

Job Burnout among College Counselors and Its Related Factors

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Abstract: *Objective* To explore the status quo of job burnout among college counselors and analyze the main influencing factors. **Methods:** Five hundred and thirty-eight college counselors were recruited through the Internet from 7 universities in Guangdong Province. They were investigated with Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), General Self-efficacy Scale (GSES), Emotion Labor Scale (ELS), Social Support Rating Scale (SSRS), and a self-complied general personal information questionnaire. **Results:** (1) The total score of MBI-GS was (2.95 ± 0.85), The percentage of college counselors with mild, moderate and severe job burnout accounted for 34.4%, 26.8% and 6.3% respectively. (2) The results of multiple linear stepwise regression analysis showed that the following six factors were positively correlated to MBI-GS total score ($\beta = .209$ to $.684$, all $P < .05$), such as the school category, the number of students under the counselor's management, marital status, whether the counselor has an administrative post, and surface performance, and other 12 factors were negatively related to the total score of MBI-GS ($\beta = -.259 \sim -.803$, $P < .05$), like education level, whether counselors' majors are consistent with students', professional title, self-evaluation of career prospect, annual income, self-taught status, health status, GSES total score, deep performance, natural performance, subjective support and support utilization. **Conclusion:** It suggests that the job burnout of college counselors is on the high side, and the career prospects may be an important factor affecting the job burnout of college counselors.

Key words: College Counselors, Job Burnout, Influencing Factors, Multivariate Linear Stepwise Regression.

I. Introduction

Job burnout refers to a series of long-term psychological and behavioral reactions caused by various persistent pressures at work that individuals can not effectively cope with, mainly manifested as emotional exhaustion,

cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment [1]. Job burnout will have a negative impact on the physical and mental health and work performance of individuals, as well as the institutions where individuals are working [2].

Job burnout can occur in a variety of occupational groups. Helpers have a high incidence of job burnout. College counselors are not only responsible for the management of students' daily affairs, but also for the ideological and moral education of students, which has an important impact on students' academic and psychological development [3]. Therefore, college counselors are typical helpers. Previous studies have shown that counselors are prone to job burnout [4].

With regard to the influencing factors of job burnout of college counselors, there are few relevant researches in China. Most of the researches focus on theoretical analysis or the elaboration of the roles and interrelationships of the limited two or three factors, and the factors involved are all different [5-7], which fails to systematically reveal the influencing factors and mechanisms.

Based on the above analysis, this study intends to conduct a large sample and multi center empirical research to systematically explain the status quo and influencing factors of job burnout of college counselors from three aspects: demographic factors, teaching related factors and personal factors.

1. Objects and Methods

1.1 Tools

1.1.1 Sample size estimation

G* Power 3 is used to calculate the minimum sample size [8]. The number of variables is adopted to calculate the sample size. As there are 23 independent variables in this study, and previous studies have shown that the test effect value of job burnout of college counselors is medium, which means d value is 0.50 ~ 0.80 [4-7]. In this study, with the effect value $d = 0.70$, the statistical test force $1-\beta=0.80$, class I error probability $\alpha=0.05$, the minimum sample size needed by the survey is 376. The minimum sample size is determined to be 470 with 20% chance of follow-up loss.

1.1.2 Sampling

Through online recruitment, a total of 600 counselors were selected from 7 universities in Guangdong Province, including Shenzhen University, Guangdong Ocean University, South China University of Technology, Southern Medical University, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Guangzhou Institute of Physical Education, Guangzhou University of Finance and Economics. We actually collected 538 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 89.7%. Among them, 293 males and 245 females; 353 have bachelor's degrees, 144 have master's degrees and 39 have doctor's degrees. The age ranged from 24 to 43 years (mean 32.33 ± 4.27 years).

1.2 Tools

1.2.1 Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey, MBI-GS

It is compiled by Maslach (1997) [9], revised by Li Chaoping (2003) [10] into Chinese version. It consists of 16 questions, divided into three dimensions: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DPS) and low

sense of achievement (LSA). Among them, the dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization score positively, and the dimension of low sense of achievement scores negatively. The Likert 7-point scoring method is used to score from 0 to 6 points corresponding to “never” to “always”. The higher the score of a certain item or dimension, the more obvious the tendency of the item or dimension. In this study, The Cornbach’ α coefficient of the total scale is 0.868 and the Cornbach’ α coefficients of each dimensions is 0.735-0.787.

Li Yongxin et al. [11] obtained the critical value of MBI-GS according to the research data, ie emotional exhaustion score ≥ 25 , depersonalization score ≥ 11 , low sense of achievement score ≥ 16 , and divided job burnout into four levels, namely zero burnout (ie scores on three dimensions are all lower than the critical values), mild burnout (ie the score on one dimension is equal to or higher than the critical value), Moderate burnout (scores on two dimensions are equal to or higher than the critical values) and high burnout (ie scores on three dimensions are equal to or higher than the critical values).

1.2.2 General Self-Efficacy Scale, GSES

It is complied by Schwarzer (1997) [12], revised by Wang Caikang et al. (2000) [13] into Chinese version. GSES has 10 items, with single dimension structure. The Likert 4-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 4 points corresponding to “completely incorrect” to “completely correct”. The higher the score of the total scale, the higher the general self-efficacy. In this study, The Cornbach’ α coefficient of the total scale is 0.858.

1.2.3 Emotional Labor Scale, ELS

It is complied by Diefendorff (2005) [14], revised by Zhong Jian'an (2007) [15] into Chinese version. There are 14 items which are divided into 3 dimensions, including surface performance (SPF), deep performance (DPF) and natural performance (NPF), consisting 7, 4 and 3 items respectively. The Likert 5-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 5 points corresponding to “never” to “always”. The higher the score of a certain item or dimension, the more obvious the tendency of the item or dimension. In this study, the Cronbach'a coefficients of the three dimensions are 0.864, 0.830 and 0.815 respectively.

1.2.4 Social Support Rating Scale, SSRS

It is complied by Xiao Shui yuan (1987)[16] which aims to assess social support and its use. There are 10 items, which are divided into three dimensions: objective support (OS, ie actual support received), subjective support (SS, ie experienced or emotional support) and utilization of support (US, ie active use of various social support, including ways of talking, asking for help and participation in activities). The higher the score, the higher the level of social support. In general, if the total score is less than 20, it refers to less social support; 20 to 30 scores refers to general social support; More than 30 scores refers to satisfactory social support. In this study, the Cronbach’ α coefficient of the total scale is 0.907 and the Cronbach’ α coefficient of each dimension is between 0.830 and 0.879.

1.2.5 Self-compiled questionnaire for general information of college counselors

The CNKI, Wanfang database, VIP database, Baidu, Pubmed and other search engines are used to search the literatures about job burnout among college counselors (57 in Chinese and 2319 in foreign). Based on that, the basic content of the questionnaire is constructed, with a total of 23 items. Combined with the results of 3

rounds of collective discussions with 5 experts in the field of higher education, 5 representatives of college counselors and 10 representatives of college students, 3 items are deleted, and 2 items are added. The final questionnaire for related factors of college counselors' job burnout consists of 22 items, including gender, age, origin, marital status, education, major, years as a counselors, professional title, administrative post, major matching (whether your major are the same as those of the students), the grade you manage, the number of students under your management, school category, whether you have any children, health status, self-taught status, career prospect, peer evaluation, annual income, rationality of evaluation system, frequency of physical exercise, and duration of each physical exercise.

1.3 Collection and arrangement of data

Before the investigation, the researchers who participated in the survey are trained uniformly, and the investigation process and evaluation standard are unified. The consistency test ($\kappa = 0.81 \sim 0.90$) met the test requirements. By means of online survey, the investigators issue a questionnaire, which will be filled in by the selected college counselors themselves. The questionnaires with scores of more than 50% of the items missing are eliminated. The missing values of the valid questionnaires are estimated and filled with the average. Two researchers independently input the same data using Epidata3.0 software and conduct a unified logic check to ensure the accuracy of the data.

1.4 Data processing

Data is exported from epidata3.0 to SPSS 20.0 for statistical analysis. The main statistical methods include descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, χ^2 test, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis.

II. Results

2.1 The status quo of job burnout of college counselors

According to the evaluation criteria proposed by Li Yongxin [11], the incidence of job burnout in this group is 67.5% (363/583). There are 185 counselors have mild job burnout symptoms, with a detection rate of 34.4%; 144 with moderate job burnout, with a detection rate of 26.8%; 34 with high job burnout, with a detection rate of 6.3%.

2.2 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables

It can be seen from Table 1 that the surface performance, the total scores of GSES and MBI-GS are correlated in twos ($r = -.104, .247, -.344$, all $P < 0.01$); The deep performance, the total scores of GSES and MBI-GS are correlated in twos ($r = .285, -.235, -.344$, all $P < 0.01$); The natural performance, the total scores of GSES and MBI-GS are correlated in twos ($r = .316, -.276, -.344$, all $P < 0.01$).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Variables

Dimension	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.SPF	4.45	.83												

2. DPF	4.27	.94	-.013.											
3. NOF	3.81	.85	-.027	.153**										
4. GSES total score	2.42	.60	.104*	.285**	.316**									
5. EE	3.22	.96	.271**	-.331**	-.294**	-.267**								
6. DP	2.14	.98	.200**	-.130**	-.178**	-.389**	.631**							
7. LSA	3.06	.87	.113**	-.264**	-.341**	-.756**	.519**	.134**						
8. MBI-GS	2.95	.85	.247**	-.235**	-.276**	-.344**	.884**	.870**	.930**					
9. OS	7.96	2.19	-.013	-.087*	-.118**	.272**	-.211**	-.181**	-.193**	-.195**				
10. SS	17.19	3.45	-.007	-.125**	-.157**	.404**	-.311**	-.223**	-.264**	-.268**	.554**			
12. US	9.21	2.78	-.004	-.242**	-.268**	.296**	-.260**	-.184**	-.178**	-.225**	.548**	.621**		
13. SSRS	34.36	6.92	-.011	-.173**	-.226**	.399**	-.249**	-.196**	-.217**	-.222**	.514**	.577**	.611**	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (the same below)

2.3 A Single Factor Analysis of Demographic Factors of Job Burnout among College Counselors

One-way ANOVA showed that the following 19 items such as gender ($t=7.366$, $P < .001$), major ($df=6$, $F=18.117$, $P < .001$), major matching ($t=3.771$, $P < .001$), administrative post ($t=-4.016$, $P < .001$), grade under your management ($df=4$, $F=4.945$, $P < .001$), category of working school ($df=5$, $F=-5.487$, $P=.011$), education level ($df=2$, $F=-31.152$, $P < .001$) Marital status ($df=3$, $F=-15.016$, $P < .001$), whether you have any children ($t=-3.337$, $P < .001$), professional title ($df=2$, $F=-4.224$, $P < .001$), self-taught status ($df=3$, $F=17.016$, $P < .001$), career prospects ($df=3$, $F=7.889$, $P < .001$), peer evaluation ($df=3$, $F=2.805$, $P=.039$), rationality of evaluation system ($df=4$, $F=9.255$, $P < .001$), health status ($df=3$, $F=53.001$, $P < .001$) frequency of physical exercise ($df=4$, $F=6.586$, $P < .001$), duration of each physical exercise ($df=3$, $F=5.443$, $P < .001$), annual income ($df=3$, $F=41.389$, $P < .001$), the number of students under your management ($r=.345$, $P < .001$) have statistically significant effects on the total score of MBI-GS; The other three items of origin ($df=4$, $F=1.235$, $P=.253$), age ($df=3$, $F=1.872$, $P=.138$), and years as a counselor ($df=4$, $F=1.722$, $P=.177$) had no statistically significant impact on the total score of MBI-GS.

2.4 regression analysis

2.4.1 Variable assignment

First, values are assigned to the possible situations (alternative answers) of 22 categorical variables (including demographic variables and psychosocial variables) that have significant influence on MBI-GS total score in one-way ANOVA, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Variable Assignment

Item	Options and assignments
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1. Gender	0=Male, 1=Female
2. Major	0=Psychology, 1= Pedagogy, 2= Management, 3= Other liberal arts majors, 4=Science, 5=Engineering course, 6=Medicine, 7=Agronomy
3. major matching	0=No, 1=Yes
4. Grade you manage	0=Freshman, 1= Sophomore, 2=Junior, 3=Senior, 4=Fifth-year
5. Category of working school	0=Private undergraduate school, 1=Second batch of university, 2= Local first batch of university, 3= Provincial key university, 4= National famous university, 5="211" or "985" engineering school
6. Marital status	0=Unmarried, 1=Widowed, 2=Divorced, 3= Married
7. Education level	0=Bachelor, 1=Master, 2=Doctor
8. Title	0=Primary, 1=Intermediate, 2=Vice senior or above
9. Have you any administrative post?	0=None, 1=Yes
10. Whether you have any children	0=No, 1=Yes
11. Self-taught status	0=None, 1=Occasionally, 2=Often, 3=Almost every day
12. Career prospect	0=Very bad, 1=Not very good, 2=Average, 3=Very good
13. Peer rating	0=Basically competent, 1=Competent, 2=Backbone, 3=Expert counselor
14. Rationality of evaluation system	0=Very unreasonable, 1=Unreasonable, 2=Unknown, 3=Somewhat reasonable, 4=Basically reasonable
15. Annual income	0=Below 40000 yuan, 1=40000 to 50000 yuan, 2=50000 to 60000 yuan, 3=60000 to 70000 yuan, 4=70000 to 80000 yuan, 5=above 80000 yuan
16. Health status	0=Very poor, 1=Not very good, 2=Average, 3=Very good
17. Frequency of exercise	0=Never, 1=Once a week, 2=Twice a week, 3=Three times a week, 4=Every day
18. How long do you exercise each time?	0=Less than 30 minutes, 1=30 to 60 minutes, 2=60 to 120 minutes, 3=More than 120 minutes
19. The number of students under your management	0=less than 100, 1=100-199, 2=200-399, 3=400 or more

2.4.2 multiple stepwise linear regression analysis on influencing factors of MBI-GS total score

Taking the total score of MBI-GS as the dependent variable and 19 categorical variables, the total score of GSES, the scores of 3 dimensions of ELS and SSRS as independent variables, the multiple stepwise linear

regression analysis is carried out within 95% confidence interval. From Table 3, it can be seen that the total score of MBI-GS is positively correlated with gender, category of working school, the number of students under your management, marital status, whether you have any administrative post, surface performance ($\beta=.209$ to $.684$, all $P<.05$), education level, major matching, title, career prospect, annual income, self-taught status, health status, GSES total score, deep performance, natural performance, subjective support and utilization of support are negatively related to MBI-GS total score ($\beta=-.259$ to $-.803$, all $P<.05$).

Table 3 Multivariate linear stepwise regression analysis of main influencing factors of MBI-GS total score

Dependent variable	Independent variable	B	SE	β	<i>t</i> value	<i>P</i> value	R^2	R_{adj}^2
MBI-GS total score	Gender	.418	.058	.241	6.839	<.001	.525	.520
	Number of students	.650	.098	.421	4.535	<.001		
	Post	.379	.057	.231	5.811	<.001		
	School category	.479	.069	.337	2.501	.019		
	Marital status	.326	.075	.209	9.363	<.001		
	Surface performance	.814	.134	.684	6.195	<.001		
	Education level	-.548	.074	-.349	-8.041	<.001		
	Major matching	-.368	.065	-.259	-4.196	<.001		
	Title	-.366	.069	-.571	-7.643	<.001		
	Career prospect	-.697	.094	-.499	-5.536	<.001		
	Annual income	-.836	.108	-.771	-6.609	<.001		
	Self-taught status	-.454	.088	-.278	-4.439	<.001		
	Health status	-.735	.148	-.643	-5.701	<.001		
	GSES total score	-.892	.169	-.803	-4.899	<.001		
	Deep performance	-.670	.102	-.506	-3.837	<.001		
	Natural performance	-.832	.144	-.727	-6.615	<.001		
	Subjective support	-.587	.929	-.468	-9.181	<.001		
Utilization of support	-.495	.830	-.358	-2.206	.036			

III. Discussion

The incidence of job burnout in this group is 67.5% (363/583), and the detection rates of mild, moderate and serious burnout are 34.4%, 26.8% and 6.3%, respectively; The general self-efficacy is at a low level, and the three strategies of emotional labor are at a high level. It is consistent with previous research results [4-7], suggesting that college counselors generally have obvious job burnout, high emotional labor and low general

self-efficacy.

The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that six factors, including gender, the category of working college, the number of students under your management, marital status, whether you have any administrative post, and surface performance, are positively related to the total score of MBI-GS. The following 12 factors such as the education level, the matching of majors, professional title, self-evaluation of career prospect, annual income, self-taught status, health status, GSES total score, deep performance, natural performance, subjective support and support utilization are negatively related to the total score of MBI-GS.

We find that gender is significantly related to job burnout of college counselors, and women have significantly higher job burnout than men, consistent with Zhao Xiaobin's [5] research results. In addition, studies on different occupational groups have also found similar situations [17-18], suggesting that gender has an important impact on job burnout, which may be due to the different anti-frustration and emotion regulation ability of men and women [19].

The number of students under counselors' management, whether they have any administrative post, and the category of working colleges are significantly positively related to the job burnout of college counselors. It is consistent with the results of previous studies [4, 17, 20-21], indicating how workload and work pressure can cause and aggravate job burnout of counselors. Generally speaking, the more students they manage, the higher the level of working colleges, and those who hold administrative posts, the heavier the workload and work pressure, and they are more likely to have job burnout.

Marriage status is a significant predictor of job burnout of college counselors, which is consistent with the results of previous research [22-24]. It is suggested that role stress and role conflict are important factors affecting job burnout for various occupational groups. Generally speaking, the family roles that the unmarried, widowed, divorced and married groups need to undertake are gradually increasing, the role tasks are aggravated in turn, the role conflict is aggravated one by one, and the role pressure is increased in turn, leading to the job burnout being aggravated in turn.

The GSES total score, education level, major matching, professional title and self-taught status negatively predict the job burnout of college counselors, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [17-18, 20-21, 25, 26]. It is suggested that occupational competence is helpful to prevent and reduce job burnout. The total score of GSES reflects the self-confidence of individuals in general (most) activities, which can also be said to be subjective professional competence; The education level, professional matching, professional title and self-taught status are the objective and necessary elements of professional competence: the higher the education level, the consistency between major and the profession, the higher the professional title, and the counselors who focus on self-taught to improve professional skills are usually more able to systematically and skillfully master the knowledge and skills required for their own work, so their work will be more professional, more effective, and less work pressure, the degree of job burnout is less.

Annual income and self-evaluation of career prospect negatively predict job burnout of college counselors, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [6-7,18]. It is suggested that the sense of occupational

gain is helpful to prevent and reduce job burnout. Income is the basic condition of material life. The higher the income, the more material gain; The better the career prospect, the better the career self-concept, the more they tend to affirm the social value of the career and their social status, the stronger their sense of professionalism and subjective well-being [27].

Health status negatively predicts job burnout of college counselors, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [4,7]. It suggests that physiological function plays an important role in career development. Poor health is easy to cause individual discomfort and loss (including physiological and social function loss), reduce the evaluation of their own abilities and value of activities (including various professional and amateur activities), hinder the input of activities, and thus cause job burnout.

Surface performance positively predicts job burnout, while deep performance and natural performance negatively predict job burnout, consistent with the results of previous studies [4,7]. Because surface performance needs to suppress or even completely change one's true feelings to make them consistent with the requirements of the organization or the situation, it is easy to lead to individual emotional imbalance, causing fatigue, tension, emotional disorders, low job satisfaction, and then job burnout. Deep expression and natural expression are internalizing the organization's emotional expression rules into one's own values, and the emotion expressed is consistent with one's own true feelings, so it can promote the generation of their own positive emotions, relieve work pressure, reduce and avoid job burnout [28].

Subjective support and support utilization negatively predict job burnout, which is consistent with the results of previous research [29-30] Social support is based on full interpersonal understanding and harmonious interpersonal relationships. It can not only provide the parties with material assistance and emotional comfort, but also provide feasible coping methods to help them reasonably solve problems, successfully overcome difficulties, reduce physical and mental stress levels, maintain mental health, and prevent burnout.

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