Investigating Professional Quality of Life of Conservation Scientists

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Introduction
Professional Quality Of Life (ProQOL):

- Multidimensional balanced structure comprised of compassion satisfaction and fatigue
- Compassion fatigue is made up of burnout and secondary trauma.

(Hooper, Craig, Janvrin, Wetsel, & Reimels, 2010)
ProQOL Scale

Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how equently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I=Never</th>
<th>2=Rarely</th>
<th>3=Sometimes</th>
<th>4=Often</th>
<th>5=Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am happy.</td>
<td>2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].</td>
<td>3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.</td>
<td>4. I feel connected to others.</td>
<td>5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Because of my [helping], I have felt &quot;on edge&quot; about various things.</td>
<td>12. I like my work as a [helper].</td>
<td>13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].</td>
<td>14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].</td>
<td>15. I have beliefs that sustain me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Aim & Objectives

This project aims to:

1. Determine the professional quality of life levels among conservation scientists.

2. Determine how job satisfaction in conservation scientists potentially lead to compassion fatigue.

3. Add conservation as an industry to which the ProQOL scale can be used effectively.
Methods

Survey:
• Distributed online through social media and forums within New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom & United States of America.
• Contained adapted version of the ProQOL scale along with demographic and targeted questions.

Target Audience:
• Self-identified conservation scientists.

Data analysis:
• ProQOL questions analysed through the ProQOL self-score.
• Linear analysis
### Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are “reverse scored.” If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. “I am happy” tells us more about the effects of helping when you are not happy so you reverse the score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Wrote</th>
<th>Change to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have completed the burnout scale questions. The sum of your Burnout Questions is ______. And my Burnout level is ______.

- 22 or less: Low
- Between 23 and 41: Moderate
- 42 or more: High

Total: ______

### Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is</th>
<th>And my Compassion Satisfaction level is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 or less</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 23 and 41</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 or more</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have completed the compassion satisfaction scale questions. The sum of your Compassion Satisfaction questions is ______. And my Compassion Satisfaction level is ______.

Total: ______

### Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is</th>
<th>And my Secondary Trauma Stress level is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 or less</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 23 and 41</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 or more</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have completed the secondary traumatic stress scale questions. The sum of your Secondary Trauma questions is ______. And my Secondary Trauma Stress level is ______.

Total: ______
Demographics

- **Country of Residence**
  - Australia (Aus)
  - New Zealand (NZ)
  - United Kingdom (UK)
  - USA

- **Gender**
  - Male
  - Female
  - Them

- **Age Group**
  - 18-24
  - 25-34
  - 35-44
  - 45-54
  - 55-64
  - 65-74
  - 75+
ProQOL Results

ProQOL Self-Score

ProQOL Scales

CS

STS

BO
Data Analysis

Linear correlation showed the variable of country of residence to explain the results (LM: $X^2 = 461.44$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.04$)
Country of Residence ProQOL Results

![Bar chart showing ProQOL scores for different countries.]

- **Country of Residence**: Aus, NZ, UK, USA
- **ProQOL Scores**: CS, STS, BO

The chart displays the ProQOL scores for different countries, categorized by CS, STS, and BO, respectively.
“My care for nature is what drives me... I sometimes get disheartened but this is the only work that I know will really satisfy me.” (CS=45 HIGH, STS=19 LOW, BO=16 LOW)

“I think overall, I have ongoing struggles (with positivity and hope)...” (CS=31 MED, STS=36 MED, BO=33 MED)

“I have worked in conservation for 20 years and I am exhausted. My friends and I have thrown all our energy & passion at trying to get change and we all now have fatigue...” (CS=47 HIGH, STS=33 MED, BO=33 MED)

“...I found I cared too much... I had to get out but now I feel guilty that I left. The hidden fact is conservation here kills people – I lost close friends through suicide because the work got to them, I was not alone in burn out either...” (CS=39 MED, STS=40 MED, BO=33 MED)
Findings

Elevated levels of compassion satisfaction support that of previous studies within the conservation industry (Yeung, White, & Chilvers, 2017).

Moderate levels seen across all components of ProQOL supportive to Markowitz, Slovic, Västfjäll, & Hodges (2013) who found the presence of compassion fade within self-identified environmentalists.

Although individuals expressed low job satisfaction this did not show within their ProQOL scores.

Is ProQOL a sufficient way for measuring compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, burnout and secondary trauma within conservation scientists?
Limitations

Western hemisphere based so may be interpreted as skewed.

Some people may not have felt safe enough to take part in the study despite it being anonymous.
Implications

Conservation scientists express moderate levels of professional quality of life

NZ, Aus & UK conservation scientists have similar levels of professional quality of life with USA conservation scientists possessing higher levels of compassion satisfaction

Gecko rescue Waiheke (Barling, n.d.)
Concluding remarks

The presentation of moderate levels shows room for improvement.

Further study is required within this area.
References


