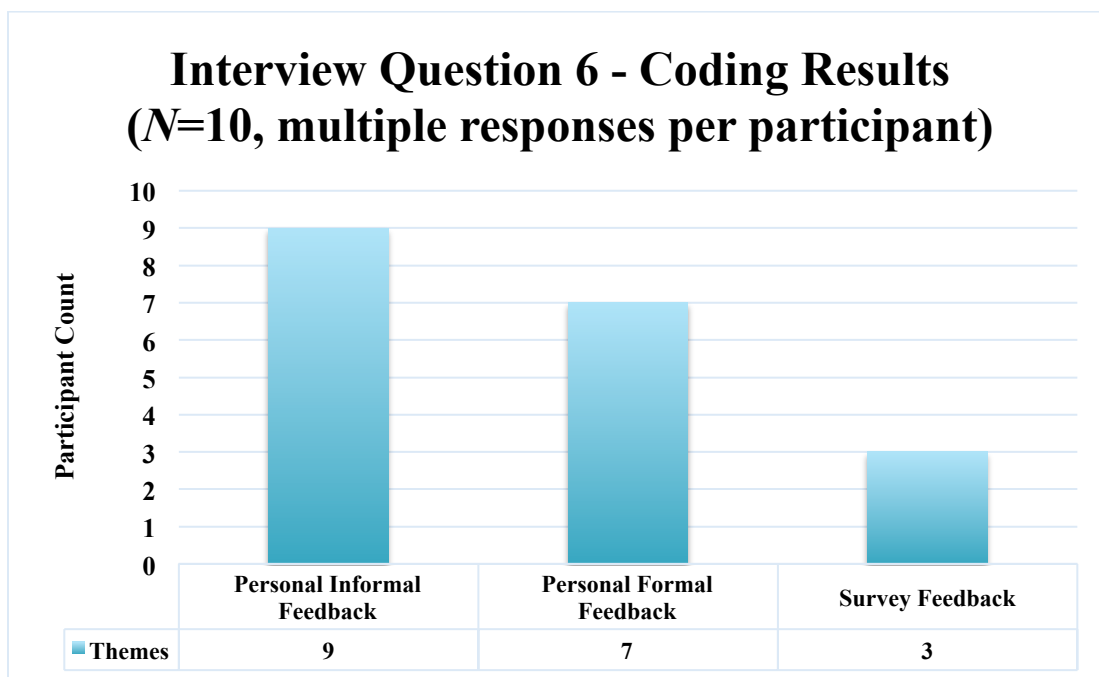


Figure 8. Themes that emerged from IQ6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

Personal informal feedback. Nine participants expressed that they had personal informal channels for feedback. P1 gave an example of the pastor's form of personal feedback and stated, "It's more of a qualitative analysis as he walked around and just talked with people. So personally going to each one. He would go to a different one each week and connect with them" (personal communication, March 22, 2017). P4 likewise reported, "There is personal feedback so the volunteers can talk to me. I'm the volunteer coordinator so I encourage them, any problems

just come to me and we'll try to solve it, they can also go to any pastor" (personal communication, April 3, 2017). P5 correspondingly explained that they are really personal with their feedback and if any of the volunteers needed anything, including prayer requests or starting another ministry they would directly come to them. Feeling safe and comfortable in relationships was emphasized heavily as a prerequisite to acquiring personal informal feedback.

Personal formal feedback. Seven participants indicated that they had some sort of personal formal feedback schedule. P3 reported, "I try to check in with my volunteers about once per month just to see how their group is going and to see if they are discouraged or frustrated about something" (personal communication, April 2, 2017). P7 accounted a similar system with different levels of communication and stated, "All of our ministry leaders, will gather a lot of the feedback for their ministry. So the volunteers will go to their particular leader and trust them to report back" (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Same with P10 who explained, "So they have a team leader that they should be in regular communication with and then that leader has a coach that they are in relationship with and should be talking to frequently, and then that coach has a director which is like the top level of volunteer teams" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). P9 also stated, "That is a mandatory thing that we just, with our teams, hey what can we fix for next week and stuff like that. And I think that's good feedback. We do huddles on Sunday, and so Sunday morning before our huddle we'll just kind of discuss" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Survey feedback. Three participants stated that they had some form of survey or form feedback. P1 stated that some of their departments do formal surveys better than others, but that she wanted to implement an anonymous option. P8 stated that they had, "Year end surveys that they do. And some departments do mid-year and end-year surveys" (personal communication,

April 5, 2017). P7 explained that they don't do many surveys, but will do them for special or large events.

Research question 3 summary. RQ3 asked: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers? To answer RQ3, the following two interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees: IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process? IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them? Four commonly occurring measures of burnout mitigation and prevention emerged from the data (a) retention, (b) close community, (c) personal informal feedback, and (d) finding the right fit.

Research Question 4

RQ4 asked: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout? To answer RQ4, the following three interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees:

- IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?
- IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?
- IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?

Interview question 7. What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process? Three

overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 7 (a) implementing early prevention systems, (b) leadership modeling, and (c) acknowledge and appreciate volunteers. (see Figure 9)

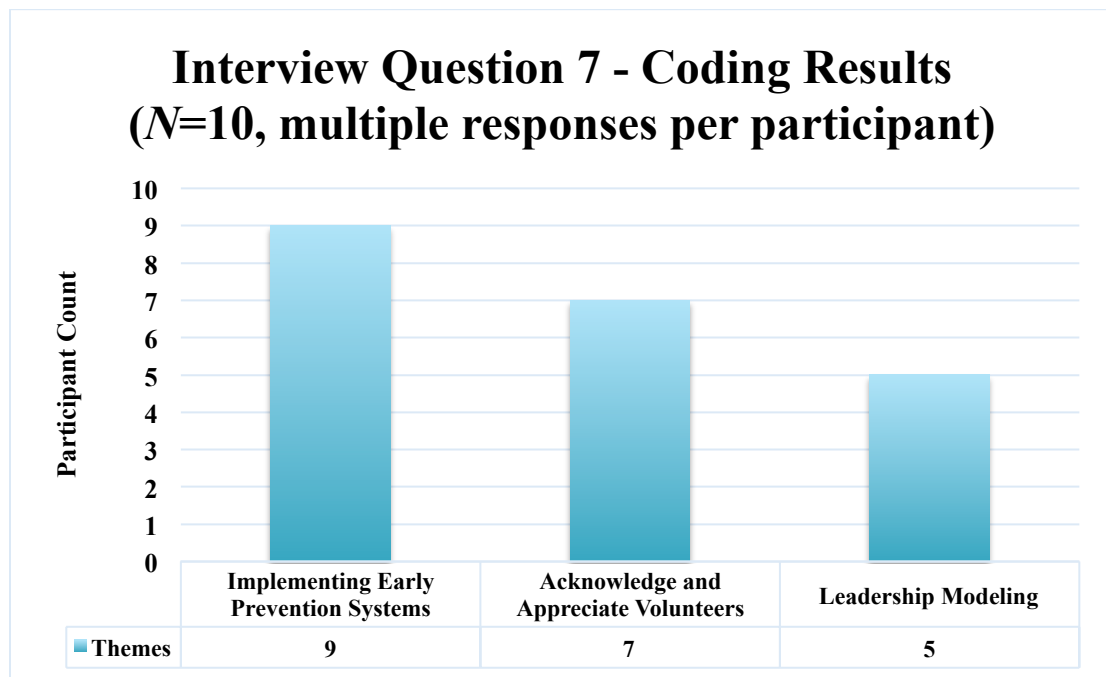


Figure 9. Themes that emerged from IQ7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?

Implementing early prevention systems. Nine participants reported that implementing early systems of prevention, as something they learned and would tell other leaders to start out doing at the beginning. Early recruitment systems came up as a common theme among participants, to avoid burnout later by having enough volunteers to rotate. P7 stated, “So I think if you want to reduce the burnout you need the people so you can rotate. And focus on those personal connections so you can recruit more people” (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Another prevalent theme was early onboarding, personal fit and vision casting. P8 explained, “I think the idea of identifying someone’s passions and giftedness and putting them in the right spot in the first place” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Vision casting and pouring into volunteers kept surfacing through this data. P10 explains implementing their life-

track classes, which are onboarding classes designed to train volunteers, actually created a huge shift in where it gives us a lot more opportunity to pour culture and vision into people before they're serving, so they have a clear understanding of what to expect and what the process is and what the structure is and all of that. That really made a big difference. There was more misunderstanding and frustration before Life Track than since (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Acknowledge and appreciate volunteers. Five participants mentioned appreciating and recognizing volunteers as something they would have started earlier and recommend for other church leaders to assist in burnout prevention and mitigation. The theme of loving on and caring for volunteers in a way that they recognize it, is heavily emphasized. P2 stated, "so we have volunteers that work in teams there and are just there to be in tune with volunteers and love on them" (personal communication, March 23, 2017). Likewise, when speaking about volunteers, P5 reported, "So it's kind of like a partnership, too. So just love them, put them before yourself" (personal communication, April 3, 2017). All five participants added that appreciation could be small things like notes, or verbal acknowledgments. P4 explained, "and I just try with little things, I send them birthday cards, and just write a post to say thank you. Just little things to remind them that we appreciate all they do" (personal communication, April 3, 2017).

Leadership modeling. Five participants involved leadership role modeling as something they would implement earlier and recommend to other church leaders for their burnout prevention and mitigation programs. P1 talked about volunteer giving and stated, "I think it's out of an overflow so looking at, not just asking your team leaders to model it or your staff members that are in charge of it to model it, but making sure that we're pouring into them in the same way that we expect them to pour in" (personal communication, March 22, 2017). Likewise P8

reported that, “All of this is modeled from the top down in our leadership and it is a part of our church culture” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Interview question 8. Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process? Three overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 8 (a) informed problem-solving system, (b) formal process of onboarding, and (c) internal support system. (see Figure 10)

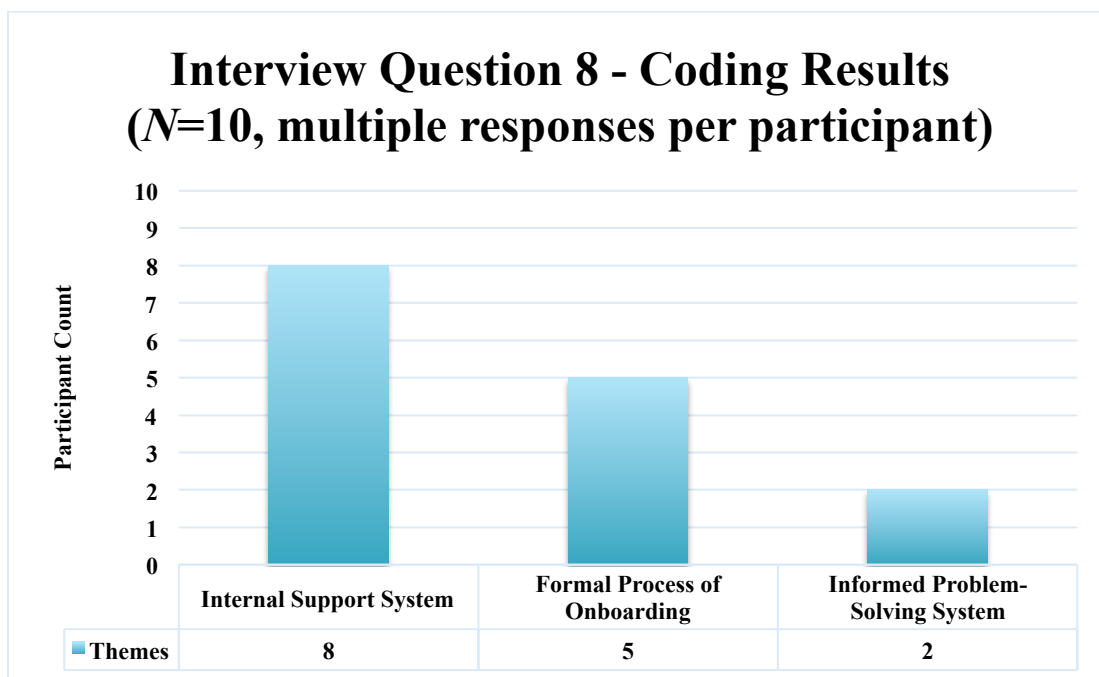


Figure 10. Themes that emerged from IQ8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?

Internal support systems. Eight participants highlighted implementing more internal support systems from the beginning, to mitigate and prevent burnout. The eight participants emphasized a place where relationships were top priority, it was ok to fail, appreciation was freely shown and spiritual renewal was highlighted. P7 stated, “I probably would have stressed to take breaks more that you don’t have to do it forever. So even having a refresher so the volunteers can get refreshed” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). Participants postulated

about doing things differently and encouraging these principles from the start. P3 explained, “Perhaps I could put on a quarterly dinner or something that they would want to attend where they could get their emotional and spiritual batteries charged, where ideas could be shared, and where they could talk about problems they are facing” (personal communication, April 2, 2017). Likewise, P5 stated that she would put on an event, “like a social once a month, not just to get some of my volunteers that are on my team, but volunteers from all the teams to come together and connect with each other” (personal communication, April 3, 2017).

Formal process of onboarding. Five participants reported that they would have had a formal onboarding process to begin with. Participants stated that they would go back and emphasize finding the right fit for the position, instead of just filling a spot with anyone who would take it. As well as making sure expectations were clear from the beginning and volunteers were aware of what they were getting into. P6 explained, “Like we’ve got all of this going on and I made sure I filled positions. And I think that this is, I don’t know, the burnout prevention when I onboard volunteers now, I lay the expectations pretty high and so they know what they’re getting into” (personal communication, April 4, 2017). P10 spoke about implementing their onboarding classes sooner and stated, “It would have been nice to start the Life Track sooner. We work with a lot of church planters and we encourage them to start with it from the beginning” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Informed problem-solving system. Two participants heavily emphasized having a more in-depth way to solve problems from the start. Stating that they would have handled the process of problem solving and finding a solution much differently. P1 explained, “What I would do now and what I’m learning to do now is take a touch more time on the front end, gather information so spend some time finding out where the challenges are, what’s happening now, what we’re

currently doing, all that and gather information and then starting to look at you know meeting with people to confirm and validate the information we received and then thinking through a full plan, laying out a plan, and then rolling out a solution” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). P1 expressed that when a church takes the time to slow down the process of problem solving, to a level at which the real problem can be teased out, it saves a lot of time. Allowing for time and thorough data gathering, before rolling out a “knee jerk” solution, can save mass amounts of frustration.

Interview question 9. Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study? Four overarching themes surfaced in response to IQ 9 (a) engage and empower volunteers, (b) creating adaptable guidelines, (c) meaning making and (d) close community. (see Figure 11)

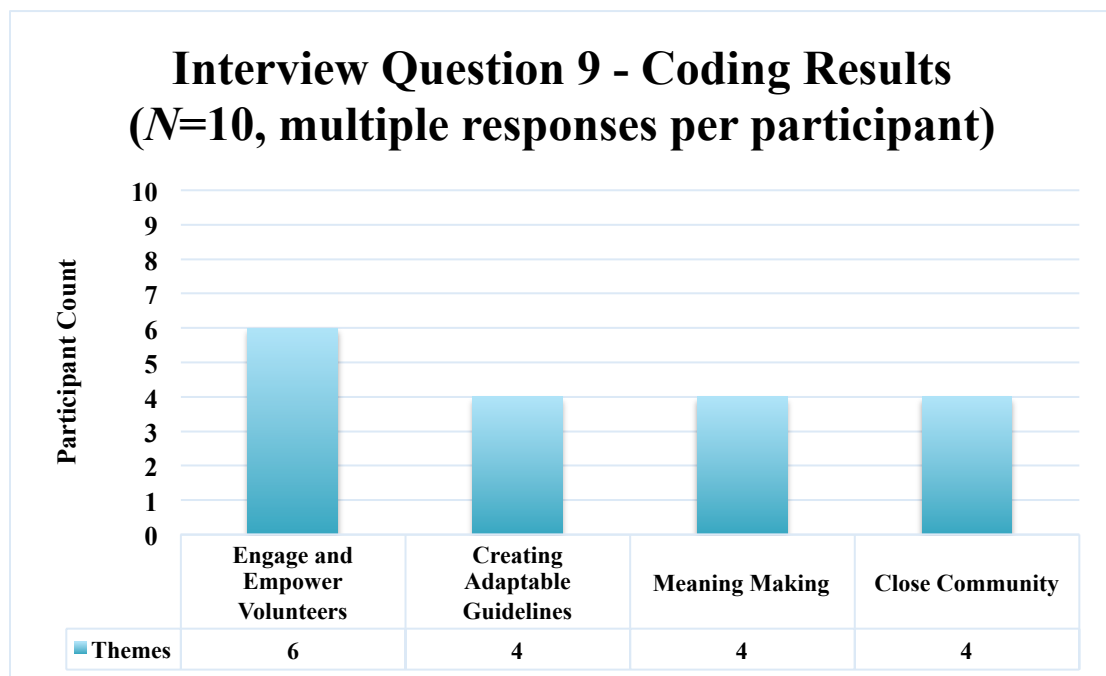


Figure 11. Themes that emerged from IQ9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?

Engage and empower volunteers. Six participants emphasized the value and deep need for volunteers in the church to feel empowered positively. Participants 2, 5, 7 and 9 all agreed that loving on, finding the right place for, empowering, appreciating and valuing volunteers is essential to the heart of the church. P2 stated, “If we can figure out how to harness the horsepower there and treat them kindly and lead them gently into service opportunities, I think we’ll make a huge difference because they love it. And they’re good at it. They’re gifted” (personal communication, March 23, 2017). P5 stressed the importance of not letting volunteers just drop out or fade away. P5 expressed, “like really reach out to them and love on them and you’ll see them reach out and you’ll see them come back and be 100x better than they were before. It’s all the heart” (personal communication, April 3, 2017).

Creating adaptable guidelines. Four participants expressed the desire to see a flexible system in place for their churches and among their people. Participants agreed that there needed to be a formal structure and guidelines but that there should be room for personalization in each area. P6 expressed that when implementing guidelines they should be structured as well as individualized. Likewise, P1 explained, “I think it’s important for each area to have some flexibility, and to know these are the parts that are non-negotiable, like contacting your team within 72 hours, but the way you contact them is up to your team” (personal communication, March 22, 2017).

Meaning making. Four participants honed in on the purpose and vision behind what a volunteer does, the volunteer’s meaning making process and relational core. P3 explained, “I find that when people have a clear sense of purpose and can see how they are improving the lives of the families they serve, they are far more willing to wear themselves out without burnout to do what they do” (personal communication, April 2, 2017).

Close community. Four participants stated that a close community is the most important aspect of volunteer burnout prevention and mitigation. P1 expressed, “I think there’s an inner desire for that belonging and being known” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). Participants expressed that the goal of volunteering is to share and work as a team to build strong relationships. Having small teams was stated to work better. P1 shared that on smaller teams and groups, “people feel more known in a way that’s personal. And we value relationships so we need to make that change to make it that direction” (personal communication, March 22, 2017). Likewise, P10 expressed that, “We encourage the teams to spend time together and encourage the coaches to plan dinners and potlucks” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Summary of research question 4. RQ4 asked: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout? To answer RQ4, these three interview questions were posed to all ten interviewees: IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process? IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process? IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study? Five commonly occurring recommendations emerged from the data (a) internal support systems, (b) meaning making, (c) implementing early preventions systems, (d) appreciate volunteers, and (e) official onboarding system.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to navigate strategies and practices employed by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Backed by previous research and this study, burnout prevention and mitigation systems are essential for volunteer retention, and

sustaining long-term volunteers is imperative for the continued functioning of the church. Nine semi-structured interview questions were given to ten church leaders and volunteer coordinators who were directly involved in volunteer training through a face-to-face interview process. Those nine interview questions were formed from these four research questions, which sought to gain insight into how churches are currently empowering their volunteers through informal or formal processes:

- **RQ 1:** What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?
- **RQ 2:** What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout.
- **RQ 3:** How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?
- **RQ 4:** What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

Chapter four summarized the participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, and summarized the findings of this study. Results were organized by the research questions. Forty themes emerged from the data, obtained through the coding process. Those codes were peer reviewed through an inter-rater reliability review process to ensure validity. Table 3 below provides a summary of all the themes obtained through the data analysis process. Findings of the study, future recommendations of research, researcher conclusions, and implications are all summarized in chapter five.

Table 3

Summary of Themes for the Four Research Questions

RQ1. Best Practices and Strategies	RQ2. Leadership Challenges	RQ3. Measures of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
Serving limits and expectations	Leadership style	Close community	Implementing early prevention systems
Personal fit	False identity	Volunteer retention	Acknowledge and appreciate volunteers
Relational connection	No resistance	Finding the right fit	Leadership modeling
Spiritual growth	Resistant to change	Effective feedback	Internal support system
Meaning making	Unengaged	Effective volunteer recruitment	Formal process of onboarding
Leadership role modeling	Lack of mentoring	Personal informal feedback	Informed problem-solving system
Identity development	Lack of volunteer development	Personal formal feedback	Engage and empower volunteer
Providing resources		Survey feedback	Creating adaptable guidelines
Expression of appreciation			Meaning making
Leadership style			Close community

Note: This table demonstrates a summary of all the themes derived through the data analysis process.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusions and Recommendations

Volunteers are foundational to the functioning of the church and represent the church to the community. Their role is essential to the church's mission in the community and in the world. The church's ability to recruit, train, and sustain volunteers is vital for the church's functioning. Churches would not be able to make a difference in their congregations, communities, or the world without volunteers and their commitments to serve. According to Lawson (2014), developing skills is directly linked to behavioral learning. Therefore, volunteers should be trained in these necessary skills, including ways to mitigate and prevent burnout, in order to serve their community and congregation effectively. Bays (2006) contributed to this thinking by adding that the church is its own community, relying on the service of its volunteers to keep all of its ministries running. This study will benefit church leaders and volunteer coordinators in creating, developing and maintaining these burnout prevention and mitigation systems.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore successful strategies implemented by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Burnout among volunteers and church leadership is common but effective training can help to prevent or deal with burnout. The insights gained from this research study were correlated with the current literature on burnout prevention and mitigation. This study utilized four research questions as a baseline in forming nine semi-structured interview questions. The following research questions were used to gather data surrounding the best practices and strategies used by church leaders to assist in the mitigation and prevention of burnout among their church volunteers:

- **RQ 1:** What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?
- **RQ 2:** What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout.
- **RQ 3:** How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?
- **RQ 4:** What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?

Summary of Findings

The ten research participants consisted of church leaders and volunteer coordinators who work with volunteers regularly. Seven females and three males participated in the study. 80% were Caucasian, 10% were African American, and 10% were Hispanic. Details of data collection and coding are outlined in chapter four. 40 themes emerged from the data derived from the nine interview questions. Of these 40 themes, significant categories were evident in each of the research questions:

- RQ1 - What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?
 - Setting serving limits and having clear expectations
 - Focus on a relational connection rather than just getting the job done
 - Sharing the vision and the significance of the work
 - Finding the best fit for the volunteer
- RQ2 - What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?

- Serving for the wrong reasons
- Inflexibility in the leadership styles
- Either church or volunteer bring resistance to change
- A relative lack of engagement from either side
- RQ3 - How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?
 - Volunteer retention
 - Effective feedback
 - Focus on the community building (also in the church)
 - Volunteers being placed out of need instead of fit
- RQ4 - What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?
 - Implementing prevention systems sooner
 - Modeling of leadership
 - Showing appreciation for the volunteers
 - Have official onboarding systems
 - Create more internal system supports for volunteers
 - Volunteer buy in to the church purpose

Key Findings

Church leader's ability to recruit, train, and sustain volunteers is vital for the church's continued functioning. Volunteers need to develop needed skills and tools to prevent and mitigate burnout in order to serve the congregation and community effectively (Lawson, 2014). Unruh (2010) stated that religious organizations need to place value and support on their

volunteers to keep all of their ministries running and the best resource to give their volunteers is training in the prevention and mitigation of burnout. These concepts were consistent with the findings of the study and correlate directly with each theme.

Relational connections. One consistent theme found throughout the research and data collection was the importance of relational connections in the prevention and mitigation of volunteer burnout. Caesar and Caesar (2006) stated that relationships are essential in their ability to give you what you actually want in life, when the volunteer shifts the focus from an individual goals and agendas, to one that aligns their personal values with that of their co-workers and the organization's. This system fosters a dynamic and strong relationship, which is built on a firm foundation of mutual benefit for the worker and organization. Chandler (2009) stated that in mitigating burnout it is imperative to have social support systems, and stay away from isolation. Relational connection was represented throughout the data as developing deeper relationships within the church, whether through formal church programs or informal gatherings. Personal relationships provide a source of comfort, empathy, support, opportunity for personal growth and different perspectives. Small groups are poignant in making these connections within the larger congregation and should be embedded into the church culture. Small groups provide a sense of family, belonging, understanding and the ability to be authentically known and seen by others.

Building those connections and sharing one's views, thoughts, and feelings can assist the volunteer in identifying and handling stress effectively, and be a preventative measure for burnout (Gilliam, 2012). Mitigating stressors through peer support systems could be accomplished best in a small group setting, in which confidentiality and vulnerability were emphasized (Proeschold-bell et al., 2011). Despite even A-type personalities who rejected and did not want help, they still burned out eventually because of a lack of relational support. People

are looking for a community of belonging; somewhere people actually want to get to know them and they know other people on a deep level. The goal is to be real with each other, to be known, and to fit into an authentic community who is genuinely concerned for them. Volunteers not only crave that desire to be seen and to belong, but also thrive on it. Small relational units are more likely to build this type of authentic community with each other and naturally delve into each other's lives further than surface level. These findings emphasized that training could provide social support resources through, small groups, and mentor systems to set the volunteer up for connections from the start. The volunteer's accessibility to establish and maintain relational support systems increases long-term sustainability through personal core connections.

The right fit. Another consistent theme that every participant brought up was finding the right place for volunteers to fit. According to Buys and Rothmann (2010) assuring that the individual and the position fit well together, while also having plenty of resources and social support to draw upon, is essential in providing growth opportunities to volunteers. Social support and job satisfaction were key points in long-term sustainability and preventative measures against burnout. Using relational connections to help find the best fit in churches is a very successful strategy. When a volunteer wants to serve or is recruited, a leader meeting with them face-to-face to assist in placing the volunteer is key. Once a volunteer has met face-to-face with a leader and gotten to know what's expected of volunteers, they can then proceed to taking personality tests and spiritual gift tests, along with spiritual gift tests that two people close to the volunteer would take about their friend. Once the tests are completed, the volunteer would then come back and meet with the leader again with all the results in front of them. This discussion would surround what the volunteer and leader both think would be the most appropriate ministry for that volunteer, while considering the volunteer's giftings, strengths and personality, and

where the volunteer would best meet the need of the church. This intersection of passion, fit and service need is at the core of finding the right place for ministry.

According to Krych (2006) churches should be creating job descriptions for volunteer positions and interviewing applicants. Churches should also be thinking about individuals in their congregation who would be qualified for a given position and approaching them for help. Loescher (2001) pointed out that a more intentional approach is needed if churches wish to connect volunteers to positions of service that align with the volunteer's internal motivations and foster a sense of lasting fulfillment. Finding the best fit for a volunteer would cause the volunteer to be energized and fulfilled by their service position, instead of drained or dreading it. The volunteer's natural giftings and talents would be highlighted, their positive personality traits and spiritual gifts would come alive in those service areas. This does not mean, however, that each position would be glamorous, but that the volunteer's gifts come alive in those areas of work. For example, someone who cleans the bathrooms would have specific giftings but they would also need to be able to put their service into a perspective that made them feel fulfilled. It is more about your personal view of that position and which traits you choose to accentuate through the service.

Onboarding. Onboarding was another consistent theme that kept popping up within the data. Effective onboarding can include vision casting, meaning making, mentoring systems and identity development. Stewart (2003) argued the importance of training, coaching, and equipping volunteers in the church. He stated that providing volunteers with a lot of support at the beginning could prevent burnout later on. Lawson (2014) reported that onboarding should be sufficiently structured and convey a smooth integration plan for the worker into the organization. Training should include: the volunteers' specific role, explain the importance of the workers'

role to the organization, communicate the organization's mission/vision, promote effective communication within the organization, provide inspiration, and extend resources to assist the volunteer in thriving in their new position.

Key components of onboarding would consist of the expectations of volunteers in their roles, including clear job descriptions, the mission and vision of the church, having the bigger picture communicated directly, and sharing what the true value of the volunteer means to the church, community, and the volunteer directly. Effective onboarding should give the volunteer a sense of how valuable they are to the church, in whatever capacity they serve. It should also include a formalized process for providing a mentor or someone they could talk to when they're having a hard time or need to be mentored into a role. Onboarding should also include teaching people and providing resources to draw meaning, identity and their bigger purpose from God instead of their service role.

Effective onboarding can provide help with the volunteer's meaning making process and identity development as well. Participants explained ways they empower their volunteers to draw their identity from Christ, and not just from service or their position. Differing tools to assist volunteers with this include: small groups, community, service, attending church services consistently, and knowing they have a greater purpose. Pooler (2011b) postulated that the Holy Spirit's influence supersedes that of the individual or organization. He theorized that real fulfillment and purpose for a volunteer could be found in God's intention for them. Deriving purpose and identity from God is what establishes the basis for the deep fulfillment of the person as they conduct their tasks as a volunteer. Meaning making hones in on the purpose and vision behind what a volunteer does, the volunteer's process and relational core.

Huynh et al. (2012) and Ross et al. (1999) explained that if there is a lack of emotional rewards to balance out the work put in by the volunteer, they burn out. Ross et al. (1999) postulated that when the emotional investment is not refueling the volunteer, emotional exhaustion could surface. A volunteer's process of having a purpose greater than them to create meaning out of their service is an important aspect to the prevention and mitigation of burnout.

Participants speculated that when volunteers feel like they're serving altruistically, for God, and that they are able to see the impact they are having on other people's lives, they burnout less. Guinot et al. (2015) explained that when a person serves from their spiritual center, utilizing internalized principles such as altruism, the rigidity of their expected role fades away. Allowing the individual to be more responsive and to bring a human touch into their communication with those they serve.

Spiritual growth. Both the literature and participants in the study supported this aspect of the process. Supporting volunteer's personal spiritual growth was valuable to the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout. Volunteer training in the church implies a certain level of commitment to God and spirituality. Loescher (2001) explained that for any type of service, that prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to guide the process is the most vital element. Spiritual practice comes with the territory, but making meaning and aligning this with that of the volunteers', create resources for long-term sustainability with volunteers. Marriner (2015) stated that spiritual practice is an important factor in burnout prevention and mitigation. He explained that the people most likely to overcome burnout are those who employ spiritual practices, have a belief in humanity and justice, and believe in the human spirit.

Appreciation for volunteers. Every participant spoke about caring for, valuing, loving on and truly appreciating their volunteers. Huynh et al. (2012) explained that when volunteers

experience a lack of appreciation from their organization, disengagement and apathy are not far behind. This type of environment fosters a lack of motivation in the volunteer, due to feelings of being unable to contribute or not being able to be successful, regardless of personal engagement. All participants expressed some form of appreciation for their volunteers and acknowledged that this was extremely important and that they desired an environment that fostered relationships as their top priority and appreciation was shown freely. In this appreciation, spiritual renewal and taking breaks was emphasized. Participants focused on the idea of a rotation system that would allow for volunteers to serve at alternating times and take breaks frequently.

Malmin (2013) explained that a refusal of delegation could come from a hero complex. Some volunteers are so passionate about their chosen position or cause that they may adopt a warrior motif. Malmin (2013) explained that positioning oneself within the context of this warrior stance, could lead the volunteers to minimize and devalue their own self-care. Often leading to the prioritizing of the demands of the battle, over that of their overall well-being. Often volunteers have to see burnout prevention and mitigation habits modeled to understand how to incorporate them in their own life.

Leadership role-modeling. Participants brought up leadership role modeling as a theme in several categories. Robbins and Judge (2011) talk about different leadership styles who role model, one being authentic leaders. Because they understand themselves, they know what their values and beliefs are, and they follow these values and beliefs openly. These types of leaders lead by example and role model for volunteers the healthy environment and habits they want to see from them. Volunteers see the behaviors and shadowing allows them to experience and see what leadership expects from them by their actions. Leaders need to encourage volunteers to have relationships within the church, that authentic community, but also outside of the church.

Leadership has to role model these behaviors by connecting and maintaining these vital relationships themselves. Leadership should be intimately involved in their own small groups and support systems.

Implications of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore successful strategies and practices implemented by church leaders to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout. Volunteer training, particularly in the church, is paramount in order to fulfill the mission and vision that Jesus had for the church in the world. The purpose of this study also aimed to align the volunteers' values with that of the church, effectively organize and communicate with volunteers, and set up a system to receive constructive feedback from the volunteers. The implications for the purpose of this study point towards successful, relationally oriented volunteer training programs, in order to create long-term sustainability.

The current literature provides additional opportunities of exploration in regard to church volunteer programs that incorporate burnout prevention and mitigation strategies. These opportunities directly correlate with the church's ability to foster spiritual gift discovery and training with burnout prevention and mitigation strategies. Although there is a need for some formal or informal trainings to assist in burnout prevention and mitigation, spiritual gift discovery and development within churches, some churches have been successful in implementing training, coaching, and resources for their volunteers in such a way that burnout is far less prevalent. This study could impact the research that is available on burnout prevention and mitigation among churches and assist in developing new programs. This research data adds to the literature in these three areas.

Onboarding/Training. The research implies that utilizing an early and organized onboarding program will assist in preventing burnout among both leaders and volunteers. These onboarding trainings should include personalized personality and spiritual gift tests to ensure a good fit while also providing the mission and vision of the church to place significance and meaning on the specified volunteer or leadership role.

Effective Feedback. Feedback is at the core of analyzing current strategy effectiveness and reassessing for volunteer burnout. Feedback should include both formal and informal processes of personal, relational connections between volunteers and leaders. Informal processes come in the form of open door types of policies, whereas formal feedback should be regular meetings and leadership structures. Surveys and other anonymous options should be available.

Relational Connection. Permeating all other strategies, the research suggests that volunteers' having relational and personal connections within the church provides the key ingredient and staying power to all the other strategies. This concept involves making sure that the person is more important than the job, both in volunteer perception and in expressions of appreciation.

Program Development for Burnout Prevention and Mitigation Model

Elements of an effective burnout mitigation and prevention program for church volunteers would contain the following themes and techniques, customized for each church, depending on their particular culture. There would be a design, performance objectives, and evaluations for each stage to ensure success. There would be a heavy emphasis permeating the program that would convey the necessity of drawing our identity from Christ and that the center of everything is Jesus. Our mission, vision, purpose and true service stems from the “who” and

not the “what” we do it for. This would convey that Jesus and His love for His people is the greatest principle and highest priority above any procedure or training.

Based on the research and data collected from the field, the researcher has concluded that an effective burnout prevention and mitigation program, that would sustain long-term volunteers in the church, would contain several core value systems: relational connections, personal fit, Christ-centered identity development, creating adaptable guidelines and role modeling. These core value systems would encompass and utilize the following practices: onboarding, feedback systems, setting limits, volunteer recruitment, mentoring, providing resources, resistance management, engage and empower volunteers, internal support systems, evaluation and volunteer appreciation.

- Phase One: Exploring
 - Recruitment, Onboarding and Setting Limits
 - Relational Connection
 - This is manifested in making each step of phase one involve personal connection such as peer recruitment instead of a “cattle call” style recruiting. In addition, onboarding will take place utilizing as many face-to-face options as possible to provide options for immediate interaction, connection, and feedback from the volunteers.
 - Personal Fit
 - This is shown by intentional recruitment and asking for specific skill sets while the onboarding process will involve assessments so as to find appropriate fits for volunteers.
 - Christ-Centered Identity Development

- This is shown by setting limits, making sure that the volunteer is able to attend services regularly, being fed spiritually and relationally, but also utilizing the onboarding process to make sure that the motivation for serving is in balance with their identity in Christ and in the community.
- Creating Adaptable Guidelines
 - Phase one, particularly the limits and onboarding processes, will heavily rely on being flexible to the current strengths of the church and their unique calling and ministry. The training should allow for the unique values of the church to shine through.
- Role-modeling
 - This should require that all leaders go through the onboarding process and are familiar with the assessments and have likewise undergone “good fit” assessments. Of course, leaders should be the prime example in setting limits on their own serving and making sure that their relationship with Christ and the community is paramount to their ministry.
- Phase Two: Equipping
 - Feedback Systems, Providing Resources, Internal Support Systems and Mentoring
 - Relational Connection
 - Phase two is designed to maintain the community support systems in order to provide longevity of service. Feedback systems can provide “open door” options for volunteers to approach leadership with

concerns. Internal support systems such as small groups and Bible studies create “know and be known” atmosphere. In addition to the small group system, a monthly meeting for specific ministries and their leaders to check in with the volunteers will be pertinent.

- Personal Fit
 - Mentors should consistently be checking in with volunteers to assure good fit of service. Feedback systems such as volunteer leaders and surveys allow for open communication for any complaints or concerns a volunteer may have about the fit of a given task.
- Christ-Centered Development
 - Mentoring and internal support systems should be highlighting the importance of active and communal relationships with Christ. Now that the volunteer has been in the ministry a while, it will be important for mentors and small group members to encourage personal identity in Christ rather than just completing the task.
- Creating Adaptable Guidelines
 - Feedback systems will largely depend on the size of the church, with often surveys and face-to-face check-ins being appropriate in larger settings, while more informal check-ins will suffice in smaller settings. Resources such as books and even childcare should have flexibility in order to meet the needs of the church community and local demographic. Mentoring processes should involve multi-step

processes and accountability but encourage creative liberty in the mentoring style.

- Role-Modeling

- It is important for leaders to be actively pursuing the same internal supports as their volunteers. Small groups, Bible studies, mentoring, and feedback options should all be utilized regularly if not more often than any volunteers.

- Phase Three: Empowering

- Resistance Management, Engage and Empower, and Volunteer Appreciation

- Relational Connection

- Often after times of volunteering or serving, there develops a resistance to any changes. It is important that close connections are utilized when addressing concerns in order to show the importance of the person. Appreciations displays should be as personal as possible, again utilizing the relationships built to show appreciation to volunteers in a way that will be meaningful to them. In addition, personal check-ins to assess that a volunteer is connected appropriately to internal supports and that those supports are building up the volunteer. The volunteer should feel known by the community on a personal level and not just revolving around the job being done.

- Personal Fit

- Much resistance stems from lack of personal fit. During stage three it is important to be regularly re-assessing personal fit as things may

change over time. Empowering and engaging methods should be in a method appropriate for the volunteer. Knowing whether the volunteer prefers public meetings or public appreciation versus private one-on-one meetings and thank you cards can make the difference in the prevention and mitigation of burnout.

- Christ-Centered Development

- When Christ is the center, the calling of the volunteer will become more important than the needs of the church. Recruiting and mentoring processes from previous phases should allow for the freedom of volunteers to follow their personal relationship with Christ without feeling obligated to a specific church position. Setting limits on serving times will allow a person to take sabbaticals and “reset” their spiritual lens. In addition, churches should show appreciation in a way that honors Christ and the greater picture instead of allowing an individual or specific ministry to shine above all else. Janitors and food service volunteers are serving God just as faithfully as the pastoral staff.

- Creating Adaptable Guidelines

- It is encouraged to have a formal resistance management training program, particularly in addressing complaints or concerns from volunteers. These programs need to be realistically based on the staffing options and expertise available. Also, volunteer empowerment

can involve anything from quarterly volunteer celebrations to suggested trainings or team building courses offered.

- **Role Modeling**
 - Leadership should be not only addressing resistance of volunteers in a respectful manner, but also expressing their own concerns respectfully and to the appropriate sources. Leaders should continue to model their own empowerment and show how they are utilizing the community to build themselves up. In these events, authenticity is key and leaders should not be afraid to share difficulties while modeling a reliance on the internal supports and their identity in Christ as the center of their ministry.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study is one of very few done specifically on volunteer burnout prevention and mitigation within churches. Future research could hone in on program development for spiritual gift discovery and development as a direct means to serving in the right ministry, which would lend itself to the prevention and mitigation of burnout. The data collected from this research highlighted several future research recommendations:

- A study of leadership role modeling done through the lens of spiritual gift discovery and development.
 - Goleman (1998) outlined some key aspects for successful leadership: a leader's interpersonal capabilities (social awareness), intrapersonal capabilities (self-awareness, self-development, self-regulation), and the leader's ability to respond and/or learn from various stimuli.

- This research study eludes to the premise that adding role modeling and spiritual gift development could add to the current research on effective leadership and training.
- A study of the effectiveness of formal and informal feedback systems within volunteer training programs.
 - Allen and Mueller (2013) did a study that expressed that volunteers experience burnout when there is a loss of resources (such as energy or emotional support) and when volunteers do not feel heard, or their feedback and ideas are not making any difference.
- A study done on mentoring church leadership into new role positions.
 - Bays (2006) stated that the church is its own community, relying on the service of its volunteers to keep all of its ministries running. Bays reported that the church has a call to empower its volunteers through training and support, in order for them to be able to foster their spiritual gifts and contribute to the body of Christ.
 - This study could potentially impact the way church leaders are hired, trained and recruited into the church.

Researcher's Observations

One observation the researcher noticed was that each church seemed to have it's own theme and area of focus. For example: one church focused on appreciating and loving on their volunteers, another on serving in the community, another on investing in their volunteer's personal and spiritual development, and so on. It would have been helpful in hindsight to add a question like, "what does your church do exceptionally well, and how do you do it?"

Another observation the researcher made was the distinction of knowledge between different staff at the different churches. Some of the volunteer coordinators or pastors were very knowledgeable about what burnout was and methods to prevent and mitigate it. Oddly, they were the exception; most of the volunteer trainers did not seem to have any knowledge on the prevention of burnout. They practiced some methods, like appreciation and rotations, but without knowing that those were methods for burnout prevention and mitigation. Many of the leaders were placed in their positions with very little or no formal mentoring or training. They were learning as they went along and most told the researcher up front that they didn't use any prevention methods so they did not think they would be helpful. In the researcher's observations there were only three out of the 10 interviewed who had formal training and mentoring before or after taking their positions.

A final observation the researcher pondered was the role modeling of the volunteer leaders and their understanding of themselves. Only five out of the 10 interviewed considered themselves leadership. Even though, they were all leaders, in charge of departments and many volunteers.

Final Thoughts

Leaders seem to be very concerned with the welfare of their volunteers and their hearts intentions. Leaders are saying that a heart of service and love poured out in their ministry comes from an overflow that they themselves feel from their relationship with God and the community around them. I see leaders struggling with how to help their volunteers connect more deeply in order to serve from the right place. To want the volunteers to understand their purpose and gifting, so that they fit in the right place and feel good about how they are serving. Unfortunately, the vast majority does not know how to assist their volunteers with this process

effectively. I would like to be able to see more churches have the knowledge and skills to implement an effective onboarding program and a spiritual gifts and discovery program in order to assist leaders with this quandary.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Notice



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 28, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Katie Donihoo

Protocol #: 16-09-386

Project Title: BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES USED BY CHURCH LEADERS TO MITIGATE AND PREVENT BURNOUT AMONG CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Katie Donihoo:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

Page: 1



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

(Graduate School of Education and Psychology)

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES USED BY CHURCH LEADERS TO MITIGATE AND PREVENT BURNOUT AMONG CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by **Katie Donihoo, M.S, and Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D.** at Pepperdine University, because you fit the following eligibility criteria: (a) has served in a leadership capacity at the church for at least 1 year, (b) agrees to be audio-recorded, (c) lives in southern California (d) agrees to a face-to face interview. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for you records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the strategies and best practices used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers. To understand the challenges church leaders face in supporting church volunteers to overcome and mitigate church volunteer burnout. To be able to evaluate how church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers. And to see clarification on recommendations church leaders would make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will last for approximately 60 minutes. The semi-structured interview includes the use of 9 open-ended questions that are designed in advance, with probes that are either planned or unplanned, to clarify your responses. The types of questions will elicit valuable information, leadership styles, and strategies that church leaders can utilize in preventing and mitigating

church volunteer burnout. During this interview your answers will be recorded. If you choose not to have your answers recorded, you will not be eligible to participate in this study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include feeling uncomfortable with questions, boredom, and fatigue from sitting for a long period of time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to the church, community, and volunteers, which include, raising awareness of burnout prevention and mitigation strategies to sustain long-term volunteers in the church.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse, elder abuse or dependent adult abuse. Pepperdine University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

To protect the identity of your responses, the recordings will be saved under a pseudonym and transferred to a USB flash drive, which will be kept in a safe, lock box within the researcher's residence for three years, after which it will be properly destroyed. The researcher will be transcribing and coding the interviews herself. The documents containing the transcribed interviews and coding analysis will also be transferred to the same USB flash drive and maintained in the same locked box at the researcher's residence, which will be destroyed after three years. Your name, affiliated organization, or any personal identifiable information will not be reported. Instead a pseudonym with a generic organization name will be used to protect your confidentiality.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

Your alternative is to not participate. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Katie Donihoo at katie.donihoo@pepperdine.edu, or Farzin Majidi, Majidi.Farzin@pepperdine.edu if you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

AUDIO

- ☐ *I agree to be audio-recorded*
- ☐ *I do not want to be audio-recorded*

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of his/her questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Dear [Name],

My name is Katie Donihoo. I am a doctoral candidate in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am conducting a study on church leaders in assisting their church volunteers with burnout prevention and mitigation. I would like to invite you to participate in the study.

If you agree, you are invited to participate in an interview that intends to explore best strategies and practices that church leaders utilize for the prevention and mitigation of burnout among their church volunteers. The purpose will be achieved by identifying the challenges and successes that current church leaders face while assisting their volunteers in burnout prevention and mitigation, while managing the complexities this field demands.

The interview is anticipated to take no more than 60 minutes to complete and the interview will be audio-recorded with your consent. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study. Your name, affiliated organization or any personal identifiable information will not be reported. Instead a pseudonym from a "generic organization" will be used to protect your confidentiality. Additionally, confidentiality and privacy of all participants will be fully protected through the reporting of data in aggregate form.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at [redacted for confidentiality] or Katie.donihoo@pepperdine.edu

Thank you for your participation,

Katie Donihoo
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Status: Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D

Peer Reviewer Forms

1.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
<p>RQ1: What strategies and best practices are used by church leaders to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?</p>	<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>1. Is there a formal or informal process used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?</p> <p>a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>c. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p style="color: red; margin-left: 20px;">a</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> </div> <hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>2. How engaged is the leadership in implementing the burnout prevention process as well as role modeling the process?</p> <p>a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>c. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p style="color: red; margin-left: 20px;">a</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>3. How is resistance or push back to the process handled?</p> <p>d. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>e. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>f. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p style="color: red; margin-left: 20px;">d</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> </div>

	<p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ 2: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?	<p>4. What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <p>g. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated h. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it i. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr/> <p style="color: red;">g</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>5. How are those challenges handled?</p> <p>d. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated e. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it f. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr/> <p style="color: red;">d</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
RQ 3: How do	6. How do you measure the success of your burnout

<p>church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?</p>	<p>prevention and mitigation process?</p> <p>j. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>k. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>l. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr/> <p>j</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>7. Do you have any formal or informal feedback systems?</p> <p>g. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>h. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>i. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr/> <p>g</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>RQ 4: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?</p>	<p>8. What have you learned through implementing this process, that would help of leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <p>m. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>n. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>o. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <hr/> <p>O</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p>

	<p><u>I think this could be broken down to 2 questions, especially since you have only 9 questions, you might need 1 or 2 more.</u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>9. Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?</p> <p>j. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>k. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>l. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <p><u>j</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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2.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: What strategies and best practices do church leaders use to overcome and mitigate burnout among church volunteers?	<p>1. Is there a formal or informal process used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?</p> <p>a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated</p> <p>b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it</p> <p>c. The question should be modified as suggested:</p> <p>C. To keep this from being a “yes/no” question – reframe it as “What types of formal and information processes are used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?”</p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview</p>

	<p>questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>2. How engaged is the leadership in implementing the burnout prevention process, as well as role modeling the process?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it The question should be modified as suggested: <hr/> <p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <p>Maybe not a true follow up question – but if the answer is “very involved” You might could follow up with, “Can you specifically describe how...”</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>3. How is resistance or push back to the process handled?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it The question should be modified as suggested: <hr/> <p><u>A.</u></p>
<p>RQ2: What challenges do church leaders face in supporting church volunteers in overcoming and mitigating burnout?</p>	<p>4. What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it The question should be modified as suggested:

	<p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>RQ3: How do church leaders measure successful burnout mitigation and prevention among church volunteers?</p>	<p>5. How are those challenges handled?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it c. The question should be modified as suggested: <p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>6. How do you measure the success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it c. The question should be modified as suggested: <p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<p>7. Do you have any formal or informal feedback systems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it c. The question should be modified as suggested: <p>C. To keep this from being a “yes/no” question – reframe it as “What types of formal and informal feedback systems do you have in place, and if so, how do you use them?”</p> <hr/> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Other?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>RQ4: What recommendations would church leaders make to other leaders in faith-based organizations to mitigate and prevent church volunteer burnout?</p>	<p>8. What have you learned through implementing this process, that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as stated b. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete it c. The question should be modified as suggested: <p>A.</p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<p>9. Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as statedb. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete itc. The question should be modified as suggested: <p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>10. Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The question is directly relevant to Research question - Keep as statedb. The question is irrelevant to research question – Delete itc. The question should be modified as suggested: <p><u>A.</u></p> <p>I recommend adding the following interview questions:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>11. Other?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

IQ 1: What formal or informal process is used for burnout prevention and mitigation for your volunteers?

IQ 2: How does leadership support the process of the prevention and mitigation of burnout?

IQ 3: Have you encountered any resistance in developing and implementing the program?

IQ 4: What challenges do you regularly face or have you faced, through supporting volunteers through the burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 5: How do you define success of your burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 6: What types of formal or informal feedback systems do you have in place, and how do you utilize them?

IQ 7: What have you learned through implementing this process that would help other leaders in implementing a burnout prevention and mitigation process?

IQ 8: Knowing what you know now, how would you handle things differently throughout the process?

IQ 9: Is there anything else you would like to share that you think is relevant to this study?