

A STUDY ON COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' JOB BURNOUT AT X PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the current status of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province and the differences in college instructors' job burnout in different demographic backgrounds, in order to analyze the causes of their job burnout and propose effective strategies to alleviate the job burnout of college instructors. Based on relevant literature analysis, this study used the Job Burnout Scale developed by Maslach (1981) to conduct a questionnaire survey on 189 college instructors from X Private University in Henan Province, China, with a response rate of 100%. Through the SPSS software to conduct data statistics on the collected questionnaires. The results showed that: (1) The overall level of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University was low. (2) In terms of demographic backgrounds such as gender, age, educational qualification and marital status, there were significant differences in college instructors' job burnout at X Private University, Henan Province, China. Based on the research results and discussion, put forward relevant suggestions.

Keywords: X Private University, College Instructors, Job Burnout

Introduction

Internationally, many colleges have not set up a particular position for college instructors. Still, a variety of professional roles jointly undertake the responsibility of providing various services and support for students. These roles included but were not limited to, psychological college instructors, career college instructors, and student affairs administrators. However, most of the work contents of Chinese college instructors were similar to those of school college instructors in other countries (Robinson et al., 2021). However, in contrast, the work of college instructors covered a wide range of areas and often required them to take on multiple roles. As an essential part of the faculty and management team of the university, college instructors usually had various identities such as educators, managers and service providers, which was why they played a very crucial role in the process of students' growth and all-round development. College instructors were not only the leading force in

promoting ideological and political education in schools but also essential participants in national talent training (Li, 2022). With the development of the times and the progress of society, the thinking of contemporary college students was more open and active, and their needs were becoming more complex and diversified. This change would inevitably put higher requirements on the work of college instructors. Compared with other jobs in colleges, college instructors also had to deal with various trivial matters, such as student attendance statistics, fee collection, and safety education. Therefore, long-term occupational pressure and tension were likely to cause individual college instructors to show stress reactions, which led to job burnout (Chen & Wang, 2019).

Job burnout has long become a universal psychological problem for practitioners in various industries in society. At the same time, the research on the phenomenon of job burnout has also been favored by more and more scholars, whose research goals were primarily to analyze its causes, so as to seek countermeasures to alleviate job burnout and effectively improve work effectiveness (Guo et al., 2020; Mullen et al., 2021). Then, with the continuous extension of theoretical research on job burnout in various fields, some studies showed that the groups with a high incidence of job burnout were mostly in industries that needed to face a lot of emotional communication and interpersonal interaction, such as medical care and education (Chen et al., 2018; Dang & Wei, 2020).

In the process of promoting ideological and political education in colleges, the contribution of college instructors can't be ignored, and their functions can't be replaced. They were the backbone and important team of students' work and talents training in colleges. Today's college instructors' work was no longer just about ideological and political education and party and league building. It should also include many aspects such as daily management, employment planning, psychological counseling, recreational activities and social practice (Zhang, 2017; Kuang, 2023). However, the complexity of the work and the wide range of functions behind the law have increased the professional pressure on college instructors to a certain extent. At the same time, the need for self-growth, the influence of individual factors, and the increase in workload and the support of school and society might all become sources of stress for college instructors (Wu, 2015). However, which was followed by the sense of physical, mental and job burnout. Because of this, the occupational pressure and job burnout of college instructors have gradually become the focus of public attention and research.

Because of the particularity of the profession of college instructors, some studies showed that if college instructors often show indifference and depressed job burnout in their work, it would inevitably lead to a series of far-reaching and extensive negative effects. It would not only have a negative impact on the development of students' personality shaping and value formation but also might cause the ideological and political education work in colleges to be unable to be effectively carried out because of the college instructors' dereliction of duty, resulting in students' value deviation, ideological confusion and moral anomaly. In turn, it led to inestimable and severe consequences such as social,

ideological turmoil and frequent social problems (Liu, 2014). In addition, college instructors were the group who had the closest and most frequent contact with students at the university stage, and their attitudes and behaviors usually had the most direct and profound impact on students. Therefore, if college instructors lacked patience, confidence and tolerance for students due to job burnout and ignored students' needs and personality development, they would naturally be unable to establish a deep relationship of mutual trust with students. Then when students encounter difficulties, they would not be able to get timely guidance and help when they needed psychological counseling, which was very unfavorable to students' physical and mental health and academic development. It would also hinder the growth of their personality and the improvement of their overall quality (Li, 2019).

As a big education province in China, Henan had a large number of colleges, all of which were of good strength. However, some research showed that there were some problems with the current status of the professional development of local college instructors in Henan province. As the rank system had just started, the current career promotion channels for college instructors were not perfect, and the ambiguity of professional roles also led to the lack of advantages and core competitiveness in the promotion of professional titles. Even though the "two-way progress" promotion mode was intended to change the dilemma of college instructors in promotion, many college instructors still felt that there was "no way out" due to many reasons, such as missing assessment standards and limited development platform (Guo, 2014; Wei, 2023). Therefore, as an important part of college teachers and management teams, the study of job burnout of college instructors has become a topic that must be faced in a new era. At the same time, based on the sake of personal work, the study deeply experienced and observed that there was a common job burnout among college instructors. Therefore, how to help college instructors overcome job burnout, in order to clarify career planning, maintain enthusiasm for education, and improve work efficiency and sense of achievement was the problem that this study urgently wanted to solve.

Research Objectives

(1) To investigate the current status of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University, Henan Province, China.

(2) To analyze the difference in college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province, in terms of demographic backgrounds such as gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, and monthly salary income.

Literature Review

Research on the Connotation of Job Burnout

Job burnout was first used to describe a pathological manifestation of police teaching and

treating offenders in the process of law enforcement. American scholar Freudenberger (1974) first defined the concept of job burnout in psychology and found that when service industry practitioners were in a state of mental burnout for a long time and overload of work, Freudenberger (1974) described this state. For the first time, he put forward "job burnout". He defined it as a psychological state of exhaustion and emotional exhaustion generated by individuals who were too persistent for their ideal lifestyle and state but when the beautiful vision could not be realized in reality.

Some other scholars, when defining the concept of job burnout, put forward that the formation and development of various symptoms of job burnout could not be separated from the main incentive of work pressure. For example, Li & Shi (2003) pointed out that individuals who had been under work pressure for a long time would have a persistent adverse reaction and work state when their coping strategies in the face of pressure become ineffective, which was called job burnout. Similarly, Dong (2018) believed that job burnout referred to the negative state of physiology, psychology and emotion caused by various subjective and objective factors when an individual faced various stressors in the occupational situation.

For the group of college instructors, many researchers would elaborate on the definition of college instructors' job burnout from three perspectives, including individual physiological, emotional status and work normality. For example, Guo et al. (2020) believed that with the rapid development of China's higher education, cultural diversity had enriched the ideological and moral construction of college students, which also made college instructors face a situation of overload with heavy tasks and increasing pressure for a long time. Even so, the embodiment of their professional value could be seen in the following ways: Even the promotion of social status had not been correspondingly changed, so the bad occupational states such as fatigue, emotional exhaustion and behavioral apathy were the obvious symptoms of job burnout of college instructors.

Research on the Measurement of Job Burnout

After the 1980s, western scholars developed scale tools to measure job burnout, aiming at quantitative research on the causes of job burnout. The most widely used one was the MBI of Maslach et al. (1981). The MBI has been translated, revised and applied by many Chinese researchers. For example, in order to measure the different effects of resource distribution equity and procedural equity on job burnout in their research, Li and Shi (2003) partially revised the MBI scale to suit their research theme. The revised scale included 22 items in three dimensions, namely emotional exhaustion, deindividuation and low personal accomplishment. The questionnaire was widely applicable in China and has been used by many researchers to study the job burnout of teachers and college instructors in universities (Zhang & Yu, 2016; Wang & Lin, 2022). Therefore, this questionnaire was selected as the questionnaire of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province, China.

Combined with the connotation of job burnout and based on the theory that job demand didn't

match the resources obtained, German scholar Demerouti et al. (2003) divided the dimensions of job burnout into two dimensions: alienation and exhaustion and compiled the OLBI burnout scale. This scale was applicable not only to helping industries but also to non-helping industries, and it has been proved by some researchers to have high reliability and validity.

On the basis of referring to previous scales, Li & Wu (2005) compiled a CMBI questionnaire in combination with research needs and actual situations, which included three factors: low personal accomplishment, depersonalization and exhaustion, and had good reliability and validity.

Research on Influencing Factors of College Instructors' Job Burnout

As for the research on the influencing factors of coaching burnout, summarizing the existing research results, it could be seen that individuals and organizations were the main factors affecting job burnout. The research contents of individual influencing factors were mainly demographic backgrounds, individual psychological characteristics and so on. Demographic variables of individual job burnout included gender, age, marital status and educational qualification. For example, Watts(2014) collected articles related to job burnout in Europe and the United States and found that it was highly correlated with individual age. Specifically, college teachers with a younger age were more likely to have job burnout. Dyrbye et al. (2011) confirmed that job burnout had a significant gender difference through research. Armon et al. (2012) in Israel showed that individual job burnout at different ages would be changed by their emotional stability and level of responsibility. Chinese scholars Zhang & Liao (2012) pointed out that college instructors had job burnout in the process of adapting to the in-depth and continuous reform and development of higher education. In this study, they selected 245 college instructors from Guangdong Females Vocational and Technical College as the research objects. Through empirical research, they found that in terms of demographic backgrounds such as gender, professional title and marital status, There were differences in the level of college instructors' job burnout at different vocational colleges. In terms of gender, the burnout level of female college instructors was generally higher. In terms of professional title, overall, there was no significant difference in the burnout level of college instructors. But in the dimension of deindividuation, college instructors with junior professional titles had a higher level of deindividuation. The difference in marital status was still significant only in the dimension of deindividuation. That was, married college instructors had a higher level of deindividuation than unmarried college instructors.

On organizational factors influencing college instructors job burnout. Zhang (2016) and Guo (2018) analyzed the actual situation of private colleges. They argued that private colleges were in a period of education system reform, and many management systems were not perfect. They needed to be improved, and there was a lack of policy support and a security system for college instructors. College instructors' work was complicated and ideological, and political education was insufficient. Moreover, they were faced with problems such as unfair evaluation of salary and work performance,

which caused job burnout. Then Guo et al. (2020) pointed out in their study that a lower degree of satisfaction with university work and conflicts in work would lead to long-term burnout in university students and workers, which would lead to negative emotions towards work and emotional exhaustion.

Research on the Current Status and Improvement Countermeasures of College Instructors' Job Burnout

Many research viewpoints point out that the formation of job burnout originates from the joint action between humans and the environment. Therefore, based on this broad view, the research on the causes of college instructors' job burnout mainly starts from three aspects: human, organization and society. At the individual level, Chinese scholars find that the ambiguity, conflict and overload of their roles were the objective factors in the process of studying the job burnout of college instructors. For example, Zhu (2013) pointed out that it was precisely because college instructors play too many roles that the confusion and conflict in switching between multiple roles restrict the effective play of their abilities and then lead to the emergence of job burnout. Yang Chao (2014) further found that the inefficient performance of college instructors, such as procrastination and lack of coordination, would lead to the delay and accumulation of their work tasks, which would also lead to the emergence of job burnout. Later, with the gradual extensive and in-depth influence of utilitarian thought on Chinese social thought, its negative impact also brought many problems and hidden dangers to various industries in society. Li et al. (2019) pointed out in their research that the embodiment of utilitarianism in the profession of college instructors might be the pursuit of personal vested interests while ignoring the interests of students and schools, the use of improper means in peer competition, or the use of public power for personal gain to damage students' legitimate rights and interests. Due to the lack of moral quality and weak professional belief, when the position of college instructors can't "meet" the purpose of seeking benefits, some college instructors would sabotage their work or try to change jobs, and the emotion of job burnout would also follow.

The Particularity of the Counselor's Profession

College instructors' occupations had certain particularities in their work content, nature and object. Therefore, compared with other occupations or college posts, the college instructors' job burnout was also different. The particularity of the work object. College instructors work with college students. They were independent, full of creativity and unique personality, but also complete with curiosity and interest in new things. Only when college instructors fully understood the characteristics of the physical and mental development of contemporary college students could the education work be carried out efficiently and orderly. At the same time, college instructors often live in a critical and strict working environment, always facing a particular group of work objects, resulting in their work was full of challenges. Therefore, it was tough and challenging to achieve the "imperceptible" education effect. College instructors need to spend a lot of energy and thought, think deeply, and strive to find ways to

make accurate judgments and proper treatment of various problems encountered by students so as to adopt appropriate educational strategies and means (Meng et al., 2018).

With the continuous development and expansion of the X Private University, the number of college instructors has also increased rapidly. The expansion of the team of college instructors undoubtedly reserved sufficient strength for the development of college student management and ideological and political education. It was also an essential prerequisite for the professional development of the position of college instructors. X Private University of Commerce also attached great importance to the construction of the college instructors team and Many relevant documents have been formulated, a platform for work, guaranteed benefits, and development space, and to promote the professionalization, professionalization, and professionalization of college instructors.

Methodology

This study took X Private University in Henan Province, China as the research site, and the school college instructors as the research objects. There were 189 college instructors at X Private University in Henan Province, China. After screening, sorting and collecting 189 valid questionnaires, the effective recovery rate was 100%.

This study adopted the job burnout scale compiled by Maslach (1981), which had been translated, revised and applied by many researchers (Li & Shi, 2003). There were 22 items on the scale, including three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, deindividuation and low personal accomplishment.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

This study took 189 college instructors from X Private University in Henan Province, China as the survey sample. In terms of gender, there were 65 male college instructors, accounting for 34.4%, and 124 female college instructors, accounting for 65.6%. The number of female college instructors participating in the survey was more than that of male college instructors. In terms of age, 39 college instructors were 30 years old and below, accounting for 20.6%, 67 college instructors were 31-35 years old, accounting for 35.5%, 83 college instructors were 36 years old and above, accounting for 43.9%. Among the college instructors who participated in the survey, more were over 31 years old. In terms of educational qualifications, there were 156 bachelor's degree students, accounting for 82.5%, and 33 graduate students, accounting for 17.5%. There were no doctoral students in the survey, and the number of bachelor's degree students was mostly. In terms of marital status, 101 were married, accounting for 53.4%, and 88 were unmarried, accounting for 46.6%. The number of married and unmarried people in the survey was similar. In terms of salary monthly salary income, 38 were below 4,000 yuan, accounting for 20.1%; 86 were between 4,000 yuan and 5,000 yuan, accounting for 45.5%; 65 were above 5,000

yuan, accounting for 34.4%. Most of the people in the survey had monthly salary incomes between 4,000 yuan and 5,000 yuan.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Through the data of mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), this study explored the current status of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University. Table 1 showed that the overall level of job burnout was low (M=2.50). In all dimensions, the level of emotional exhaustion was moderate (M=2.79), and the level of depersonalization (M=2.34) and low personal accomplishment (M=2.36) were low. Therefore, the overall level of college instructors' job burnout was low.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of College Instructors' Job Burnout (N=189)

Dimension	Mean	SD
Emotional exhaustion	2.79	0.714
Depersonalization	2.34	0.746
Low personal accomplishment	2.36	0.646
Overall job burnout	2.50	0.638

Difference Analysis

Independent samples t-tests and One-way ANOVA were used to analyze the difference in college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province under different demographic backgrounds. The results of the difference analysis verified the contents of the research hypothesis.

Table 2: Difference Analysis of College Instructors' Job Burnout of Different Genders

Dimension	Gender	N	M	SD	T	P
Emotional exhaustion	Male	65	2.64	0.775	1.996*	0.048
	Female	124	2.86	0.671		
Depersonalization	Male	65	2.22	0.761	1.663	0.098
	Female	124	2.40	0.733		
Low personal accomplishment	Male	65	2.22	0.712	2.111*	0.037
	Female	124	2.44	0.598		
Overall job burnout	Male	65	2.36	0.675	2.113*	0.037
	Female	124	2.57	0.607		

Note: * p<.05

There were significant differences in college instructors' job burnout of different genders at X Private University in Henan Province, China, and the level of job burnout among female college instructors was higher than that of male college instructors.

There was a significant difference in college instructors' job burnout at different ages in X Private University in Henan Province, China, and the level of college instructors' job burnout aged 36 and above was relatively high.

There were significant differences in college instructors' job burnout with different educational qualifications at X Private University in Henan Province, China. The level of college instructors' job burnout with bachelor's degrees was higher than that of college instructors with master's degrees.

There were significant differences in college instructors' job burnout of different marital statuses at X Private University in Henan Province, China. The level of job burnout among married college instructors was higher than that of unmarried college instructors.

Discussion

Current Status of College Instructors' Job Burnout at X Private University, Henan Province, China

According to the research results, the overall college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province was at a relatively low level. It indicated that a series of policies and management measures adopted by X Private University in recent years have shown initial results. In order to further strengthen the construction of the college instructors team and assist the physical and mental health level of college instructors. It has launched multiple relevant documents and management measures to ensure that the college instructors team had conditions for work, a platform for work, guaranteed benefits, and room for development. Obviously, the implementation of these favorable policies was not only conducive to the smooth progress of daily work for college instructors but also provided strong support for their career promotion and development and effectively alleviated their job burnout.

Difference Analysis of College Instructors' Job Burnout at X Private University, Henan Province, China

According to the results of the difference comparison, the gender difference in college instructors' job burnout at X Private University was significant. The level of job burnout of female college instructors was higher than that of male college instructors, which was mainly reflected in emotional exhaustion and low personal accomplishment. This conclusion was also supported by Zhang and Liao (2012) et al. The reasons were as follows: first of all, females focused on emotional thinking, so they paid more attention to the construction of emotions when dealing with work and interpersonal relationships. However, the effective development of college instructors' work must be inseparable from their true feelings, so female college instructors with delicate and sensitive emotions tend to suffer more and faster emotional exhaustion. Secondly, under the influence of traditional social concepts, the contradiction between female's roles in family and society still exists. Family burdens, childbearing, and work responsibilities undoubtedly cause a lot of energy and emotional consumption, which further aggravates the situation of female college instructors' emotional exhaustion. Finally, the prejudice of professional identity and social status made it difficult for females in the workplace. Coupled with the

fierce competition in career development and promotion, female college instructors would experience more frustration and loss, which was one of the main reasons why it was difficult for them to improve their sense of accomplishment.

According to the results of the difference comparison, there was a significant difference in the age of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University. The level of college instructors' job burnout at 36 years old and above was higher than that at 30 years old and below. Some researchers agreed with this result, such as Lu et al. (2021), while some other scholars held different views, such as Watts (2014). The reason for this still stems from the particularity of the profession of college instructors. A college instructor from X Private University once proposed that "college instructors should move students in small details, influence them subtly, and inspire them by demonstration of words and deeds." It also pointed out the true meaning of a qualified college instructor's work, that was, if they wanted to become an excellent college instructor, they must do everything in the work and selfless dedication. At the same time, it was also a challenge and test for the physical, mental and other aspects of the college instructors. On the one hand, young college instructors were full of physical strength and energy, and their physical and mental resilience was also very fast, which significantly alleviated the speed of emotional exhaustion. In contrast, the older college instructors not only their physical strength was weakening, but also their work and social responsibilities were gradually increasing. The feeling of being powerless under the interweaving of multiple burdens would be more and the sense of job burnout would be higher. On the other hand, most of the college instructors aged 36 and above were in the critical period of career development.

Still, the imperfect promotion mechanism and security system make the senior college instructors encounter the bottleneck of career development, which was also the reason for their low personal accomplishment. In addition, current college students have strong personalities and active thinking. In the process of getting along with and serving them, young college instructors generally had more advantages. They were more similar in age, more compatible in thinking and cognition, and a lot of work was more accessible to carry out. The older college instructors often, because of the ideological and cultural gap, which led to a lot of education and communication work being superficial, which not only significantly reduced the effectiveness of the college instructors' work but also might aggravate their sense of job burnout.

According to the results of the difference comparisons, there was a significant difference in the educational qualification of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University, and the level of college instructors' job burnout with bachelor's degrees was higher than that of college instructors with graduate degrees. Wen (2021) also supported the results of this study. The reasons might be that, first of all, the academic background is the proof of an individual's in-depth and systematic professional training, comprehensive professional knowledge learning and ability accumulation. Highly educated

college instructors might have more advantages in carrying out ideological and political education and solving students' problems. Secondly, with the attention of the country and society to the ideological and political education in colleges, the psychological education of college students and other issues, colleges were paying more attention to the construction of college instructors. Many colleges have raised the requirements of college instructors' educational qualifications for postgraduates. Therefore, many college instructors with graduate degrees not only enjoy higher salaries but also become more competitive in career promotion. However, for college instructors with bachelor's degree degrees, the difficulties faced in work and the restrictions encountered in career development made their negative emotions, and physical and mental fatigue aggravated, and thus significantly increased the dedication to the formation of job burnout. Finally, it was concluded that the results of this study might also be related to the relatively large sample size gap in the distribution of educational qualifications.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The overall level of college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province was low.

Conclusion 2: In terms of demographic backgrounds such as gender, age, educational qualification and marital status, there were significant differences in college instructors' job burnout at X Private University in Henan Province, China.

In terms of gender, the level of job burnout of female college instructors was higher than that of male college instructors.

In terms of different ages, college instructors aged 36 and above had relatively high burnout levels.

In terms of different educational qualifications, the level of college instructors' job burnout with bachelor's degrees was higher than that of college instructors with master's degrees.

In terms of different marital statuses, the job burnout level of married college instructors was higher than that of unmarried college instructors.

There was no significant difference in college instructors' job burnout with different monthly salary incomes at X Private University in Henan Province, China.

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