

# A study on the influence of college counselors' job burnout on students' work

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**Abstract:** College counselors are the backbone of strengthening ideological and political education of college students and serving their growth, but they also face difficulties and problems such as job burnout leading to students' inability to work. Job burnout will reduce the cognitive ability, intrinsic motivation and work performance of counselors, and will also have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of students. Based on the connotation of counselors' emotional labor and students' work, this paper analyzes the causes of counselors' job burnout and the influence of job burnout on students' work. Finally, suggestions are put forward from individual level and organizational level.

**Keywords:** college counselors, job burnout, students' work

## 1. Introduction

A tutor is the backbone force in carrying out the ideological and political education of college students, which is closely related to the effectiveness of the universities in fulfilling their fundamental mission of cultivating people with integrity, wisdom, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. They shoulder the glorious mission of cultivating socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, it was stated that "the counselor team must be built and maintained at a high quality and standard, ensuring a continuous supply of qualified personnel." [1] Different from ordinary college teachers and administrators, college counselors are closer to students and a key link in the work pattern of "three-whole education", with unique professional ethics, ability standards and work fields. With the development of The Times, counselors take on heavy routine work and professional pressure, and also play the dual roles of teachers and administrators. "Fireman", "senior nanny" and "grid worker" are the unique labels affixed to counselors, which makes the work of college counselors full of busy, tired and conflicted feelings. There are widespread problems such as emotional overload and psychological fatigue, which affect the physical and mental state and work behavior of the team to a certain extent, resulting in a sense of job burnout [2]. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the research on the influence of college counselors' burnout on students' work, so as to improve the working state and education efficiency of college counselors more accurately, improve the policy system and institutional mechanism of counselor team construction more pragmatical, and promote the high-quality development of college students' moral team.

## 2. The causes of job burnout of college counselors

In 1974, American clinical psychologist Feidenberg put forward the term burnout in the journal of Occupational Psychology to describe a state of physical and mental exhaustion caused by the intensity and difficulty of work in the service industry. American social psychologists Maslach and Jackson further carried out research and proposed a widely recognized three-dimensional model of job burnout, defining job burnout as a comprehensive symptom accompanied by individual emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment in the service field [3].

Counselors' job burnout refers to a phenomenon of high mental fatigue and psychological tension caused by frequent overwork in work and the lack of timely and effective solutions to various problems and conflicts in the process of getting along with students and other people, resulting in counselors working in the "responsible person" situation for a long time. In thought, emotion, cognition, behavior and other aspects of the performance.

### ***2.1 Deviation between ideal and reality, resulting in loss of interest***

Counselors are the backbone of ideological and political education of college students, which is related to the implementation of the fundamental task of moral cultivation and human beings, and shoulder the glorious mission of training the socialist builders and successors of all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, American and labor. The counselor's main job responsibilities include ideological and theoretical education and value guidance, party and group construction and class construction, study style construction, students' daily affairs management, mental health education and consultation work, network ideological and political education, campus crisis response, career planning and employment and entrepreneurship guidance, theory and practice research, and undertake heavy management tasks. Before entering the ivory tower of the university, many people will think that the counselor position, that is, the college worker, is a "decent" job, but ignore its inner reality. In the case of work overload, time limit, psychological burden, in the contrast between the ideal and the reality, often lead to emotional failure, the "cynical" and "self-denial" mentality. When people's limited energy and overloaded work produce conflicts and contradictions, it often brings anxiety and tension, causing work enthusiasm and interest to fade, and finally inducing psychological fatigue and boredom[4].

### ***2.2 The gap between requirements and growth, resulting in insufficient capacity***

Counselors are the backbone of ideological and political education for college students, which requires counselors to have the basic theory of Marxism, pedagogy, management, political science, sociology and other subject knowledge. Counselors are known as students' life mentors and intimate friends, which is also put forward higher requirements for counselors, counselors need to deepen specialization and professionalism, so as to better face the more prominent personality of the youth group. However, the professional knowledge structure of most counselors is not relevant to them, the age level of counselors is too young, lack of work experience, simple work content mode, and slow improvement of work ability, which leads to their inability to deal with students' problems and lead students' thoughts.

### ***2.3 The contrast between investment and return, resulting in personal value is difficult to cash***

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the need for self-realization is that people pursue to realize their ability or potential and make it perfect. In the daily work of counselors, they need to deal with various types of students as well as teachers, teaching assistants, leaders, etc. In the face of endless routine management, student safety responsibility, superior inspection and other internal and external work, they will inevitably invest a lot of energy and time, but often hard work can not be understood by students and recognized by leaders. Easy to produce a low sense of accomplishment, the occupation of their own lost passion and vision. In addition, due to the implicit characteristics of the effectiveness of student management, students' work is difficult and intangible, it is difficult to see the actual harvest, and it is not easy to count the workload. In other people's eyes, counselors are only the people who solve messy things, and the work does not have technical content, resulting in low sense of achievement of counselors, low sense of work achievement, and not conducive to the building of self-esteem and confidence.

## **3. The influence of college counselors' job burnout on students' work**

### ***3.1 From "personalized" education to "infusion" education***

Counselors usually carry out ideological and political education in the form of class meetings and grade conferences, and design the content of mental health, career planning, class and league construction. In the course of the actual work of the counselors, their education of students is accompanied by many problems and challenges. According to the Regulations on the construction of counselors in colleges and universities, colleges and universities should set up full-time counselors according to the teacher-student ratio of no less than 1:200, but in fact, due to the rapid expansion of higher education, the ratio of counselors to students in some colleges and universities is higher than this ratio standard. In the face of students from different life backgrounds, different places of origin and different personality characteristics, counselors have limited energy, and it is difficult to conduct personalized education according to the characteristics of each student. They usually focus on the key points and focus on class cadres and individual students with problems, while most of the middle

students have little emotional investment, lack of communication and understanding. The affinity is obviously insufficient, and it can only complete the "shaping" and "training" of students in a scripted way, and students can not get the real "personalized" education.

### ***3.2 From "fine" management to "mass" management***

Although counselors are both teachers and managers, their work scope and responsibilities are significantly different from those of professional teachers who undertake teaching tasks and those of functional departments who undertake administrative management. Counselors guarantee students' smooth study and life on campus by assisting students' daily life and restricting their daily behaviors. Their management contents include dormitory civilization, study style construction, evaluation, reward and punishment, poverty assistance and other aspects. As a manager, counselors need to use administrative means such as policies and rules to restrict students' behavior. As a service provider for students' study and life in school, counselors need to treat students as "customers", serve students' study and life well, and take the satisfaction of "customers" as an important standard to measure the quality of work. When the various identities of college counselors are superimposed together, the contradictions between different "identity norms" will arise, and the conflicts between various roles will be magnified invisibly, resulting in the work being unable to be "refined" to every student, and finally adopting a "one-size-fits-all" and "mass" working method.

### ***3.3 From "sincere" to "light desertification" exchanges***

As a special interpersonal relationship, the teacher-student relationship must be promoted jointly by both parties to achieve mutual benefit and common progress. As a counselor, whether in classroom teaching or daily work, the educator should be the most closely connected with students, but it is difficult to establish a close relationship between teachers and students in the actual process of getting along. "Teacher-orientation" means that students have a certain degree of attachment to teachers in the process of learning, living and growing up in school[5]. From the individual perspective of teachers and students, in recent years, the team of counselors tends to be younger, due to lack of work experience, weak theoretical foundation, lack of patience and love, counselors do not know enough about the actual needs and inner feelings of students. At the same time, as the post-90s and post-00s college students are mostly the only child, they tend to be self-centered and pay more attention to their independence of consciousness in terms of cognition and will. They respect themselves and their individuality, ignore the existence of counselors, and lack respect and recognition for counselors[6]. The occupational requirements and work characteristics of counselors determine that they are not only mental and physical labor, but also high-intensity emotional workers. In their work, they have frequent contact with students and parents, and need to regularly express the emotions required by the organization, which may sometimes be inconsistent with their inner feelings, and need to invest a lot of emotional labor in interpersonal interaction.

## **4. The improvement path of college counselors' job burnout of middle school students**

### ***4.1 Face the inner world and stimulate career interest***

Nowadays, young people's pursuit of career interests and their own hobbies is becoming more and more intense, and the interest-oriented career values have been widely recognized by young people. According to the self-determination theory, an individual's internal motivation will drive him to produce self-determined behaviors that meet his expectations. Young people's career interests reflect the individual's psychological expectations and value demands in the field of career. When the expected results are satisfied, the perceived dissatisfaction and external pressure level will be relieved. Existing studies have confirmed that career interests have a significant positive predictive effect on job satisfaction. When their own interests are matched with the work environment, they will obtain higher job satisfaction and stability, while employees with mismatched interests will feel dissatisfied and stressed at work.[7] Through self-assessment, career counseling or participation in relevant training, counselors can more clearly recognize their natural interests and advantages in student work areas, such as mental health education, career planning guidance, campus cultural activity planning, etc. Therefore, apply to engage in the work field of their interest, give full play to personal advantages, achieve professional work, in order to achieve a highly matched state.

#### ***4.2 Implement psychological intervention to relieve psychological pressure***

Although the degree of social support for counselors is not high, the school society does not attach much importance to counselors, the work is complicated and stressful, and students' affairs are complicated and difficult to do, as college counselors, they must first face up to these pressures and challenges, and at the same time accept the fact from the outside world and their own pressures from the heart. Although the external environment is difficult to change, counselors can start from improving themselves, such as taking more physical exercise, cultivating elegant hobbies, and gradually cultivating a positive and optimistic attitude; Learn to release their negative emotions and seek psychological help if necessary. By actively adjusting themselves, college counselors can relieve the tense rhythm, adjust their body and mind, improve personality quality, create a harmonious working atmosphere, and achieve a healthy lifestyle. Secondly, it is also necessary for the school to provide targeted psychological maintenance for the counselors according to the actual situation of the counselors, implement the counselors' "psychological growth" project, and implement the system guarantee. For example, through experts to carry out popular mental health and development education routine, popularize mental health knowledge, promote the cultivation of positive psychological quality; Through experts to carry out psychological supervision for counselors or provide individual psychological counseling to normalize, to solve counselors psychological confusion, promote their psychological growth.

#### ***4.3 Improve the incentive mechanism to enhance career happiness***

College counselors can only complete the tasks assigned by the organization by spending a certain amount of time and energy, and only when they strive to achieve work performance and make certain contributions to the organization, the organization will reward them. Therefore, the measurement of performance has become the key for counselors to obtain organizational rewards for their hard work. Generally speaking, colleges and universities will use performance appraisal to measure the performance of counselors' duties as "life mentors" and "intimate friends" from the perspective of the dual identities of teachers and administrators. However, judging from the results of performance appraisal in most colleges and universities, the performance appraisal rating is generally divided into "excellent", "qualified" and "unqualified" three kinds, few are rated as "excellent", "unqualified" almost no, most people are "qualified". In this way, the performance appraisal results can not accurately reflect the difference between the work performance of counselors, only a few people reward the good and punish the bad, reward the hard work and punish the lazy, and most counselors still eat the "egalitarian big pot rice". Organizational reward, which consists of survival reward, emotion reward and growth reward, will become the primary factor affecting the degree of work effort of college counselors. Among them, survival reward is the reward provided by the organization to meet the basic survival and safety needs of counselors, including stable increase of wages, diverse benefits and safe working environment. As Herzberg's two-factor theory tells us, these basic material incentives are necessary, and the absence of them leads to dissatisfaction. Especially for young counselors who just graduated, their career concept is changeable, life pressure is greater, more loyal to their own lifestyle rather than work, if the salary income can not meet the basic life, work and life boundaries are blurred, then they will easily feel dissatisfied, or even choose to quit. Emotional reward mainly focuses on the emotions and feelings of college counselors to meet their needs for love, belonging, recognition and respect. From the micro level, colleges and universities should fully consider the professional characteristics of counselors, such as heavy workload, low work presentation and slow work effectiveness test, give them more care and support in daily work, give them timely recognition and reward after their achievements, and give them necessary comfort and understanding when they make mistakes in work. These humanistic care will enhance college counselors' confidence in work and life[8].

### **5. Conclusion**

College counselors are the initiators and guides of college students' management and education, and their words and deeds have a subtle influence on college students' thoughts. The level of job burnout often directly affects the attitude and effect of work, and then affects the level of work performance. All colleges and universities should increase the organizational support and care for counselors, give policy preferences in terms of professional title promotion and salary treatment, clarify the boundary of work responsibilities, reduce work pressure, enhance the level of professional construction and professional sense of belonging of the team, and then weaken the job burnout of counselors and ensure the

ideological and political education effect of the school.

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