The Relationship Between Bob Burnout and Emotional Labor among College Counselors: Mediating Effect of General Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study is to explore the characteristics of job burnout, general self-efficacy and emotional labor in college counselors, and analyze the relationship among the 3 variables. Totally 538 college counselors were recruited through Internet from 7 universities in Guangdong Province. They were investigated with Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), Emotional Labor Scale (ELS) and General Self - Efficacy Scale (GSES). The survey results indicate the following four points. First, the scores of MBI-GS, GSES, surface performance, deep performance and natural performance were (2.95±0.85), (2.42±.60), (4.45±.83), (4.27±.94) and (3.81±.85), respectively. Second, counselors with mild, moderate and severe job burnout accounted for 34.4%, 26.8% and 6.3%, respectively. Third, there was a pairwise correlation among the total score of surface performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r = - .104, .247, -.344, all $P < 0.01$), a pairwise correlation among the total score of deep performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r = .285, -. 235, -. 344, all $P < 0.01$), as well as a pairwise correlation among the total score of natural performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r = .316, -. 276, -. 344, all $P < 0.01$). Last, the score Of GSES played a partly mediating effect in the relationship between surface performance and MBI-GS, a partly mediating effect in the relationship between deep performance and MBI-GS, as well as a partly mediating effect in the relationship between natural performance and MBI-GS, with the mediation effect accounting for 14.5%, 41.7% and 39.4% of the total effect, respectively. It is therefore suggested that emotional labor not only has a direct role on the job burnout in college counselors, but also indirectly affects it through general self-efficacy.
Keywords: College Counselors; Job Burnout; General Self-Efficacy; Emotional Labor; Mediating Effect

1. INTRODUCTION

Job burnout refers to a long-term response caused by an individual's inability to effectively deal with various continuous pressures at work, which is generally considered to include emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment [1]. Job burnout has a negative impact on individuals' physical and mental health and job performance, as well as the development of organization that individuals belong to [2].

Job burnout can occur in a variety of occupational groups, and practitioners in the helping industry are the high incidence groups. College counselors are not only responsible for the management of students' daily affairs, but also bear the major responsibilities of shaping students' personality and morality, affecting students' academic life, career and psychosocial development [3]. It can be said that college counselors are typical helpers. Previous studies show that counselors are more prone to job burnout than full-time teaching and research personnel in colleges or universities [4], but there are few empirical studies on job burnout of college counselors.

Self-efficacy [5] refers to people's expectation of whether they have the ability to complete a certain task in specific situation, which reflects the subjective evaluation of the extent to which individuals can control the environment and their own behavior. After mastering the corresponding knowledge and skills, self-efficacy becomes the determinant of behavior. It affects people's choice and persistence of activities, and attitude towards difficulties. In the face of difficulties, those with low self-efficacy think more about their own shortcomings, so they bear greater pressure, avoid difficulties and even cancel actions. While those with high self-efficacy tend to choose challenging tasks, establish higher goals, stimulate stronger motivation and will, recover quickly from setbacks, deal with difficulties rationally and achieve goals.

Generally speaking, self-efficacy is a domain specific concept, because individuals may have high self-confidence in one domain, but may not be so in other domains. However, scholars also find a universal sense of self-efficacy, that is, general self-efficacy, which is the

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overall self-confidence that individuals need to face new things or deal with environmental challenges.

To a certain extent, general self-efficacy reflects the habitual self-confidence in coping with new environments or difficulties, and has a significant correlation with specific self-efficacy in various fields, which is convenient for group comparison [4].

Diefendorff et al. (2003) [6] defined emotional labor as a dynamic processing process in which individuals monitor and adjust emotional expression to conform to the expression rules. Diefendorff's cybernetic model takes cybernetic principles as the framework of occurrence mechanism of emotional labor. The core concept of this theory is feedback loop, which includes four main steps (components): input, standard, comparator and output. Input is to input external information into the processing system; Standards represent the goal someone wants to achieve; Comparator compares input with standard. If they are consistent, output (reaction) will be made according to the current state. If they are inconsistent, they will be adjust to make output consistent with standard. Based on this process, Diefendorff puts forward three strategies of emotional labor: surface, deep and natural performance. Because emotional labor needs to suppress or even completely change one's own real emotions to make them consistent with the requirements (of organization or situation), it is easy to make individuals emotional imbalance, and result in fatigue, tension, low satisfaction, and even burnout [7].

Emotional labor, self-efficacy and job burnout are predictors of job performance. Emotional labor is an individual's self-evaluation of the way and effect of emotional management at work, which result is largely affected by self-confidence (self-efficacy); Emotional exhaustion, the core component of job burnout, refers to the phenomenon that someone is unable to effectively manage his own emotions at work, that is, the lack of self-efficacy of emotion management at work; Therefore, there is a logical connection between the three in connotation [8].

On the other hand, empirical studies find that there is a pairwise correlation among emotional labor, general self-efficacy and job burnout [9-13]. Job burnout is a series of explicit behavioral and emotional responses, belonging to outcome variables; Emotional labor is individuals' emotional control and management mode, belonging to deep psychological qualities (distal antecedent variables). Self-efficacy is a psychological quality to overcome difficulties manifested in the choice and reaction of enviroment, belonging to surface psychological qualities (proximal antecedent variables). So, emotional labor should be mediated by general self-efficacy. we can assume general self-efficacy plays an intermediary role between emotional labor and job burnout.

2. OBJECTS AND TOOLS

2.1. Objects

Through online recruitment, 600 counselors were selected from 7 universities including Shenzhen University, Guangdong Ocean University, South China University of Technology, Southern Medical University, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Guangzhou Institute of Physical Education and Guangzhou University of Finance and Economics. 538 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective rate of 89.7%. The age was 24 to 43 years old, with an average of (32.33 ±4.27) years old. There were 293 males and 245 females; 353 had a bachelor's degree, 146 had a master's degree and 39 had a doctoral degree.

2.2. Tools

2.2.1. Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey, MBI-GS

It is compiled by Maslach (1997) [2], and revised into Chinese version by Li Chaoping (2003) [14]. There are 16 questions, which are divided into three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment. Likert 7-point scoring method is used to score from 0 to 6 points corresponding to "never" to "very frequent". The higher the total score, the higher the degree of job burnout. In this study, *Cronbach's a* coefficient of the total scale is 0.894, and *Cronbach's a* coefficient of three dimensions are 0.843, 0.825 and 0.850, respectively.

Li Yongxin et al. [15] put forward the critical value of MBI-GS (exhaustion score $\geqslant 25$, cynicism score $\geqslant 11$, reduced personal accomplishment score $\geqslant 16$) and divided job burnout into four levels, namely zero burnout (scores on three dimensions of MBI-GS are all lower than the critical values), mild burnout (the score on one dimension is equal to or higher than critical value), moderate burnout (scores on two dimensions are equal to or higher than critical values), and high burnout (scores on three dimensions are equal to or higher than critical values).

2.2.2. General Self-Efficacy Scale, GSES

Compiled by Schwarzer (1997) [16] and revised into Chinese version by Wang Caikang et al. (2000) [17]. GSES is a one-dimensional with 10 items. Likert 4-point scoring method is ued to score from 1 to 4 points corresponding to "completely incorrect" to "completely correct". The higher the total score, the higher the general self-efficacy. In this study, *Cronbach'a* coefficient of GSES is 0.858.

2.2.3. Emotional Labor Scale, ELS

Compiled by Diefendorff (2005) [18], and revised into Chinese version by Zhong Jian'an (2007) [19]. There are 14 items divided into three dimensions, including surface, deep and natural performance. Likert 5-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 5 points corresponding to "never" to "always". The higher the total score, the higher the emotional labor. In this study, *Cronbach'a* coefficients of three subscales are 0.864, 0.830 and 0.815, respectively.

2.3. Data processing

SPSS 20.0 is used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics is used to calculate the average score and standard deviation of each scale; Pearson product moment correlation is used to explore the correlation between variables; Linear stepwise regression analysis is used to analyze the mediating role of general self-efficacy between emotional labor and job burnout.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Status of job burnout of college counselors

The incidence of job burnout in this group is 67.5% (363/583), and the detection rates of mild, moderate and serious job burnout are 34.4%, 26.8% and 6.3%, respectively.

3.2. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of each variable

It can be seen from table 1 that there is a pairwise correlation among the total score of surface performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r =-.104, .247, -.344, all P < 0.01); a pairwise correlation among the total score of deep performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r = .285, -. 235, -. 344, all P < 0.01); a pairwise correlation among the total score of natural performance, GSES and MBI-GS (r =.316, -. 276, -. 344, all P < 0.01).

Table 1. Correlation analysis of scores of various scales and dimensions

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Surface performance	4.452	.831								
2.Deep performance	4.273	.938	-.013.							
3.Natural performance	3.809	.850	-.027	.153**						
4.Total score of GSES	2.422	.602	-.104*	.285**	.316**					
5. Emotional exhaustion	3.220	.963	.271**	-.331**	-.294**	-.267**				
6. Cynicism	2.144	.980	.200**	-.130**	-.178**	-.389**	.631**			
7. Low sense of achievement	3.062	.871	.113**	-.264**	-.341**	-.756**	.519**	.134**		
8.Total score of MBI-GS	2.951	.852	.247**	-.235**	-.276**	-.344**	.884**	.870**	.930**	

Note: * *p*<0.05, ** *p*<0.01 (The same below)

3.3. Mediating effect test of general self-efficacy on emotional labor and job burnout

According to the mediation effect test method proposed by Wen Zhonglin et al. [20], the score of each dimension of ELS is used as independent variable respectively, MBI-GS total score is used as dependent variable, and GSES total score is used as intermediary variable. The results are shown in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

3.3.1. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between surface performance and job burnout

Table 1. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between surface performance and job burnout

Step	Dependent variable	Independent variable	β	t	R^2
Step 1(c)	MBI-GS total score	Surface performance	0.247	6.305**	0.061
Step 2(a)	GSES total score	Surface performance	-0.104	-2.934*	0.009
Step 3(c')	MBI-GS total score	Surface performance	0.195	3.836**	0.123
(b)		GSES total score	-0.344	-8.146**	

It can be seen from Table 2 that in the first step, surface performance positively predicts MBI-GS total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (0.247); In the second step, surface performance negatively predicts GSES total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (-0.104); In the third step, after controlling the influence of GSES on MBI-GS total score, surface performance can still positively predict MBI-GS total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (0.195), that is, after adding the intermediary variable GSES total score between dependent variable MBI-GS total score and independent variable surface performance, the absolute value of regression coefficient between MBI-GS total score and surface performance decreases. It can be seen that GSES

has a significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between surface performance and MBI-GS total score, with an mediating effect accounting for 14.5% of the total effect (i.e. effect M =ab/c =(-0.104)×(-0.344)/0.247×100%=14.5%).

3.3.2. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between deep performance and job burnout

Table 2. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between deep performance and job burnout

Step	Dependent variable	Independent variable	β	t	R^2
Step 1(c)	MBI-GS total score	Deep performance	-0.235	-5.984**	0.055
Step 2(a)	GSES total score	Deep performance	0.285	7.134**	0.081
Step 3(c')	MBI-GS total score	Deep performance	-0.147	-4.033**	0.183
(b)		GSES total score	-0.344	-8.146**	

It can be seen from Table 3 that in the first step, deep performance negatively predicts the total score of MBI-GS, with an significant regression coefficient of (-0.235); In the second step, deep performance positively predicts the total score of GSES, with an significant regression coefficient of (0.285); In the third step, after controlling the influence of GSES on MBI-GS total score, deep performance can still negatively predict MBI-GS total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (-0.147), that is, after adding the intermediary variable GSES total score between dependent variable MBI-GS total score and independent variable deep performance, the absolute value of regression coefficient between MBI-GS total score and deep performance decreases. It can be seen that GSES total score has a significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between deep performance and MBI-GS total score, with an mediating effect accounting for 41.7% of the total effect (i.e. effect M = ab/c = (0.285)×(-0.344)/(-0.235)×100%=41.7%).

3.3.3. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between natural performance and job burnout

Table 3. Mediating effect of general self-efficacy between natural performance and job burnout

Step	Dependent variable	Independent variable	β	t	R^2
Step 1(c)	MBI-GS total score	Natural performance	-0.276	-7.418**	0.217
Step 2(a)	GSES total score	Natural performance	0.316	7.134*	0.109
Step 3(c')	MBI-GS total score	Natural performance	-0.239	-5.667**	0.183
(b)		GSES total score	-0.344	-8.146**	

It can be seen from Table 4 that in the first step, natural performance negatively predicts MBI-GS total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (-0.276); In the second step, natural performance positively predicts GSES total score, with an significant regression coefficient of (0.316); In the third step, after controlling the influence of GSES on MBI-GS total score, natural performance can still negatively predict MBI-GS, with an significant regression coefficient of (-0.239), that is, after adding the intermediary variable GSES total score between the dependent variable MBI-GS total score and independent variable natural performance, the absolute value of the regression coefficient between natural performance and MBI-GS total score decreases. It can be seen that GSES total score has a significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between natural performance and MBI-GS total score, with an mediating effect accounting for 39.4% of the total effect (i.e. effect M = ab/c= (0.316)×(-0.344)/(-0.276)×100%=39.4%).

4. DISCUSSION

The incidence rates of mild, moderate and serious job burnout in this group are 34.4%, 26.8% and 6.3%, respectively, and counselors in our study have a low level of general self-efficacy [16-17] and a high level of emotional labor [18-19], which is consistent with the results of previous studies [21-23], suggesting that college counselors generally have obvious job burnout, high emotional labor and low general self-efficacy.

There are direct and indirect effects between college counselors' emotional labor and job burnout.

On one hand, There is a significant correlation between each dimension of ELS and MBI-GS total score, indicating that there is a direct effect between emotional labor and job burnout, which is consistent with the research results of Zhao Xiaobin et al. [21]. In other words, the higher the level of emotional labor, the more serious the job burnout.

On the other hand, there is an indirect effect between emotional labor and job burnout. It is manifested in the following ways: emotional labor - general self-efficacy - job burnout, that is, general self-efficacy plays a partial

intermediary role between emotional labor and job burnout. People with higher emotional labor often have lower general self-efficacy. They lack self-confidence to control the environment and self-behavior, think themselves are incompetent, and often feel nervous, frustrated and afraid at work, resulting in job burnout.

5. CONCLUSION

This study initially reveals the relationship between emotional labor and job burnout of college counselors, and verifies the following hypothesis: General self-efficacy plays a partial intermediary role between emotional labor and job burnout.

To sum up, both emotional overwork and low general self-efficacy are important reasons for college counselors' job burnout. In other words, personality traits and cognitive style are two basically influencing factors of college counselors' job burnout. According to this conclusions, the following recommendations are made: The intervention of job burnout of college counselors should start with strengthening the professional construction of counselors, improving their professional core competence, work efficiency and self-efficacy; At the same time, we should strengthen mental health education and psychological quality training to help them scientifically regulate emotional activities at work, appropriately reduce emotional labor intensity and avoid excessive emotional labor. In the future, we can add longitudinal research data to further verify the relationship between college counselors' emotional labor and job burnout.

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