

# Examining Relationships in Applied Behavior Analysis: Training in Compassion, Burnout, Self-Compassion, and Inflexibility



Catherine M. Fuller & Darlene E. Crone-Todd  
Salem State University  
Nele Schulze  
Golden Steps ABA



## Introduction

- Compassionate care has been shown to have a positive impact on treatment outcomes and is embedded as part of the 2022 Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts.
- Historically, applied behavior analyst training programs have not universally focused on training in compassion and building therapeutic relationships.
- It is not clear to what extent behavior analysts incorporate compassion into their own professional roles (e.g., as practitioners, supervisors/supervisees, or trainers), or engage in additional professional or personal training in this area.
- Aim:**
  - To investigate whether there are any relationships between the self-reported scores on the amount of training in compassion, burnout, self-compassion, and psychological inflexibility.

## Method

- Participants were recruited via snowball method using email and social media.
- Behavior analytic practitioners (n=96) were surveyed on their self-reports.

Variable	Measurement	Abbreviation
Training experiences in compassionate care and building therapeutic relationships	Modification of survey questions (Taylor et al., 2019)	TotTrain
Burnout	Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demeroiti et al., 2010)	OLBI
Self-Compassion	Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form (Raes et al., 2011)	SCS-SF
Psychological Inflexibility	Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (Bond et al., 2011)	AAQ-2

Figure 1 Total Training & Self-Compassion

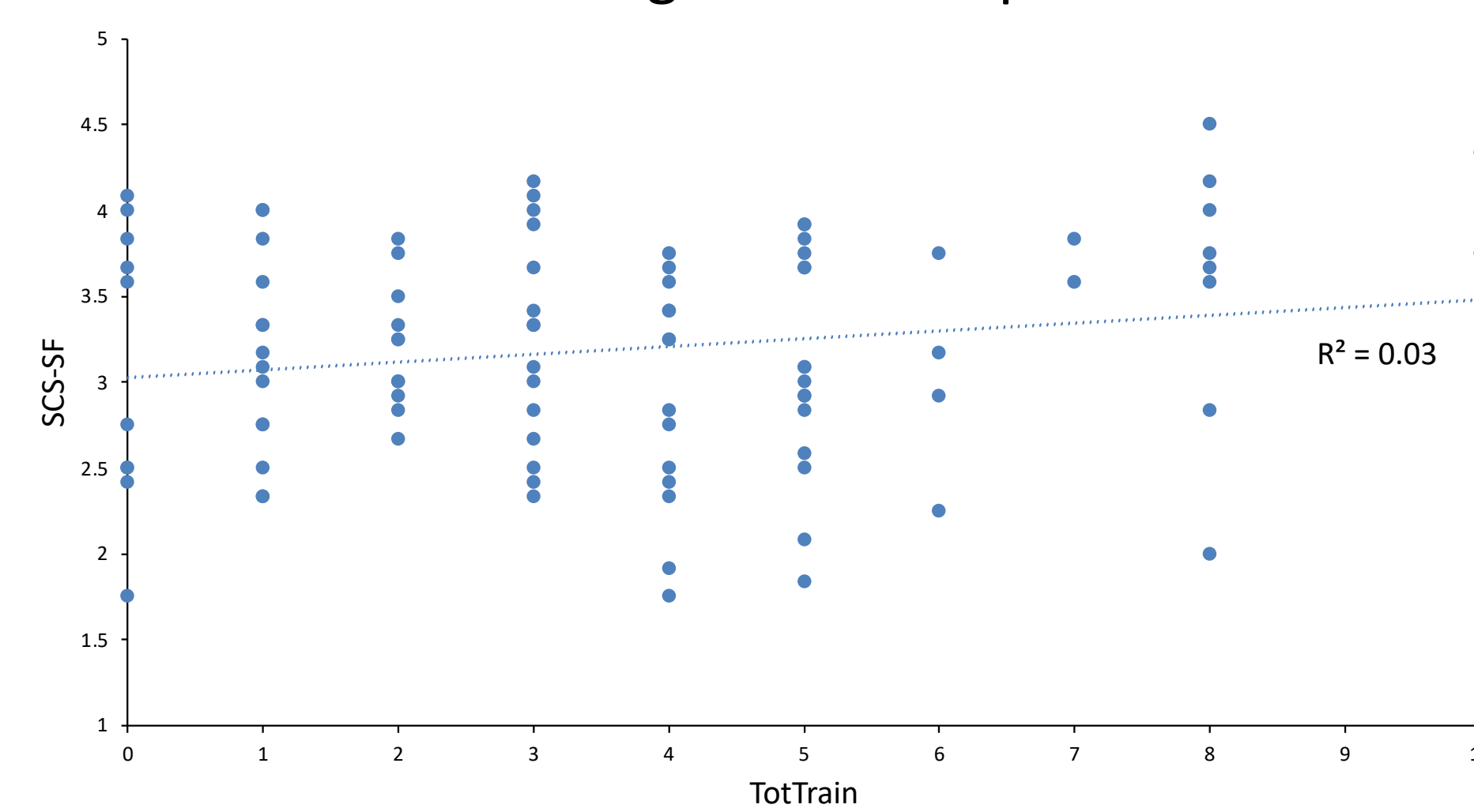


Figure 2 Total Training & Burnout

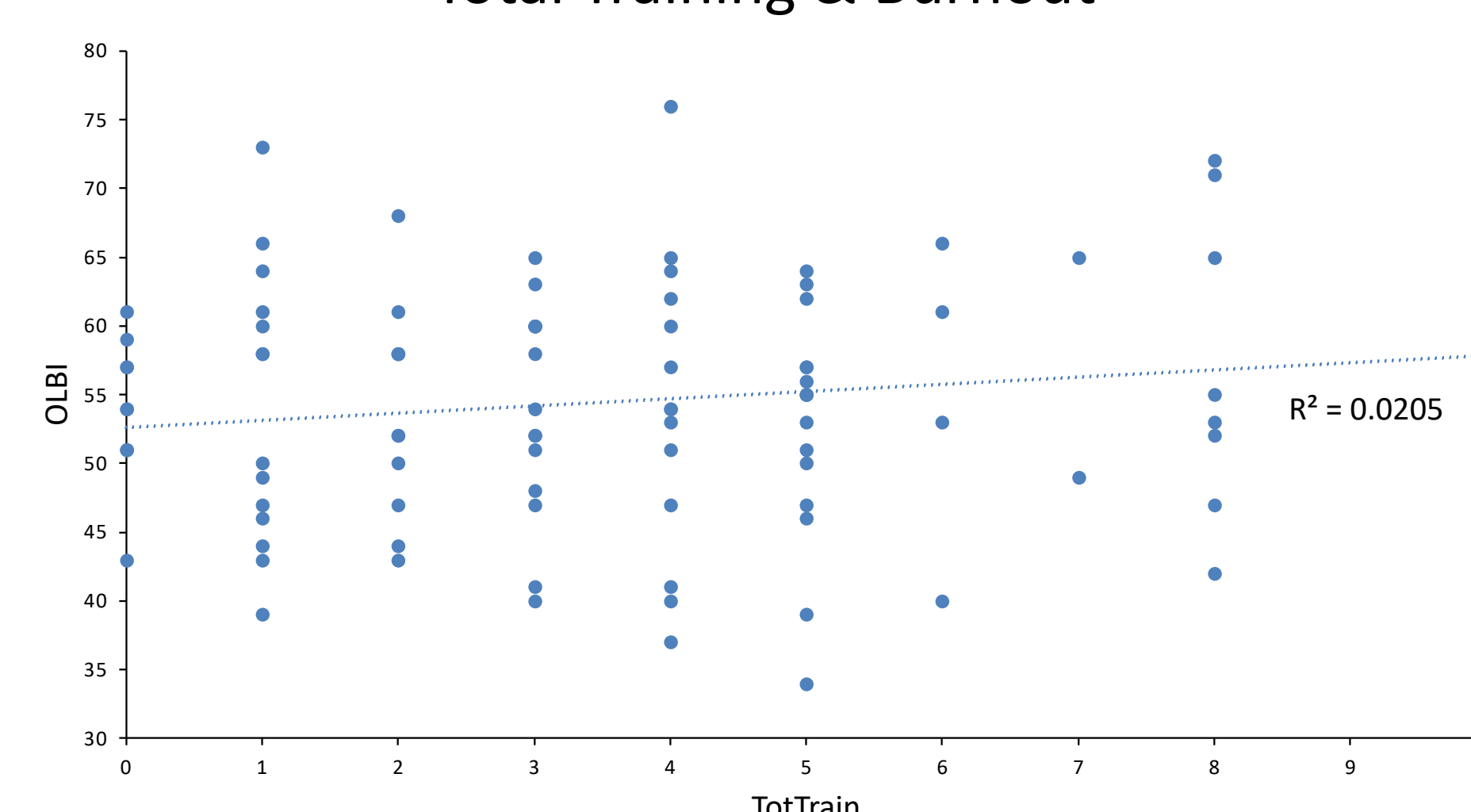


Figure 3 Total Training & Psychological Inflexibility

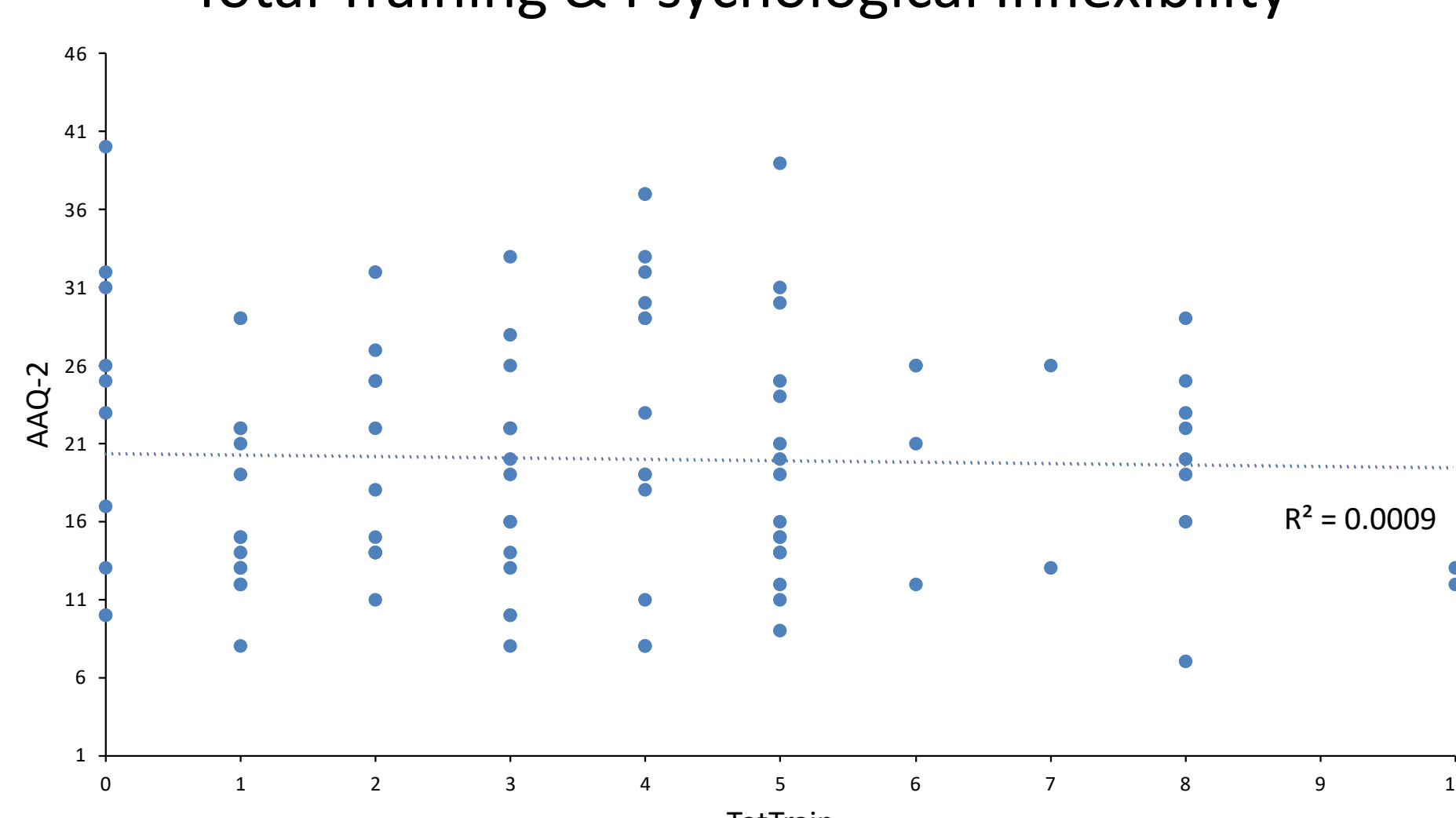


Figure 4 Self-Compassion & Burnout

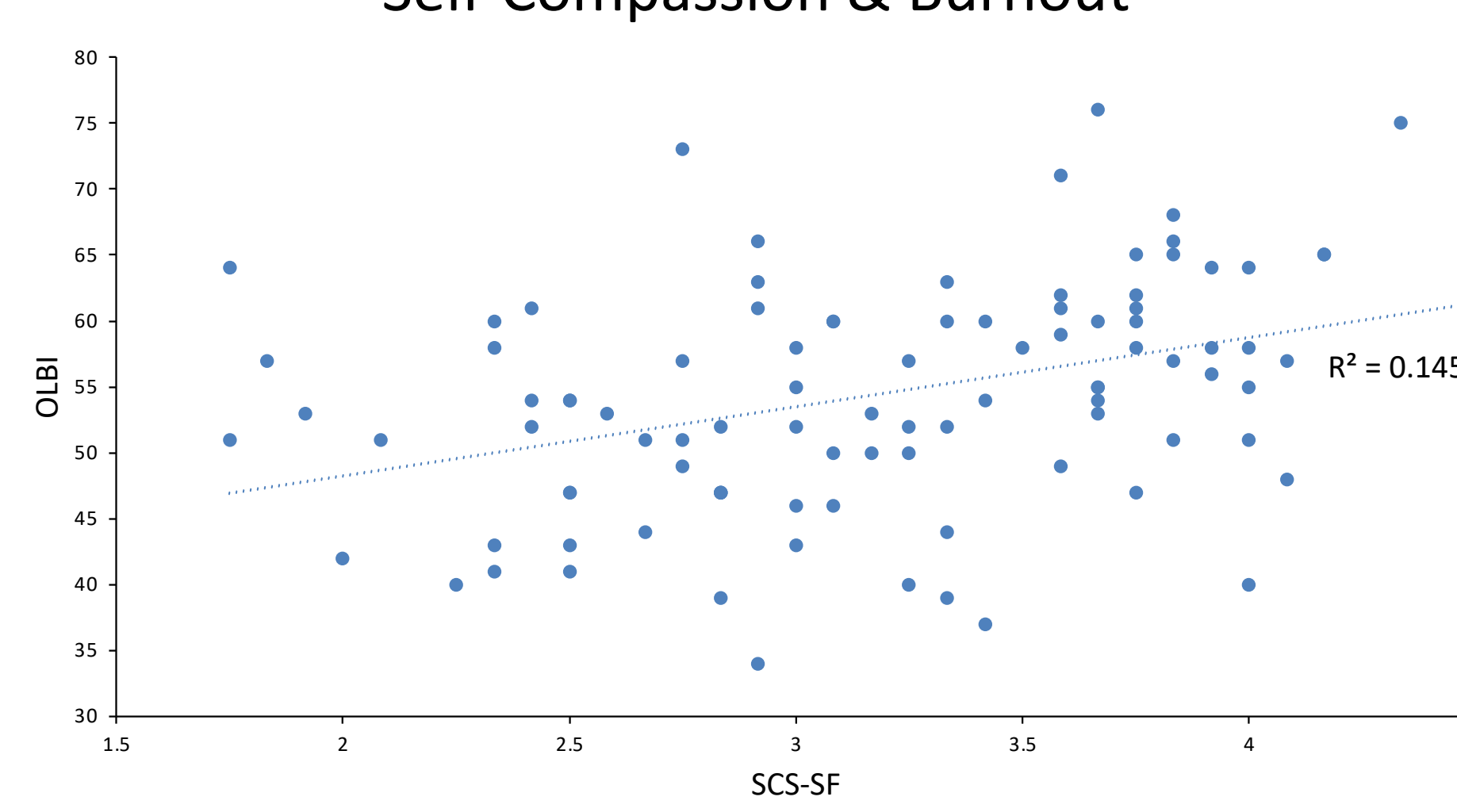


Figure 5 Self-Compassion & Psychological Inflexibility

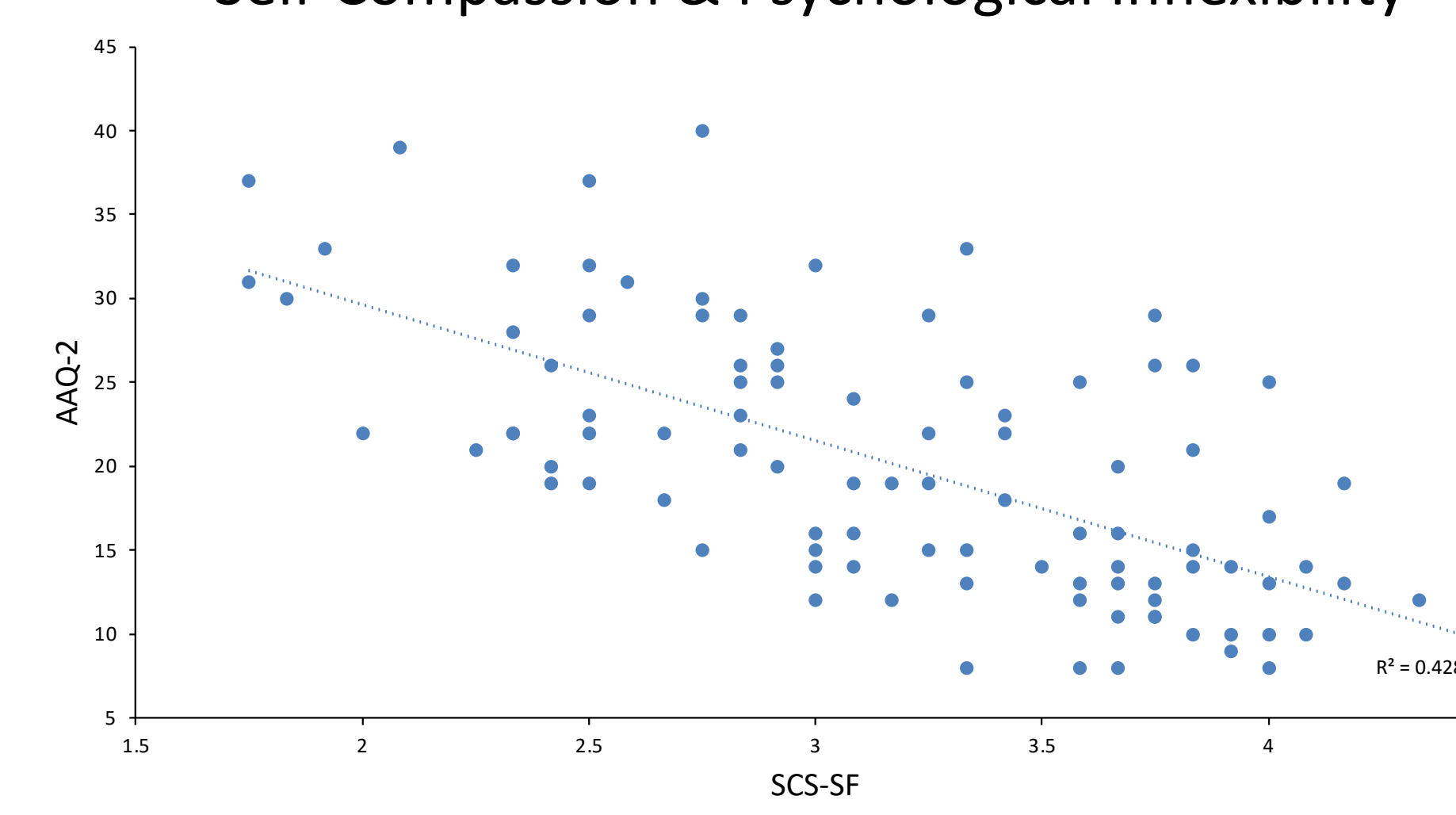
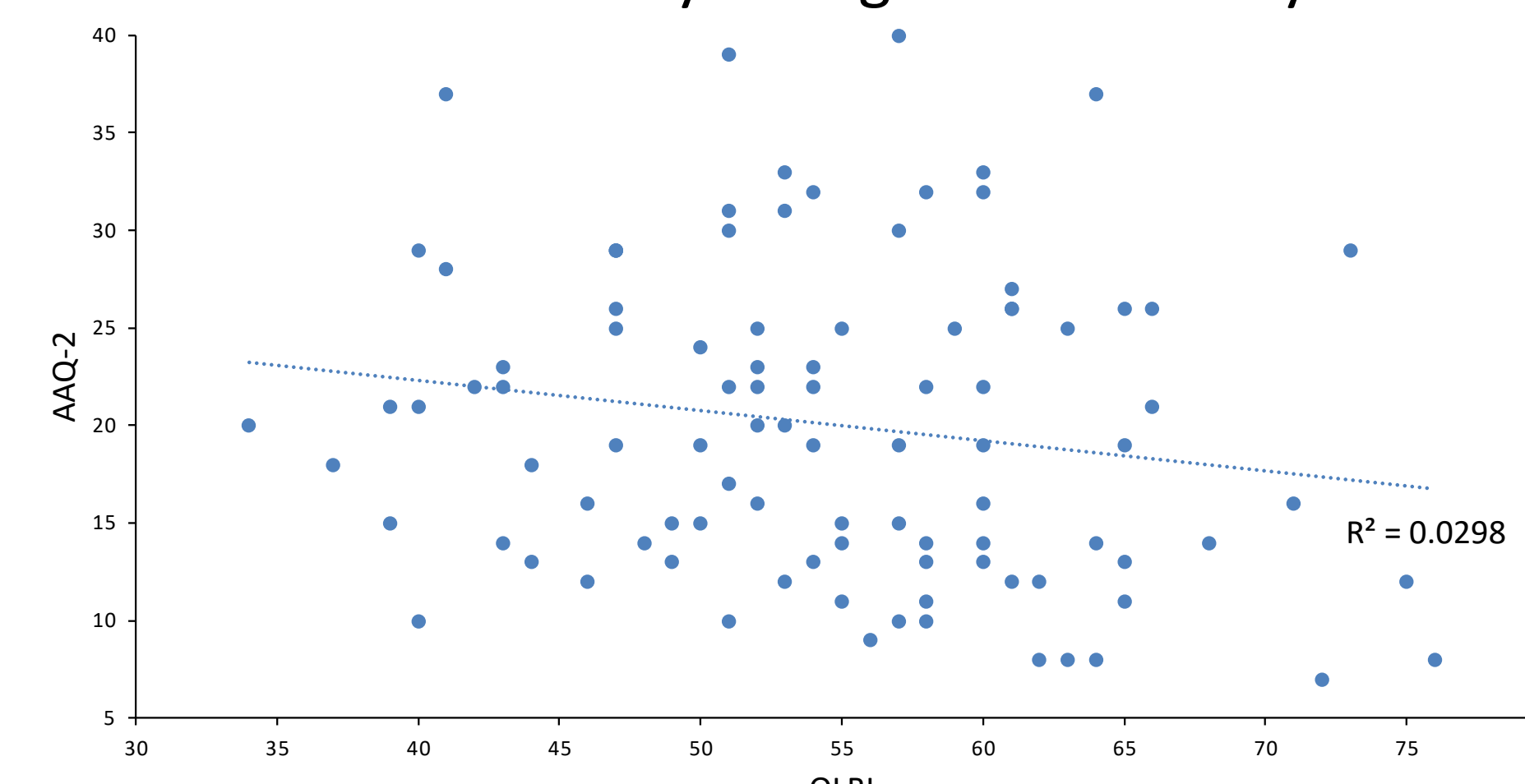


Figure 6 Burnout & Psychological Inflexibility



## Results

The self-reported results indicate a:

- Weak positive relationship between training and self-compassion ( $r=0.073$ )(Figure 1)
- Moderate positive relationship between training and burnout ( $r= 0.143$ )(Figure 2)
- Weak negative relationship between training and psychological inflexibility ( $r=-0.029$ )(Figure 3)
- Moderate positive relationship between self-compassion and burnout ( $r=0.382$ ) (Figure 4)
- Strong negative self-compassion and psychological inflexibility ( $r= -0.654$ ) (Figure 5)
- Small negative relationship between burnout and psychological inflexibility ( $r=-0.173$ ) (Figure 6)

Limitations:

- Survey open for short amount of time
- Error in question flow in SurveyMonkey

## Discussion

- Total training is generally associated with higher rates of self-compassion and burnout. It's not clear if those who are training more become burned out, or if burnout leads to seeking training.
- Psychological inflexibility is inversely correlated with training (less training) and self-compassion. Yet, there was only a weak correlation between burnout and inflexibility.
- These findings suggest a first step in which more specific training in compassion and psychological flexibility should be incorporated into graduate programs and the workplace, and their effects warrant further study.

## References

- Bond, F. W., Hayes, S. C., Baer, R. A., Carpenter, K. M., Guenole, N., Orcutt, H. K., Waltz, T., & Zettle, R. D. (2011). Preliminary psychometric properties of the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire—II: A revised measure of psychological inflexibility and experiential avoidance. *Behavior Therapy, 42*, 676–688.
- Demeroiti, E., Mostert, K., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Burnout and work engagement: A thorough investigation of the independency of both constructs. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 15*(3), 209–222.
- LeBlanc, L. A., Taylor, B. A., & Marchese, N. V. (2019). The training experiences of behavior analysts: Compassionate care and therapeutic relationships with caregivers. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 13*(2), 387–393.
- Raes, F., Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Van Gucht, D. (2011). Construction and factorial validation of a short form of the Self-Compassion Scale. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 18*, 250–255.

To obtain a copy of this poster and get access to the researchers contact information, scan the QR Code

