Job Stress, Burnout, Job Satisfaction, & Turnover Intentions among College Counselors & Student Affairs Professionals

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Abstract
Turnover among college counseling and student affairs professionals is a critical concern for the profession. In this cross-sectional correlational research investigation, we examined job stress and burnout in relationship to their job satisfaction and turnover intentions among a national sample of college counselors and student professionals. We found that higher levels of job stress and burnout associated with greater job dissatisfaction and increased turnover intentions. In this poster session, we will discuss the literature on the factors related to college counselors' turnover, the methodology employed in the study, a detailed description of the results, and implications for student affairs professionals along with future research directions.

Literature review
Student affairs staff and college counselors (SASCC) perform multifaceted jobs that can be challenging and empathetically demanding. Turnover among this population is problematic and costly to universities and colleges. Surprisingly, there is little research on the stress burnout, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction among student affairs staff and college counselors. Student affairs staff and college counselors that had ambiguous roles or have role conflict (e.g., performing work roles that are not typical) were more likely to leave their job and greater job dissatisfaction (Tull, 2014). Marshall and colleagues (2016) found that difficult workloads that lead to burnout, poor pay, new career paths, conflicts between work and personal life, lack of advancement, poor fit with supervisor and institution, and lack of passion are more reasons for student affairs staff and college counselors to leave the field. Limited large sample quantitative research on this topic.

Research Questions:
• What is the relationship between SASCC’s demographic characteristics and their work-related stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention?
• Does SASCC’s work-related stress and burnout predict their job satisfaction, and turnover intention?

Method
We surveyed 789 student affairs staff and college counselors regarding their burnout, stress, job satisfaction, and job turnover using email and a Qualtrics site. We identified 3,000 participants from across the U.S. using the National Center for Education Statistics and 789 completed the study (27% response rate). We used several measures, including the Stress in General Scale (SIP; Stanton et al., 2001), the Burnout Measure – Short Version (BMS; Malach-Pines, 2005), the Overall Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (OJSQ; Andrews & Whithey, 1976), a measure of turnover intentions, and a demographics form.

Results
• Job stress did not correlate with participant’s age but did have a small positive relationship with their experience working in student affairs (r = .07, p < .05).
• Participants’ job satisfaction, stress, and burnout did not have a statistically significant difference based on their school type, school location, ethnicity, gender, highest degree earned, or position. Also, job satisfaction and burnout did not relate to their age, and years of experience.
• Turnover intentions had a small negative correlation with participants’ age (r = -.15, p < .001) and their experience working in student affairs (r = -.09, p < .05).

Discussion
In general, this study found that participants had low levels of job stress, burnout, and job satisfaction with high job satisfaction. Job stress and burnout were related to job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Findings support existing research (Marshall and colleagues, 2016; Tull, 2014) with a more comprehensive methodologies. 

Implications:
• It is critical for student affairs staff and college counselors to be cognizant of their professional wellbeing as to ensure effective and competent services for the organization they work and the students they serve.
• Supervisors should provide effective supervision that may mediate stress and burnout among
• Programs training students to work in student affairs staff and college counselors can also heed the findings from this study.

Limitations:
• The generalizations of these findings may be limited.
• These findings are correlational not causal
• Methods relied on self-reported data.

Future Research:
• These findings should be replicated to confirm results and to further understand the stress and burnout among SAPs.
• Researchers could explore methods that SAPs use to manage and cope with the difficulties experienced while at work as a means to buffer the effect of stress and burnout.
• A noteworthy pursuit for researchers is to examine the reasons SAPs leave a position as where they pursue new jobs
• Examine the effectiveness of professional development or educational training interventions at preventing job stress and burnout.
• Examine strategies to prevent stress among SAPs.