The Relationship between Knowledge, Job satisfaction and Job Performance among University Counselors in China

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Cao Jie[1,2], Nur Naha Abu Mansor[1], Beni Widarman Yus Kelana[1]

[1]Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, [2]Xiangnan University, Hunan, China

Abstract
This paper was designed to analyze the direct effect of professional knowledge on job satisfaction and job performance among counselors in China. In addition, the mediating effect of job satisfaction within this relation was also tested. This article utilized a quantitative method by distributing questionnaires to counselors in 10 universities in Hunan province. Three hundred and ten responses were collected through stratified and simple random sampling method. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that counselors' knowledge was significantly related with their performance, and showed significantly related to job satisfaction. In addition, the result revealed that job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between knowledge and job performance.
Keywords: Knowledge, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, University Counselor

Introduction

University counselors are those who deal with all student affairs in universities in China. They are similar with student affairs professionals in western countries. At the same time, there are also differences. The counselor's job responsibilities include all aspects of students' life and study, and he/she is "a life mentor and friend who grows up healthily during university" (The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017). Meanwhile, an important responsibility of university counselors is conducting daily ideological and political education for university students. As this role is quite essential in connecting with student and also an important part in universities, higher requirements were also made for counselors, especially for the knowledge. According to the requirements of University Counselors' Professional Ability Standard (Provisional) for counselors' knowledge, counselors need to have broad knowledge reserves, and their knowledge system needs to comprehensively involve pedagogy, political science, psychology, sociology, management, law and other disciplines. However, previous research showed that counselors' knowledge structure was unreasonable and the professional knowledge was not enough (Dang, 2018; Lv, 2011). Meanwhile, counselors' satisfaction will directly influence their initiatives and also the stability of the whole group (Li, Xu, & Zou, 2019). Moreover, due to the complexity of the work content,

evaluating counselors' performance was difficult (Yang, 2013; Ye, 2017; Zhou, 2018). Therefore, this paper attempts to study the relationship among these three variables within counselors, and set the following research objectives:

Ⅰ. To identify the significant relationship between knowledge and job performance;

Ⅱ: To examine significant relationship between knowledge and job satisfaction;

Ⅲ: To determine the significant relationship between job satisfaction and job performance; and

Ⅳ: To identify the mediating role of job satisfaction to the relationship between knowledge and job performance.

Research Content
Knowledge refers to the specialized knowledge required in a particular field of expertise, and is also one of the constructs of competency (Boyatzis, 1982; Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). It is part of an employee's ability to acquire new information in order to fulfill job requirements (Saragih, Sanusi, & Manan, 2017). The importance of knowledge has increased drastically over the years, and knowledge, as a kind of resource gains interest in many industries, including the education industry (Sujatha & Krishnaveni, 2017). The knowledge acquired by counselors is the necessary prerequisite and foundation for carrying out the work of university counselors (Zhao, 2017). The knowledge required for a counselor mainly focuses on psychological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, management knowledge, career planning knowledge, ideological and political knowledge, professional knowledge related to student, party and league knowledge (Dong, 2019; Jin *et al*, 2014; Lv, 2011).

Job satisfaction is the emotional attitude of an employee towards work. which can be regarded as a general sense of work, or as a related attitude to various aspects of the job (Hoboubi et al., 2017). Job satisfaction can describe the feelings of employees towards their work since it will be affected by different factors (Jalagat, 2016). Scholars' researches on counselors' job satisfaction also originated from different angles. Some focused on the students' satisfaction about the counselors' work or studied the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Jiang, 2018; Liu, 2015). From the perspective of promoting the professional development of counselors, other scholars tried to construct questionnaires to understand the basic situation of satisfaction and put forward countermeasures and suggestions to improve satisfaction (Gan & Zheng, 2018; Liu, 2015).

Job performance is considered to be an essential part of organizational management (Yoke & Panatik, 2016). Numerous studies had been conducted to investigate employees' performance. Xie and Li (2021) conducted research about coworker's relationship, interpersonal trust and the performance among enterprises employees in China. The results revealed that interpersonal trust can be a mediator between coworker's relationship and their job performance. Omotunde and Alegbeleye (2021) focused on librarians' performance and found that talent management practices can affect librarians' performance after analyzing 277 data from Nigeria. Counselors' job performance is an important embodiment of their job effect. For university counselor, the performance is mainly a collection of behaviors, as the outcome can be influenced by other factors not only the behaviors.

Previous research also showed the relationship between knowledge and job satisfaction or knowledge and job performance (Daddi et al., 2019; Ha et al., 2016; Ye & Chu, 2013). Liu and Guo (2019) paid attention to the competency of counselors in China, and stated that professional knowledge can effectively predict the individual performance of counselors. Furthermore, it can also be used as the main body of counselors' recruitment, training, promotion and performance evaluation. These results can also be found in the research of (Liang, 2018; Peng, 2018; Zhao, 2017). Dong (2018) emphasized that counselors need a wealth of knowledge and strive to provide students with all-round guidance services, which can efficiently improve the proficiency of students' daily management. Qin, Ou, Song, Fan, and He (2019) found that clinical knowledge is positively correlated with job satisfaction. Ye and Chu (2013) constructed a seven-dimension professional competency model for railway skilled personnel, and found that the job-related skills and knowledge have a positive effect on the job satisfaction. This is in line with the finding of Daddi et al (2019), who confirmed that the knowledge level of environmental verifiers is positively correlated with the satisfaction of environmental managers. Aydogmus, Camgoz, Ergeneli, and Ekmekci (2018) considered that employee who has high satisfaction also showed higher performance. In addition, Faraz and Indartono (2018) considered that employees will adjust their personal knowledge to fit the job according to the characteristics of the position. This attitude will enhance the psychological attachment to the job and enable employees to show positive behaviors, which will improve their satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied with their work are more likely to strive for better results and gain high performance. Based on the above review, the following hypotheses are generated.

H1: There exists a significant relationship between knowledge and job performance;

H2: There exists a significant relationship between knowledge and job satisfaction;

H3: There exists a significant relationship between job satisfaction and job performance; and

H4: Job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between knowledge and job performance.

Research Method
Data were collected using stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods. Three hundred and ten responses were collected among university counselors in Hunan province. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM.

Data Analysis
Common method variance (CMV) will exist if using similar measuring tools(Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009). Since self-reported questionnaires were the only source in collecting data in this research, it was necessary to check the CMV. As suggested by Kock and Lynn (2012), testing the VIF value can be a method to check the common method variance. If the VIF value is no more than 3.3, it means that common method bias here is not a problem. Table 1 showed the result of full collinearity. All the value of VIF were less than 3.3, which demonstrated that common method bias was not a problem in this research.

Table 1 Full Collinearity Result

	Knowledge	Performance	Satisfaction
VIF	1.950	2.716	1.657

Measurement Model

Two steps were adopted in testing the model in this research, which were testing the measurement model and the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The measurement model included three assessments that were internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity as suggested by (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018).

In measuring the internal consistency reliability, composite reliability (CR) was used (Hair et al., 2017). For convergent validity, loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) were checked (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018). Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to access discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The value of loadings need to be more than 0.6, the AVE value need be equal to and more than 0.5, while the CR value should be more than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Ramayah et al., 2018).

Table 2 Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Knowledge	KNO1	0.678	0.899	0.559
	KNO2	0.723		
	KNO3	0.772		
	KNO4	0.792		
	KNO5	0.783		
	KNO6	0.752		
	KNO7	0.728		
Performance	PER1	0.667	0.966	0.53
	PER10	0.776		
	PER11	0.686		
	PER12	0.757		
	PER13	0.733		
	PER15	0.645		
	PER16	0.676		
	PER17	0.621		
	PER18	0.683		
	PER19	0.673		
	PER2	0.696		
	PER20	0.725		
	PER21	0.772		
	PER22	0.792		
	PER23	0.797		
	PER24	0.697		
	PER25	0.73		
	PER26	0.732		
	PER3	0.706		
	PER4	0.769		
	PER5	0.763		
	PER6	0.783		
	PER7	0.761		
	PER8	0.756		
	PER9	0.771		
Satisfaction	SAT10	0.739	0.925	0.507
	SAT11	0.789		
	SAT15	0.728		
	SAT16	0.676		
	SAT19	0.626		
	SAT20	0.748		
	SAT3	0.705		
	SAT4	0.765		
	SAT5	0.703		
	SAT6	0.699		
	SAT7	0.656		
	SAT9	0.698		

Note: PER27, PER14, SAT18 and SAT1were deleted because of low loadings; SAT17, SAT2, SAT8, SAT12, SAT13 and SAT14 were deleted in order to achieve acceptable AVE.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3
1.Knowledge			
2.Performance	0.757		
3.Satisfaction	0.418	0.631	

Structural Model

Path analysis was proceeded to test the relationship among variables. According to Hair et al. (2017) and Ramayah et al. (2018), the value of path coefficient, standard error, p-value, t-value, confidence intervals and effect sizes were all reported in this structural model through conducting bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resamples and two-tail set.

Table 4 showed the result of the direct relationship among each variable. It can be seen that knowledge (β=0.532, t value=12.391, p value< 0.01) and job satisfaction (β=0.418, t value=9.688, p value< 0.01) were all significantly related to job performance, which ca concluded that H1 and H3 were accepted. Meanwhile, knowledge was also significantly related with job satisfaction (β = 0.393, t value= 7.643, p value < 0.01). Thus, H2 was also accepted. For mediation test, the study of Preacher and Hayes (2008) was followed in this research. And bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resample and two-tail set was conducted to test the indirect relationship. Table 5 presented the result of mediation hypothesis test. It can be concluded that job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between knowledge and job performance, as the result demonstrated a significant relation (β = 0.249, t value= 5.768, p value < 0.01). Thus, H4 was supported.

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing the Direct Relationship

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	T-value	P-value	BCI LL	BCI UL	f^2
H1	knowledge→performance	0.532	0.043	12.391	0.000	0.445	0.614	0.649
H2	knowledge→satisfaction	0.393	0.051	7.643	0.000	0.282	0.483	0.183
H3	satisfaction→performance	0.418	0.043	9.688	0.000	0.330	0.499	0.401

Table 5 Mediation Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	T-value	P-value	BCI LL	BCI UL
H4	knowledge→satisfaction→ performance	0.249	0.043	5.768	0.000	0.162	0.325

Conclusion

Based on the analysis result, it can be concluded that knowledge and job satisfaction had significant relationships with job performance among university counselors. Thus, H1 and H3 were accepted. In addition, job satisfaction was positively and significantly related with job performance. Thus, H3 was supported. Meanwhile, job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between knowledge and job performance, which demonstrated that H4 was also accepted. It also can be seen that knowledge contributed 53.2% effect on job performance, followed by job satisfaction which contributed 41.8% effect on job performance. Knowledge contributed 39.3% effect on job satisfaction, while the other 60.7% was influenced by other factors that not mentioned in this research.

The findings revealed that with more knowledge and higher satisfaction about this job, higher performance will be achieved by counselor. From a practical view, student affairs department of university can formulate corresponding policies to improve the performance of counselors and better manage the counselor team according to these results. For instance, university administrators can improve counselors' knowledge level through various effective ways such as training and communication, and improve counselors' satisfaction by improving payment, promotion channels, job accomplishment and other measures, so as to improve counselors' job performance. Meanwhile, the basic knowledge can be specified clearly while in recruiting and selecting the counselors. In addition, it utilized job satisfaction as a mediator to detect the relationship between knowledge and performance since very few research focused on the relationship among these three variables. Moreover, this study also provided new knowledge for the education industry rather than enterprises as it mainly focused on

university counselors. At the same time, this research has contributed to the literature related to knowledge, and proved the role of knowledge in improving job performance.

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