

Research Paper

Influence of Hope, Optimism, Resilience and Sense of Humor on Compassion Fatigue among Mental Health Professionals

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the influence of hope, optimism, resilience, and sense of humor on compassion fatigue among mental health professionals. The study involved a sample of 132 (81 Females, 51 Males) mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed counselors, clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, psychiatric nurses, and substance addiction counselors. The age of the participants ranged from 25- 45 and they were required to have a minimum of 3 years of work experience. Data collection involved the use of a demographic questionnaire, as well as the Life Orientation Scale, Adult Hope Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale, and Compassion Fatigue Self-Test. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and Pearson correlation was performed using SPSS. The average scores for hope, optimism, resilience, sense of humor, and compassion fatigue were found to be 62.89 ± 2.82 , 15.62 ± 3.62 , 18.86 ± 2.77 , 68.70 ± 7.99 and 49.83 ± 13.07 respectively, based on the data analysis. The results indicated a significant low to moderate negative correlation between hope, optimism, resilience, sense of humor, and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals. These findings suggest that cultivating hope, optimism, resilience, and a sense of humor may serve as protective factors against compassion fatigue in the mental health profession.

Keywords: *Hope, Optimism, Resilience, Sense of Humor, Compassion Fatigue*

Professionals in the field of mental health deal frequently with challenging as well as emotionally taxing situations due to the nature of their employment as they work with people who have undergone trauma and who are dealing with various emotional, behavioral, mental health issues which is the reason that they are at a greater risk of developing compassion fatigue.

According to research (Kim et al., 2016; Peterson & Anderson, 2017), compassion fatigue can significantly affect mental health professionals, resulting in decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, burnout, and inclinations to quit their jobs. Furthermore, since they may become emotionally distant or overburdened by the demands of their jobs, mental health

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professionals who suffer from compassion fatigue may be less able to effectively care for their patients (Mathieu, 2007).

Therefore, it is essential to recognize and treat compassion fatigue in order to protect the wellbeing of mental health professionals and guarantee the delivery of high-quality care to patients. This entails putting methods like self-care, organizational support, and instruction in skills for building resilience and managing stress into action (Craig & Sprang, 2010).

However, several factors have been identified as potential buffers against compassion fatigue, including hope, optimism, resilience, and a sense of humour. This paper aims to explore the influence of these factors on compassion fatigue among mental health professionals, drawing upon relevant research and empirical evidence.

HOPE

Hope is characterized as a positive emotional state that includes having faith in one's capacity to accomplish goals and having high hopes for the future. It is often referred to as a "motivational construct" that can assist people in overcoming hardship and enduring difficulties (Snyder, 2002). According to research, hope is an important part of resilience and is linked to a number of favorable outcomes, such as improved physical and mental health, more happiness, and higher levels of life satisfaction (Snyder, 2002). Hope was also discovered to be favorably connected with resilience and negatively associated with compassion fatigue in a study of social workers who care for people with chronic illnesses (Butler et al., 2018).

OPTIMISM

Optimism is a positive psychological trait that involves a general expectation that good things will happen in the future and a belief that one's actions can influence positive outcomes (Seligman, 1990). Optimistic individuals tend to see setbacks and failures as temporary and specific, rather than permanent and global, and are more likely to persist in the face of obstacles (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Numerous research contend that optimism and compassion fatigue are negatively correlated. For instance, it was discovered that optimism was adversely correlated with compassion fatigue in a study of nurses working in an oncology unit (Mota, Carvalho, & Pimenta, 2013). Similar findings were made in a study of social workers who care for people with HIV/AIDS, which indicated that optimism was positively connected with resilience and negatively associated with compassion fatigue (Cieslak et al., 2013).

RESILIENCE

Resilience is the capacity to adapt as well as overcome difficulties, stress, hardship, or trauma. It is the ability of people to continue functioning well in the face of major life obstacles like disease, grief, or adversity. It is a dynamic process that can be created and strengthened over time rather than a set attribute or characteristic.

According to several research, compassion fatigue and resilience have a negative correlation. For instance, resilience was found to be correlated positively with optimism and negatively correlated with compassion fatigue in a study of social workers who cared for people with HIV/AIDS (Cieslak et al., 2013). Similarly, resilience was discovered to be

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unfavorably correlated with compassion fatigue in a study of nurses employed in intensive care units (Curtis, 2016).

SENSE OF HUMOR

The term "sense of humour" refers to a multifaceted construct that includes a person's capacity for humour production, humour appreciation, and the use of humour as a coping mechanism. "A cognitive and affective response to perceived incongruity that is designed to amuse, entertain, or provoke laughter" is how it has been described (Martin, 2007, p. 3).

Studies in psychology have looked into a variety of aspects of a sense of humour, including how it develops, how it is measured, and how it connects to personality and mental health. For instance, research has shown that extraversion, openness, and emotional intelligence are all positively connected with a sense of humour (Kuiper et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2003). Additionally, humour has been shown to benefit both physical and mental health, including lowering stress levels, boosting immune system performance, and elevating subjective well-being (Martin, 2007).

People who can keep a cheerful attitude as well as find humour in their professional lives may be more likely to use healthy coping mechanisms, look for social support, and take precautions to avoid or lessen the negative consequences of being around other people's suffering.

Understanding the influence of hope, optimism, resilience and sense of humor on compassion fatigue is essential to develop effective strategies for preventing and managing this occupational hazard. By identifying and fostering these positive psychological resources, interventions can be designed to enhance the well-being of mental health professionals, promote sustainable caregiving, and ultimately improve the quality of care provided to individuals seeking support for their mental health concerns.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anna, P., Erini, K. & Anastassios, S. (2022)- Conducted a study whose aim was to study "The relationship among self-compassion, compassion fatigue and job satisfaction in Counselling Psychologists". The sample consisted of 104 counselling psychologists, 94 of whom were women and 10 of whom were men, with an average age of 35 and a minimum of 8 years of experience. The psychologists completed the Warr-Cook-Wall job satisfaction measure, the quality-of-life scale, and the self-compassion scale. The findings demonstrated that psychologists who scored higher on self-compassion had lower levels of compassion fatigue and higher levels of job satisfaction. Self-compassion played a minor role in the association between job satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Haleem, M., Masood, S., et.al (2022)- The purpose of this study was to examine how aspects of professional quality of life, such as burnout and compassion fatigue, relate to the psychological capital and mental health of rescue workers in Pakistan. 502 male rescue personnel who completed the mental health inventory, the psycap scale, and the professional quality of life scale made up the sample. The results showed that psycap has a good correlation with compassion satisfaction and mental health, but a negative correlation with burnout.

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An, M., Shin, E. S., Choi, M. Y., Lee, Y., Hwang, Y. Y., & Kim, M. (2020)- The goal of this study was to identify the mediating function of psychological capital in the link between burnout and nursing performance outcomes among Korean nurses. The sample consisted of 258 nurses who completed the Psychology Capital Questionnaire, Nursing Performance Scale, and Professional Quality of Life Scale questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, student t-tests, one-way analyses of variance, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and multiple linear regression were used to examine the data. The results indicated that the clinical nurses' nursing performance was correlated with burnout. Positive psychological capital mediated the association between burnout and nursing performance outcomes.

Levkovich, I., & Ricon, T. (2020)- Conducted a study compassion fatigue, perceived stress, optimism and emotional distress among school counsellors. The sample compromised of 139 school counsellors. The participants completed a number of psychometric assessments including the life orientation scale, compassion fatigue questionnaire as well as the emotional distress questionnaire. Inferential statistics was used to infer the data and the results indicated that high levels of compassion fatigue were negatively associated with optimism and positively associated with perceived stress. Furthermore, primary school counsellors had higher levels of compassion fatigue as compared to the high school counsellors.

Yildirim, N., Coskun, H., & Polat, S. (2020)- The purpose of this research was to explore the link between psychological capital and occupational risk while considering the mediating role of compassion satisfaction. The sample group included 697 general nurses employed in various departments of university hospitals in Turkey. They completed a semi-structured interview form, the Professional Quality of Life Scale, and the Psychological Capital Scale. The findings showed that there was a moderate correlation between the total score of psychological capital and the subscales of burnout. However, the relationship between these variables and compassion fatigue was found to be weak.

Nejad, G., N., Hosseini, M., et.al (2019)- Conducted a research whose aim was to study the association between resilience and professional quality of life among nurses working in intensive care units. The sample compromised of 200 nurses working in intensive care units in teaching hospitals across Iran. The data was collected using Connor-Davidson resilience questionnaire and Stamm professional quality of life scale. The data was analyzed using inferential statistics including t-test and ANOVA. The results indicated an inverse significant correlation between resilience and compassion fatigue.

Nunes, R.I., Jose, H., & Capelas, L.M., (2018)- The study's goal was to look into the relationship between palliative care nurses' sense of humor and their experience of professional grief. A multidimensional sense of humor scale, a professional grief overload questionnaire, and a demographic survey were all completed by a sample of 66 nurses. The results imply that nurses who have a more positive outlook on humor facilitate emotional work, lessen the strain of dealing with death and loss, and also have a tendency to use humor as a coping tool.

Cho, H. S., & Jung, M. S. (2014)- The purpose of this study was to examine how empathy, resilience, and self-care affect compassion fatigue in oncology nurses. The sample consisted of 171 oncology nurses who completed a descriptive survey. The data was analyzed using independent t-tests, one-way ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regression. The findings

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revealed that 72% of the participants reported experiencing moderate to severe levels of compassion fatigue. Furthermore, the results showed a positive correlation between empathy and compassion fatigue, while resilience and self-care were negatively correlated with compassion fatigue.

Significance of the Study

Compassion Fatigue is the psychological toll that arises from caring for and supporting individuals who have experienced trauma. It involves the lingering emotional impact of working with those who have been affected by traumatic events. Unlike burnout, compassion fatigue is characterized by a state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma experienced by clients. This can manifest in various ways, including re-experiencing the traumatic event and heightened emotional arousal.

Given the significance of compassion fatigue, it is crucial to explore positive psychological traits such as hope, optimism, resilience, and sense of humor, especially within the context of compassion fatigue. This exploration is particularly important for professionals who are vulnerable to compassion fatigue, including emergency care workers, counselors, mental health professionals, medical professionals, clergy, advocate volunteers, and human service workers. By studying these positive traits, we can gain insights into how they may serve as protective factors or resources in mitigating the impact of compassion fatigue on these professionals.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To assess the influence of Hope, optimism, resilience and sense of humor on compassion fatigue among mental health professionals (MHP)

Objectives

1. To study the relationship between hope and compassion fatigue among mental health Professionals.
2. To study the relationship between optimism and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.
3. To study the relationship between resilience and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.
4. To study the relationship between sense of humor and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.

Hypotheses

- H1-There will be a significant negative relationship between hope and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.
- H-2There will be a significant negative relationship between optimism and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.
- H-3There will be a significant negative relationship between resilience and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals
- H-4 There will be a significant negative relationship between sense of humor and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.

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Sample and Its Selection

For the purpose of this study, the sample was randomly selected. The sample consisted of Mental health professionals aged between 25 -45 years having at least 3 years of work experience. An attempt was made to study 132 professionals, 51 Males, and 81 Females. The mental health professionals included counsellors, counselling psychologists, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, psychiatric social workers and rehabilitation psychologists across India.

Description of the Tools

- **The ADULT HOPE SCALE**, developed by Charles R. Snyder and his colleagues in 1991, is a tool designed to assess an individual's level of hope. It consists of 12 items that are rated on an 8-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (definitely false) to 8 (definitely true). The scoring procedure involves summing the scores of the four positively coded items (1, 2, 3, and 5). Then, this sum is added to the sum of the scores for the four reverse coded items (4, 6, 7, and 8). The remaining four items serve as filler items and are not used in the calculation of the total hope score.
- **The REVISED LIFE ORIENTATION SCALE**, developed by Michael F. Scheier and Charles S. Carver in 1994, is a self-report measure used to evaluate an individual's level of optimism. This scale comprises 10 items, and respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Among the 10 items, items 3, 7, and 9 are scored in reverse, while items 2, 5, 6, and 8 are considered filler items and do not contribute to the scoring process. To calculate the total score, the scores of the positively coded items and the reverse coded items are summed together.
- **The BREIF RESILIENCE SCALE**, developed by Smith et al. in 2008, is a measurement tool designed to assess an individual's level of resilience. This questionnaire consists of six items and is specifically designed to evaluate one's perceived ability to recover or bounce back from stressful situations. The scale encompasses a unified construct of resilience and includes both positively and negatively worded items. To score this scale, items 2, 4, and 6 are reverse coded, and the sum of all six items is calculated. During administration, respondents are instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree," 2 for "disagree," 3 for "neutral," 4 for "agree," and 5 for "strongly agree."
- **The MULTIDIMENSIONAL SENSE OF HUMOR SCALE**, developed by Thorson et al. in 1993, is a self-report measure used to assess an individual's sense of humor. It consists of 24 items, and respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Within the 24 items, items 4, 8, 11, 17, and 20 are scored in reverse. To calculate the total score, all item scores are summed together, regardless of whether they are positively or reversely coded.
- **The COMPASSION FATIGUE SELF TEST**, developed by Dr. Charles Figley in 1995, is a self-report measure used to assess an individual's level of compassion fatigue. This test comprises 40 items, out of which 23 items (1-8, 10-13, 17-26, and 29) specifically measure the levels of compassion fatigue. Respondents rate each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Very often). To calculate the total score, the scores of the 23 aforementioned items are summed together.

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RESULTS

Table 1: Shows the descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviations for Hope, Optimism, Resilience, Sense of Humor & Compassion Fatigue among mental health professionals.

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hope	132	62.89	2.82
Optimism	132	15.62	3.62
Resilience	132	18.86	2.77
Sense of Humor	132	68.70	7.99
Compassion Fatigue	132	49.83	13.07

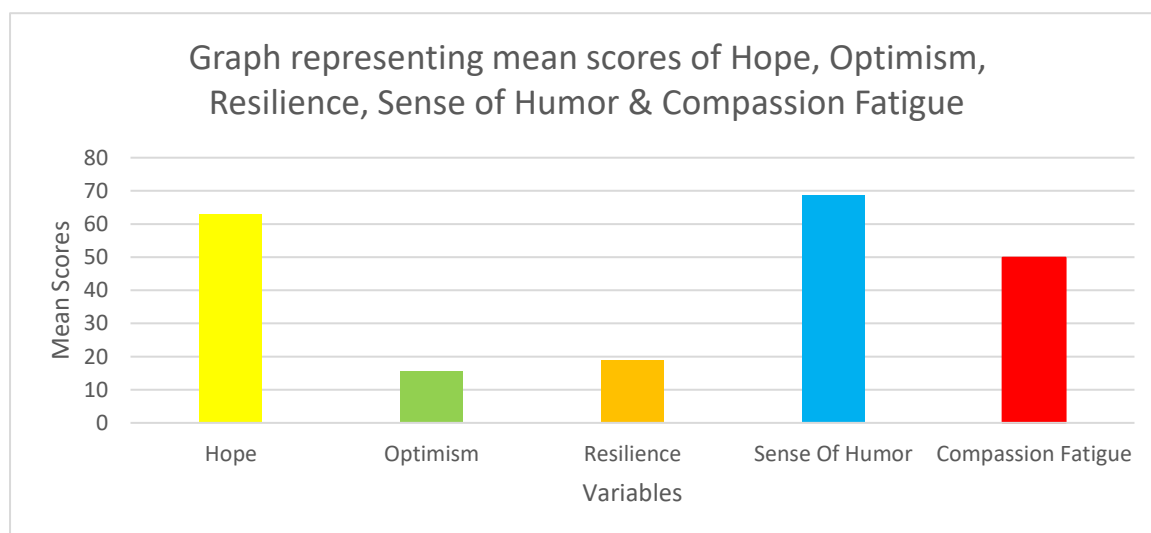


Figure 1: This figure indicates the Mean Scores of Hope, Optimism, Resilience, Sense of humor and Compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.

Table 2: Correlation values between Hope and Compassion Fatigue among mental health professionals.

Variables	N	r	P
Hope	132	1	.009
Compassion Fatigue	132	-.226**	.009

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)*

This table depicts that there is a significant negative correlation between hope and compassion fatigue with r vale $-.226^{**}$ at 0.01 level.

Table 3: Correlation values between Optimism and Compassion Fatigue among mental health professionals.

Variables	N	r	P
Optimism	132	1	0.78
Compassion Fatigue	132	-.204*	0.78

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*

This table depicts that there is a significant negative correlation between optimism and compassion fatigue with r vale $-.204^*$ at 0.01 level.

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Table 4: Correlation values between Resilience and Compassion Fatigue among mental health professionals.

Variables	N	r	P
Resilience	132	1	0.25
Compassion Fatigue	132	-.195*	0.25

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*

This table depicts that there is a significant negative correlation between resilience and compassion fatigue with r vale $-.195^*$ at 0.05 level.

Table 5: Correlation values between Sense of Humor and Compassion Fatigue among mental health professionals.

Variables	N	r	P
Sense Of Humor	132	1	.001
Compassion Fatigue	132	-.283**	.001

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)*

This table depicts that there is a significant negative correlation between sense of humor and compassion fatigue with r value $-.283$ at 0.01 level.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to investigate the impact of positive psychological traits, including hope, optimism, resilience and sense of humor on compassion fatigue among mental health professionals. The study involved a sample of 132 mental health professionals, comprising 81 females and 51 males, who had a minimum of three years of work experience in fields such as psychiatry, psychology, counseling, social work, therapy, nursing, and substance addiction counseling.

To collect data for the study, several scales were utilized, including the Life Orientation Scale, Adult Hope Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale, and Compassion Fatigue Self-Test. The data collected were then analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Additionally, the relationships between the variables were examined using Pearson correlation analysis with the assistance of the SPSS software.

According to the data analysis, the average scores for hope, optimism, resilience, sense of humor, and compassion fatigue were determined as follows: hope ($M = 62.89$, $SD = 2.82$), optimism ($M = 15.62$, $SD = 3.62$), resilience ($M = 18.86$, $SD = 2.77$), sense of humor ($M = 68.70$, $SD = 7.99$) and compassion fatigue ($M = 49.83$, $SD = 13.07$)

The study findings indicated a significant negative correlation, ranging from low to moderate, between hope and compassion fatigue, optimism and compassion fatigue, resilience and compassion fatigue, as well as sense of humor and compassion fatigue. These results suggest that hope, optimism, resilience, and sense of humor are inversely related to the experience of compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.

Hope is characterized as a positive emotional state that includes having faith in one's capacity to accomplish goals and having high hopes for the future. It is often referred to as a

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"motivational construct" that can assist people in overcoming hardship and enduring difficulties (Snyder, 2002). It can be seen in **Table 2** that there is a significant negative relationship between hope and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals which means that professionals who have high levels of hope are at a low risk of developing compassion fatigue.

According to a number of studies, hope may act as a shield against the onset of compassion fatigue. For instance, hope was discovered to be negatively associated with compassion fatigue in a study of nurses working in critical care units (AbuAlRub & Khalifa, 2015).

Optimism is a positive psychological trait that involves a general expectation that good things will happen in the future and a belief that one's actions can influence positive outcomes (Seligman, 1990). It can be seen in **TABLE 3** there is a significant negative relationship between optimism and compassion fatigue at 0.05 level among mental health professionals which means that professionals who have high levels of optimism may be at a low risk of developing compassion fatigue.

Optimism is linked to a number of advantageous outcomes, such as improved physical and mental health, more happiness, and higher levels of life satisfaction (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010).

Resilience is the capacity to adapt as well as overcome difficulties, stress, hardship, or trauma. It is the ability of people to continue functioning well in the face of major life obstacles like disease, grief, or adversity. It is a dynamic process that can be created and strengthened over time rather than a set attribute or characteristic.

As it can be seen from **TABLE 4** the relationship between resilience and compassion fatigue is significant among mental health professionals and there is an indication of negative relationship is there through which we can reach to an interpretation that professionals who have high levels of resilience might be at a lower risk of developing compassion fatigue.

Compassion fatigue and resilience have a negative correlation. For instance, resilience was found to be correlated positively with optimism and negatively correlated with compassion fatigue in a study of social workers who cared for people with HIV/AIDS (Cieslak et al., 2013).

The term "sense of humour" refers to a multifaceted construct that includes a person's capacity for humour production, humour appreciation, and the use of humour as a coping mechanism. "A cognitive and affective response to perceived incongruity that is designed to amuse, entertain, or provoke laughter" is how it has been described (Martin, 2007, p. 3).

From **TABLE- 5** it can be seen that there is a significant negative relationship between sense of humor and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals which means that professionals who have high levels of sense of humor are at a low risk of developing compassion fatigue.

Sense of humour was discovered to be adversely associated with compassion fatigue in a study of nurses working in an emergency room (Pfifferling & Gilley, 2000). Sense of humour was also discovered to be adversely associated with burnout, which includes

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symptoms of compassion fatigue, in a study of social workers who work with trauma survivors (Craig & Sprang, 2010).

From the above discussion it can be inferred that hope, optimism, resilience and sense of humor have a significant relationship with compassion fatigue and there is an indication of a negative correlation through which we can reach to the interpretation that professionals who have high levels of hope, optimism, resilience and sense of humor might be at a lower risk of developing compassion fatigue.

In regard to the hypothesis testing,

- H-1 “There will be a significant relationship between hope and compassion fatigue”. This hypothesis is **accepted** as the correlational value between hope and compassion fatigue was found to be significant.
- H-2 “There will be a significant relationship between optimism and compassion fatigue”. This hypothesis is **accepted** as the correlational value was found to be significant.
- H-3” There will be a significant relationship between resilience and compassion fatigue”. This hypothesis is **accepted** as the correlational value was found to be significant.
- H-4” There will be a significant relationship between sense of humor and compassion fatigue”. This hypothesis is **accepted** as the correlational value between sense of humor and compassion fatigue was found to be significant.

SUMMARY

The goal of the current study was to analyze the influence of hope, optimism, resilience, sense of humor on compassion fatigue among mental health professionals. For this purpose, a sample of 132 mental health professionals including 81 females and 51 males were taken. The participants of the study took a variety of psychometric tools. The data collected from the participants was further scored and then analyzed using descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation and Pearson correlation was also evaluated with help of the SPSS software. The analysis of data indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between hope and compassion fatigue, optimism and compassion fatigue, resilience and compassion fatigue, sense of humor and compassion fatigue among mental health professionals.

Limitations

- The findings of the study are based on the very sample.
- The sample size consisted of only 132 professionals which is too small to generalize the findings.
- The study is relied on self-report measures for all the variables which may be subject to response bias and social desirability bias.

Future Implications

- No research is conclusive in real sense. Every research paves the way and craves the way for future research.
- A sample of 132 professionals was taken in the present study. Same study can be conducted on a large sample.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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