

# *Analysis of Structural Model of Chinese College Counselors' Core Literacy*

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**Abstract:** College counselors in China are important key members for ideological and political work. The quality of college counselors will directly affect the development of college students in all aspects. Most predecessors only conduct theoretical analysis on counselors' literacy, which lacks the support of empirical research. Based on literature analysis and interviews, this paper analyzes the content of counselors' core literacy, screens predictive questionnaire projects, and compiles formal questionnaires. With an investigation of 537 college teachers and students, this paper builds a model of core literacy for counselors, which helps people directly understand the characteristics of university management in China and understand the standards of Chinese universities for their managers. The results show that: (1) The test has strong reliability and validity. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient and the tests' split-half reliability coefficients are all above 0.95. The coefficients of internal consistency and the split-half reliability of each dimension are all above 0.85. The  $X^2/df$  of analytical results of verification factors is less than 5. GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and IFI are all greater than 0.7. RMSEA is equal to 0.07. The fitting indicators of this model are sound and this test meets measurement requirements. (2) The core literacy structure of college counselors consists of five major factors: moral quality, professional competence, political awareness, instructional planning, and interpersonal relationships. The total variation rate of these five factors is 65.117 percent. (3) Among the five factors, moral quality is the most influential factor.

## 1. Introduction

In China, college counselors are responsible for daily management of college students. The full name for counselors is "ideological and political counselors". They need to be responsible for students' daily ideological and political education and management and guiding students in their study and life planning. Since the political atmosphere is put to a higher position in Chinese colleges and universities, the most important task for counselors is to lead students' thoughts to a right direction. Meanwhile, they are also responsible for plenty of affairs related to daily management. There are obvious cultural differences and different characteristics between the

management of university affairs in China and that in other countries. Therefore, the assessment aspects of counselors in China are more than that in other countries. In addition, counselors' literacy is more diversified and multi-layered. Domestic conferences related to ideological and political affairs of universities in particular have been organized to express requirements to staff members and make them put more emphasis on their tasks (2016), which confirms that great importance has been attached to counselors' literacy at the national level.

## 2. Previous Studies

In Western universities and colleges, due to the differences of management institutions, there is no equivalent role of "counselor". Student work is called administration and leadership in student affairs, and the role function of its related administrative staff is similar to the college counselors in our country.

For example, since 19th century, student affairs in American colleges and universities have been separated from academic affairs to provide guidance for students' psychological, learning, and professional development issues, thereby creating the role of "management officer". The systematic study of student work can be first traced back to the theory proposed by Chickering in 1969. He makes requests to officers based on seven vectors of student growth (Thomas and Chickering, 1984). They are: growth ability, emotion management, growth autonomy, identity establishment, interpersonal relationships, purpose clarification, and growth integrity (Leila V. Moore, M. Lee Upcraft, 1990). Mecllland and some scholars propose that student affairs administrative staff should have 6 competency groups, namely planning, evaluation, education, consultancy, management and evaluation. (Mecllland,1998). Spreitzer GM, McCall M & Mahoney J D. Early proposes 7 aspects of work potential: administration, management and leadership functions; theoretical elucidation ability; ability to provide help and interpersonal skills; ethics and legal knowledge and decision-making skills; education and teaching ability; evaluation and assessment functions; multicultural awareness, knowledge and functionality (Spreitzer GM, McCall M & Mahoney J D. Early, 1997). There are also specialized studies on student affairs workers, in which Nicole thinks expert-level student affairs workers should learn to innovate, learn to discover, learn to develop existing resources, and learn about global thinking (Nicole P. Eramo, 2006). Kidder proposes that student affairs staff assessment should be discussed from the following four aspects: assessment, responsibility, service learning ability, assisting ability of the campus's curriculum education. (Kidder, R., 2010). V. Leilani Kupo concludes that college student affairs workers are "multitasking roles" and should form a capability to transform and integrate the capabilities of routine processing tasks into relevant research data (V. Leilani Kupo, 2014).

In China, the research on college counselors' literacy originated from the research on the quality or competency of counselors. There are multiple dimensions and multiple categories, for example, which can be divided into political quality, ideological and moral qualities, knowledge quality and competency (Lin Sifeng, 2004), as well as the organizational leadership ability, coordination ability, language ability and inductive generalization ability (Sun Jiayan, 2001). Or it can be divided into basic quality and basic ability: political quality, moral quality, knowledge structure, psychological quality; organizational coordination ability, communication and cooperation ability, ability to serve students, mental health education ability, scientific research and innovation ability, ability of self-control and controlling over situation and language expression ability (Zhang Shuming, 2010).The comparatively comprehensive occupational competence research is divided into 16 dimensions: verbal expression ability, communication ability, adaptability, organizing ability, caring students, innovation ability, observation ability, professional loyalty, ability to promote student development, self-examination ability, personal charisma, ideological and moral

accomplishment, psychological counseling ability, understanding of respecting students, principle, and participation ability (Gu Qian, 2004). The top 5 competencies of counselors are further refined as follows: understanding and respect students, verbal expression ability, principle, caring students, professional loyalty (Yang Jiping, 2004). There are also 7-dimension counselors competency model: working ability, cultivating students, moral character, professionalism, overall awareness, influence strategy, caring students (Huo Xiaodan, 2013). Since 2010, researches on literacy of college counselors have begun to emerge. It is proposed that the structure of counselors' professional literacy structure is mainly composed of professional knowledge, professional skills, professional ethics and professional affection (Ma Jing, 2010); or composed of 6 literacies: politics literacy, ideological literacy, professional ethics, cultural literacy, psychological literacy, ability literacy (Zhang Jingpeng, 2010).

### 3. Research Procedures

This study conducted a survey in 2017 by using the questionnaire survey. The prediction questionnaire was based on Likert 7 point scale (1 = very disagree, 7 = very agree). The correlation coefficient between each item in the questionnaire and the total score was calculated. After deleting the item of  $r < 0.4$ , when the questionnaire contained 51 questions, EFA showed that 9 factors were extracted and the cumulative variance contribution rate reached 82.83%. The model tended to be stable. 3 lie detection questions was compiled by drawing on the MMPI lie scale, which formed a formal questionnaire of "college counselors' literacy" with 54 items. Formal test sample objects were college teachers and students. 800 questionnaires were issued and 696 questionnaires were collected. After screening by lie detection questions, the effective questionnaire was 537. SPSS22.0 and AMOS21.0 were applied to data analysis and processing.

### 4. Research Findings and Analysis

#### 4.1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is conducted on 51 items. KMO is 0.979, which is a very suitable data for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity is 23516.560, df is 1275, and  $P < 0.001$ . The spherical assume is rejected, indicating that the questionnaire items are not independent and the values are valid. EFA uses principal component analysis and rotation is varimax, eigenvalue is over 1, and the number of factor is not limited. When 5 factors are formed by factor rotation, the cumulative variance has reached 65.72%. All 51 items enter the EFA model.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained.

	Factor 1 Moral quality	Factor 2 Business execution	Factor 3 Political consciousness	Factor 4 Guiding strategy	Factor 5 Interpersonal coordination
Number of items	15	14	10	7	5
Eigenvalue	27.196	2.468	1.443	1.068	1.034
Variance	18.016	15.785	14.626	8.729	7.962
Cumulative variance	18.016	33.801	48.426	57.155	65.117

The question of Factor 1 relates to the personal qualities and style of work that give students a role model at work and is therefore named "moral quality"; The question of Factor 2 involves a number of specific job competencies and the mental outlook of being competent for a job and is therefore named "business execution"; The question of Factor 3 relates to political awareness, party affairs, and legal awareness and therefore is named "political awareness"; The question of Factor 4

relates to the education and instruction on students, which should be advancing with the times, so named as "guiding strategy"; The question of Factor 5 relates to the ability of interaction and communication as well as emotional interaction with students and is therefore named "interpersonal coordination."

#### 4.2 Test reliability

Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the split-half reliability coefficient in the total test are all above 0.9, indicating that the actual value is in good agreement with the true value. The internal alpha coefficients and the split-half reliability coefficient of the 5 factors are all above 0.8. The reliability coefficient indicates that this test is a good test.

Table 2: Test reliability.

Items	Number of items	Alpha coefficient	Split-half reliability
Factor 1	15	0.950	0.928
Factor 2	14	0.960	0.954
Factor 3	10	0.927	0.897
Factor 4	7	0.874	0.852
Factor 5	5	0.850	0.863
Total test	51	0.976	0.953

#### 4.3 Test validity

Correlation analysis between the subscales and the total scale of the test shows that the correlation coefficients are all above 0.8. The correlation coefficients between subscales range from 0.7 to 0.9, indicating that there's relatively high correlation between subscales with close connection between various factors and good structure validity of the test.

Table 3: Test structure validity.

Subscale	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Total test
Factor 1	1					0.936
Factor 2	0.882	1				0.960
Factor 3	0.756	0.792	1			0.891
Factor 4	0.776	0.836	0.774	1		0.896
Factor 5	0.809	0.846	0.803	0.790	1	0.902

In the process of revising the questionnaire, the author discussed with current college counselors and psychologists to ensure that the content of the questionnaire has a good reference, which can better reflect the content of college counselors' core literacy structure and get approval from the majority of testers. Therefore, the content validity of the test is better.

#### 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis has been performed on the data, and all fitting indicators of this model are sound. The  $X^2/df$  of the model is less than 5, indicating that the model is acceptable. The closer the GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and IFI are to 1, the better the fitness is. The closer RMSEA is to 0, the better the result is. The load of observation variables on the corresponding latent variables is between 0.591 and 0.846. Most load values exceed 0.6, indicating that each observation variable has a large interpretation rate for the underlying latent variables. Observation variables loaded on the residuals are between 0.37 and 0.64, most of them are less than 0.5. The relationship between

variables is more reliable and the questionnaire has a good structural validity.

Table 4: Model Fit.

	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Model Fit	4411.32	1214	3.634	0.74	0.71	0.82	0.86	0.86	0.07

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the core literacy of counselors in Chinese colleges and universities includes 5 dimensions: moral quality, business execution, political awareness, guiding strategy and interpersonal coordination, covering ideology, work, study and life. Structural model as shown:

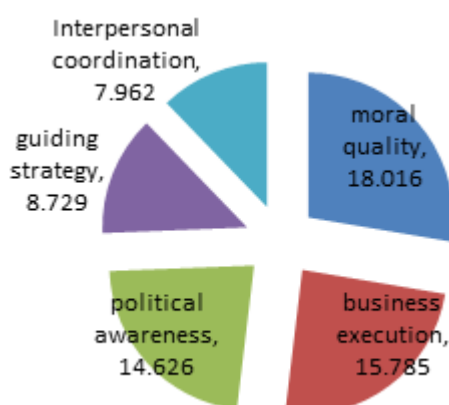


Figure 1: The 5 dimension of Chinese college counselors' literacy

Note: Numbers in the figure are the variance contribution rate of this factor.

(1) Moral quality refers to the establishment of a good style of doing things in work by counselors, teaching students by personal example as well as verbal instruction in the process of education so as to help students form the correct values, outlook on life and view of communication. (2) Business execution is an indispensable skill for counselors to handle daily affairs and involves many aspects such as leadership, instruction, observation, management, coordination, communication and practice. (3) Political awareness includes stressing that counselors should have a higher awareness of political awareness and awareness of the rule of law, be familiar with party affairs and the school's rules and regulations, and ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with laws and regulations. (4) Guiding strategy mainly refers to the guidance of counselors on students' development and the cultivation of students' ability. With the development of the times and the society, the counselors need to grasp more extracurricular, social and internet guiding strategies, and education should keep pace with the times. (5) Interpersonal coordination involves the skills of exchange and emotional interaction with students. Even if the counselors are undertaking great pressure of work, they should care and love students through self-regulation.

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