The Relationship Among Career Commitment, Career Satisfaction and Career Burnout of Special Education Teachers

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Keywords: Special education teachers; Career commitment; Career satisfaction; Career burnout.

Abstract. 347 special education teachers were used as subjects, and the relationship among career commitment, career satisfaction and career burnout were investigated by questionnaire survey. The result showed: Career commitment had a significant positive effect on the career satisfaction, and it had a significant negative effect on career burnout; Career satisfaction had a significant negative predictive effect on career burnout, and it was a complete mediator variable of career commitment and career burnout. Therefore, Career satisfaction played an important role in maintaining special education teachers’ career commitment and effectively avoiding their career burnout.

Introduction

Teachers' career commitment refers to the situation of professional identity. A teacher with higher career commitment is more likely to love and strive for their professional goals. Teachers' career satisfaction refers to a general feeling and view of their occupation, working conditions [1], it not only affects teachers’ enthusiasm, but also affects the quality of education in schools. Teacher’s career burnout is an extreme reaction when a teacher is unable to cope with working pressure smoothly, and that is a kind of prostrate state in mood, attitude and behavior caused by long-term pressure [2]. Some research found that teacher is a high-risk group for career burnout [3], and their burnout has a great negative impact on the growth and development of students and themselves.

Literature analysis shows that there is a certain correlation among career commitment, satisfaction and burnout [4-6]. But these materials barely focus on special education teachers, and most of these try to find the relationship between two variables. Based on these, with taking special education teachers as objects, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship among career commitment, career satisfaction and career burnout and to provide reference for the construction and management of special education teachers.

Methods

Objects of Study

The distribution of subjects involved 17 provinces, and they were measured in a group. This study delivered 370 questionnaires and received 347 copies. The effective rate was 94%, and in this group, included 51 (14.7%) males and 296 (85.3%) females.

Research Tools

Career Commitment Questionnaire. Occupational Commitment Sale for Middle School and Elementary School Teachers was produced by Lirong Long and Xia Li [7]. The questionnaire consists of 16 subjects, which are divided into three dimensions: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment, and it uses five grades, from "complete nonconformity" to "complete conformity". In this study, the Cronbach’s α and split-half reliability were 0.882 and 0.749 respectively. The correlation between each dimension and the total questionnaire was between 0.628 and 0.844.

Career Satisfaction Questionnaire. The questionnaire compiled by Fuming Xu et al. was reference to Greenhaus's scale [8],and it is used to measure the satisfaction of success, goal progress
etc. in personal career. The questionnaire also uses five grades, from "complete nonconformity" to "complete conformity". In this study, the Cronbach’s α and split-half reliability were 0.870 and 0.850 respectively. The correlation between each item and the total questionnaire was between 0.791-0.855.

**Career Burnout Questionnaire.** The questionnaire of teacher’s career burnout compiled by Lei Shishan and Fengqiang Gao was with reference to Maslach's scale (Maslach Burnout Inventory, MBI) [9]. The questionnaire has 22 questions, which are divided into three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, refers to someone feeling tension and losing enthusiasm for work; Depersonalization, refers to a person feeling irritability, apathy to his work; Reduced Personal Accomplishment, refers to the individual feeling incompetent to job [10]. The questionnaire uses the Likert's 5-point scoring method, in which Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization are positively scored, while Reduced Personal Accomplishment are scored reversely (that means the higher the score is, the more serious the teacher's career burnout is). In this study, the Cronbach’s α of the total questionnaire was 0.915, and the split-half reliability was 0.755. The correlation between each dimension and the total questionnaire was between 0.742-0.891.

**Data Handling.** After collecting questionnaires, the data were recorded and analyzed on SPSS20.0.

**Results**

**Correlation between Career Commitment, Career Satisfaction and Career Burnout**

The Table 1 showed: career commitment and its three dimensions were significantly positively correlated with career satisfaction; career burnout and its three dimensions were significantly negatively correlated with the affective commitment, normative commitment and the total score of career commitment; continuance commitment was significantly positively correlated with career burnout and its three dimensions; career satisfaction had a significantly negative correlation with career burnout and its three dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Affective Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2 Continuance Commitment</td>
<td>0.074</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Normative Commitment</td>
<td>0.607**</td>
<td>0.321**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Career Commitment</td>
<td>0.763**</td>
<td>0.628**</td>
<td>0.844**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>-0.412**</td>
<td>0.232**</td>
<td>-0.244**</td>
<td>-0.190**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Depersonalization</td>
<td>-0.349**</td>
<td>0.272**</td>
<td>-0.160**</td>
<td>-0.108*</td>
<td>0.700**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Reduced Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>-0.360**</td>
<td>0.132*</td>
<td>-0.259**</td>
<td>-0.218**</td>
<td>0.409**</td>
<td>0.472**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Career Burnout</td>
<td>-0.459**</td>
<td>0.251**</td>
<td>-0.277**</td>
<td>-0.217**</td>
<td>0.891**</td>
<td>0.837**</td>
<td>0.742**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Career Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.701**</td>
<td>0.271**</td>
<td>0.682**</td>
<td>0.739**</td>
<td>-0.322**</td>
<td>-0.187**</td>
<td>-0.212**</td>
<td>-0.308**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * means p < 0.05 ** means p < 0.
The Intermediary Function of Career Satisfaction between Career Commitment and Burnout

From the correlation analysis, we could know that there was a significant pairwise correlation between career commitment, satisfaction and burnout, which accorded with mediating effect analysis condition. This study analyzed mediation by using causal steps. The steps were as follows: Firstly, take career commitment as a predictive variable, career burnout as a dependent variable. Secondly, take career commitment and burnout as predictive and dependent variable respectively. Thirdly, use both of career commitment and career satisfaction as predictive variables, career burnout as dependent variable. The results were shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>career burnout</td>
<td>career commitment</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>-0.217</td>
<td>-4.130</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>career satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>career satisfaction</td>
<td>career commitment</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>20.377</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>career satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>career burnout</td>
<td>career commitment</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>career satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.325</td>
<td>-4.268</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *** means $p < 0.001$

Table 2 showed that career commitment had a direct effect on career burnout ($\beta=-0.217$, $p<0.001$), and in the step 3, the effect of commitment did not reach significance ($\beta=0.023$, $p>0.05$), but the mediating effect of career satisfaction was significant ($\beta=-0.325$, $p<0.001$). These data revealed that career satisfaction played a completely mediating role between career commitment and career burnout.

Conclusions

The Relationship between Career Commitment and Career Satisfaction

The results about career commitment and career satisfaction in this study are consistent with which in foreign research basically [11, 12, 13]. It shows that, for the teachers in special school, with higher commitment comes higher satisfaction. Career commitment means teachers' recognition, affection and devotion to their job, and career satisfaction is a comprehensive emotional judgment of satisfaction to their job. If special education teachers have higher career commitment, they will work with a passion, resolve difficulties actively, and be more satisfied with the career.

The Relationship between Career Commitment and Career Burnout

The relationship between career commitment and career burnout found in this study concurs with a study had done by Yildirim, I [14]. Besides, Salehi et al., and Tekin et al. also point out that the rise of teachers' career burnout is accompanied by a decrease in career commitment [15, 16]. Teachers' enthusiasm and sense of responsibility for the their work can protect them from burnout during the long years of repeating tasks. However, it is notable that continuance commitment is positively correlated with career burnout. Because if there is an opportunity to engage a higher income, social status and professional prestige, many teachers with high burnout may exhibit a higher turnover tendency. That will inevitably affect the stability of special education teachers.

The Relationship between Career Satisfaction and Career Burnout

There is a negative correlation between career satisfaction and career burnout, which was consistent with the findings of Platsidou, M [19]. We all found that the more satisfied with working environment, teaching achievements, welfare rewards teachers are, the more active they will be in facing and solving problems at work. If teachers lose enthusiasm and interests for their work, they
won’t be willing to devote more effort to their work. Naturally, with appearance of negative mindset it’s easy to produce career burnout.

**The Mediation of Career Satisfaction between Career Commitment and Career Burnout**

This study found that career satisfaction played an important role in maintaining career commitment of special education teachers. This result indicated that the career satisfaction had a direct relationship with career burnout, and the effect of career commitment on career burnout depends on career satisfaction. Therefore, improving teachers’ career satisfaction will be a good measure to reduce their career burnout. So maybe we can try to create a harmonious working environment, and improve the social status, salary and welfare of special education teachers. Additionally, create a broader career development space to make teachers feel more career success can be a good idea too. Through above methods, with rising satisfaction, teachers’ career burnout will decrease naturally. Then they will be more enthusiastic in teaching.

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**References**


