

# *A study of the relationship among competence, self-efficacy and job performance of university counselors*

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**Abstract:** Under the new educational environment, strengthening the construction of university counselor team, enhancing the competence and self-efficacy of counselors, and improving the job performance of counselors are the important contents of the innovation of university students' ideological and political education. Based on this, this paper analyzes the predictive role of university counselors' competence and self-efficacy on job performance from the aspects of job dedication, task performance and interpersonal promotion, specifically analyzes the real dilemma of counselors' competence and self-efficacy, and explores the strategies of improving university counselors' competence and self-efficacy from the aspects of performance evaluation, training program development and professional quality cultivation. The aim is to provide some useful references to improve the quality of university counselors' work.

## **1. Introduction**

In 2023, the Ministry of Education issued 'the Circular on the Priority Construction Work of Training and Seminar Centers for Ideological and Political Workforce in Universities in 2023'. (hereinafter referred to as the Circular). The Circular emphasizes the importance of focusing on the main responsibilities of counselors, strengthening the training objectives, and improving the quality and ability of counselors in all aspects. Counselors are the main force of student management in universities, an important and indispensable part of the faculty and student management in universities, as well as the guide for the healthy growth of university students. With the continuous change of education situation, universities should improve the knowledge of counselors' competence and self-efficacy, pay attention to improving counselors' competence and self-efficacy, improve counselors' professionalism, and enhance counselors' job performance.

## **2. The Predictive Role of Competence and Self-Efficacy on Job performance of University Counselors**

### **2.1. Forecasting job dedication**

The competence and self-efficacy of counselors can be a good predictor of job dedication.<sup>[1]</sup>In addition to being responsible for student management, counselors are also responsible for ideological and political education of university students, which requires counselors not only to

have certain management and leadership skills, but also to understand Marxist theory and have certain ideological and moral qualities. Specifically, counselors not only have to personally participate in classroom management and various affairs, but also have to deal with a variety of emergencies and problems, which requires good adaptability. In addition, counselors also need to guide the ideological values of university students correctly as well as have moral integrity, to set a good example for university students. Therefore, the adaptability, participation ability, ideological and moral cultivation level and self-efficacy of counselors' competence can be a good predictor of job dedication.

## **2.2. Predicting task performance**

Counselors' competence and self-efficacy can be a good predictor of task performance. Observation ability is one of the important abilities that counselors need to have in student management, which can help counselors clarify the causes of problems in time, grasp the ins and outs of the matter, and then solve the problems accurately. For example, counselors can discover changes in students' thoughts and behaviors in a timely manner, provide humanistic care for students, understand the problems encountered by students in their lives and studies, help them solve their problems, promote the healthy growth of students physically and mentally, and complete various tasks. In addition, on the basis of the existing resources, counselors can clarify the goals and directions of student management, which can help to improve the enthusiasm and initiative of counselors to participate in the management of university students, complete the management tasks and improve the effectiveness of university student management. Therefore, observation ability in counselors' competence and self-efficacy can be a good predictor of task performance.

## **2.3. Predicting interpersonal facilitation**

Counselors' competence and self-efficacy can predict interpersonal facilitation better. In order to do a good job in daily management of university students, counselors not only need to have moral and ethical qualities as well as professional qualities, but also need to have good interpersonal skills. Only by penetrating into the university students' groups and becoming their mentors and friends, can they accurately grasp the students' needs and realize the optimization of management. This requires counselors to frequently participate in class activities, to contact and communicate with university students, so as to promote the formation of good interpersonal relations between teachers and students. Therefore, the adaptability, participation ability of counselors' competence and self-efficacy are good predictors of interpersonal relationships.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **3. The Realistic Dilemma of Competence and Self-Efficacy Enhancement for University Counselors**

### **3.1. Inadequate Perceptions of Counselor Competence and Self-Efficacy in Universities**

With the innovation and development of university students' ideological and political education, the role of counselors in teaching management has become more and more prominent. Under the guidance of relevant policies, universities have paid attention to and strengthened the service construction of counselors, formulated and issued relevant plans and supporting policies. However, the lack of substantive content in some of the plans and the lack of implementation of supporting policies, coupled with the lack of awareness in universities of the competence and self-efficacy of counselors, have resulted in a gap between the performance of counselors and their expectations. Most of the counselors in universities have different professional backgrounds, and some of them

have rich theoretical knowledge but lack practical experience, and there are problems such as insufficient charisma and scientific research ability to be improved, which can't meet the increasing requirements of student management. Some universities do not have a deep enough understanding of counselors' competence and self-efficacy, which leads to the incompatibility between counselors' competence training and their personal characteristics, which is not conducive to the future work of counselors.

### **3.2. Inadequate system for evaluating the competence of counselors**

A scientific and effective evaluation system can help counselors recognize their personal ability, improve their competence and enhance their performance. However, according to the current evaluation of counselor competence, the evaluation system of counselor competence is not sound enough, which is manifested in the following: on the one hand, the evaluation plan of counselor competence is not well formulated, the assessment goal is not clear enough, and it fails to fully combine the counselor's competence, and the assessment plan is not in conformity with the actual situation, which affects the assessment results. On the other hand, the assessment content is not comprehensive. The competence of counselors not only includes the level of ideological and moral cultivation, but also includes the ability to adapt and participate. When evaluating the competence of counselors, some universities just focus on the level of ideological and moral cultivation, but do not evaluate the indicators of resilience and participation ability enough, which affects the accuracy of the results of the evaluation of the counselors' competence.

### **3.3. Lack of leadership, awareness and innovation among some counselors**

The lack of leadership, awareness and innovation among university counselors is one of the major problems.<sup>[3]</sup> Firstly, counselors lack leadership. Counselors not only need to get along harmoniously with university students, but also need to have a certain degree of prestige. However, from the actual situation, some counselors still lack leadership. University students do not have enough trust in counselors, counselors do not set a good example for students, plus counselors and university students do not have enough communication, which ultimately leads to lower performance of counselors. Secondly, there is a lack of awareness of counselors. Some counselors have cognitive bias on their own career, ignoring their important role in the ideological and political education of university students, believing that the work content of counselors lacks professionalism, and the threshold of entry is low, which easily affects the realization of the performance goals of counselors. Thirdly, counselors are lacking in innovation ability. The professional fields of counselors are mainly concentrated in humanities and social sciences, and a few of them are from the fields of science and engineering. In fact, counselors are responsible for both the ideological and political education of university students and the management of university students, which requires counselors to master the knowledge of psychology, management, education and other disciplines. However, some counselors do not invest much energy in knowledge learning and are affected by their own professional knowledge.

However, some counselors do not invest much energy in knowledge learning, and due to the influence of their own professional knowledge, when they are in charge of students' management, they still choose the previous working mode, with insufficient integration of innovative elements.

## **4. Strategies for Improving Competence and Self-Efficacy of Counselors in Universities**

### **4.1. Formulate training programs for counselors based on individual characteristics to strengthen supervision and assessment**

In view of the cognitive deficit of counselors' competence and self-efficacy, universities should formulate targeted training programs for counselors by combining the personal characteristics of counselors, and at the same time, strengthen the supervision and assessment, to further understand the counselors' competence and self-efficacy, and to grasp the relationship between them and their job performance.<sup>[4]</sup> Firstly, universities should formulate a scientific counselor training program by combining the personal characteristics of counselors. Each counselor has different personality characteristics, age, gender, years of experience and other characteristics which will, to a certain extent, affect the counselor's sense of competence and self-efficacy. Therefore, universities should implement targeted training plans and develop scientific and effective training programs in accordance with the personal characteristics of counselors. On the one hand, for the counselor team, set up special training funds, enrich the training course resources, improve the training methods, so that counselors can master more professional skills. On the other hand, combined with the actual situation of the counselor team, improve the relevant policies, provide counselors with opportunities for further study, require that the specialty of further study is consistent with the content of the counselor's work, and constantly improve the counselor's professional qualities, such as psychology, ideological and political education and so on. Secondly, universities should collaborate with counselors to design career plans that are tailored to their own characteristics, combine historical successful experiences and design different development directions based on the characteristics of counselors themselves. For example, some counselors are good at communicating with college students, so universities can provide career guidance for professionals in this field, and focus on supporting counselors to learn relevant knowledge and improve their professional competence. Thirdly, learning new education concepts, strengthening supervision and assessment to ensure the implementation of supporting policies. With the continuous innovation and development of higher education, universities should study the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, learn new education concepts, and deeply understand the relationship between counselors' competence, self-efficacy and job performance. On this basis, they should optimize the supporting policy system, improve the policy content, and at the same time, increase the implementation of the policy and do a good job of supervision and assessment, such as taking the implementation of the supporting policy as one of the main contents of the assessment, so that the supporting policy can be put in place.

### **4.2. Constructing a performance evaluation system for counselors based on competency modeling**

With regard to the incomplete evaluation system of counselors' competence, universities should build a sound performance evaluation system for counselors around the competence model, to understand the comprehensive ability of counselors, and to provide useful references for the innovation of student management work.<sup>[5]</sup> First, first of all, make a plan. Before making the performance appraisal plan for counselors, universities should set up a special appraisal organization and equip special appraisal staff, including experts in different fields such as university student employment guidance, ideological and political education, psychology, etc., so as to lay the foundation for better appraisal work. At the same time, universities should also allow other department heads to participate, from their respective fields of specialization, put forward reasonable suggestions to ensure the performance appraisal results of the rationality. Secondly, the implementation stage. In the process of performance evaluation, universities should pay attention to

the use of evaluation methods, from process evaluation to result evaluation, all-round assessment of counselors' work performance, and enhance the fairness and accuracy of evaluation results. Finally, summarize and feedback. After the performance appraisal, according to the appraisal results, the counselors should make self-analysis and summaries according to their grades, which can be based on their adaptability, participation ability, observation ability, ideological and moral quality level, etc. They should share their successful experiences, analyse their shortcomings and clarify their goals and development directions. Before the performance appraisal, universities should take the actual situation into account and formulate a targeted appraisal plan. At the same time, universities should focus on competence and self-efficacy, improve the performance appraisal index system, take incorporate resilience, participation ability, interpersonal communication ability and leadership ability into the scope of the appraisal, expand the scope of the performance appraisal, and ensure the accuracy of the results of the performance appraisal.

#### **4.3 Focusing on practice and innovation to improve the level of counselors' professionalism**

Regarding the lack of leadership, cognition and innovation ability of some counselors, universities should pay attention to practice and innovation, strengthen publicity and education, increase the popularization of related knowledge, so that counselors can correctly understand their own profession, correct their work attitude and work style, set a good example for students, continuously improve the level of counselors' professionalism, enhance the counselors' competence and self-efficacy, and improve job performance. For one thing, in view of the predictive effect of counselors' competence and self-efficacy on their job performance, universities should organize and carry out thematic lectures on a regular basis, specifically focusing on the "enhancement of counselors' leadership". University leaders or experts in related fields can use on-site examples to enable counselors to grasp the key elements of leadership improvement. At the same time, they can provide counselors with timely guidance services to help them gradually master the ability to control the overall situation and all affairs. Secondly, in order to cultivate counselors' innovation and practice ability, universities should organize more internal practice activities. For example, conduct classroom honor contests on a classroom basis. Class students' daily behavioral performance, academic performance, students' moral cultivation level, class environment construction, management mode innovation can be included in the scope of the evaluation, play the role of counselor leadership and service, and build a good class group. In addition, universities can also carry out more internal communication activities for counselors, with the theme of innovation, encouraging counselors to communicate more, explore more, look for new solutions to problems, optimize the student management work mode, strengthen the counselor's sense of innovation, and gradually improve the counselor's ability to practice innovation.

#### **5. Conclusion**

In summary, counselors' competence and self-efficacy can effectively predict job dedication, task performance and interpersonal facilitation, and have a strong predictive effect on job performance. However, according to the current situation of counselors' competence and self-efficacy, there are still difficulties such as insufficient knowledge of counselors' competence and self-efficacy in universities, incomplete evaluation system of counselors' competence, and lack of leadership, cognition and innovation ability of some counselors. To address these problems, universities should take targeted measures: formulate counselor training programs based on individual characteristics, strengthen supervision and assessment; build a counselor performance evaluation system based on the competency model; focus on practice and innovation to improve counselors' professionalism.

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