Study on Job Burnout of the Librarians in University

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Abstract: Job burnout is a common phenomenon in librarians, especially in university. Librarians' job burnout will affect their health, library development and information transfer. Therefore, it is necessary to study librarians' job burnout. In this study, 130 librarians from four universities were investigated on job burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. The collected investigation data were analyzed using statistic software, and the results showed that different librarians had different degree of job burnout. Furthermore, some important reasons resulting in job burnout were analyzed and some solutions to relieve job burnout were proposed based on this result.

Keywords: job burnout; librarian; investigation; statistic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Job burnout is a syndrome of physical and mental health caused by prolonged exposure to stress associated with the gradual erosion of important technical, psychological, and social resources [1, 2]. People who work in human services are susceptible to higher job burnout than others. Some of the symptoms of job burnout show irritability, hopeless, unexplained headaches, backaches or other physical problems. Job burnout was described as a tripartite syndrome involving feelings of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DS), and lack of personal accomplishment (LPA) [3]. EE is associated with syndrome of depletion of physical and mental energy; DS refers to negative attitude toward supervisor, subordinates, colleagues, clients, and the other people that one has to work with; LPA is associated with an employee's feelings of reduced job performance and other contribution to the organization [4].

Job burnout is a common social phenomenon [5-9], however in university, most studies on job burnout are focused on the teachers who have many classes or lots of research work, only few studies were reported on job burnout of the librarians as teaching-assisted staff in university [10, 11]. In fact, job burnout can affect librarians' job satisfaction and their working efficiency, bring about mental and physical illness, impair the working relationship between librarians and readers, and even affect overall service level for readers. Many researches showed that Librarians could low their level of time and energy in job involvement due to work stress [12-14]. Inevitably, prolonged work stress can result in job burnout.

With the development of social economy and culture, the library in university as a service department must provide lots of information for teachers, students and other readers, but partial librarians working in library show probably job burnout to some extent, resulting from prolonged stress. Of course, it is probably different in the librarians owing to the differences of gender, age, education background or professional title. Therefore in this present study, 130 librarians from four universities were asked to answer questions on job burnout including EE, DS and LPA through scoring method, then the data were collected and analyzed. This objectives here is to provide some references for the related administrators.

METHODS
Participants

In this study, 130 librarians (40 men and 90 women) from four universities in china volunteered to participate questionnaire survey, their age ranged from 21 to 60, and academic degree is from under bachelor, bachelor, master to doctor, and professional title includes assistant librarian, librarian, associate professor and professor.

Measures

The measures in this study referred the Maslach Burnout Inventory on job burnout questionnaire survey (MBI) [3]. The three subscales of the MBI of burnout are EE, DP and LPA. The three subscales are rated according to a 7-point Likert-type scale on which the respondent indicates how often a feeling had been experienced, ranging from 0 (never) to

6 (every day). The numerical responses were summed including EE, DP and RPA, the higher score indicated the higher level of job burnout. We defined that less than 1.5 as no job burnout, 1.5-3.5 as slight job burnout, and over 3.5 as serious job burnout [15].

Statistic analysis

SPSS version 11.5 was used to analyze the collected questionnaire data, including (1) descriptive statistics on the 130 librarians in EE, DP and LPA, consisting of range, minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis; (2) frequency distribution of 130 values derived from the 130 librarians in EE, DP and LPA, respectively; (3) descriptive statistics on the average values according to different gender, age, academic degree and professional title in EE, DP and LPA; and (4) correlation analysis among EE, DP and LPA for 40 male librarians and 90 female librarians, respectively.

RESULTS
Descriptive statistics in all librarians

Statistic results showed that different librarians had different scores in EE, DP or LPA (Table 1). Their ranges were 4, 4 and 5, respectively. For the average values, EE was the highest, up to 2.95, followed by DP, while LPA possessed the least value, only 2.05. For the two parameters skewness and kertosis, both EE and DP had negative values, whereas for LPA, the values of skewness and kertosis displayed positive. The result suggested that most of the 130 librarians had job burnout phenomenon to some extent.

Table 1: symptoms of job burnout in librarians

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
EE	130	4	1	5	2.95	1.02	-0.18	-1.02
DP	130	4	0	4	2.48	1.04	-0.43	-0.17
LPA	130	5	0	3	2.05	1.00	0.22	0.56

EE: emotional exhaustion; DS: depersonalization, LPA: lack of personal accomplishment; SD: standard deviation.
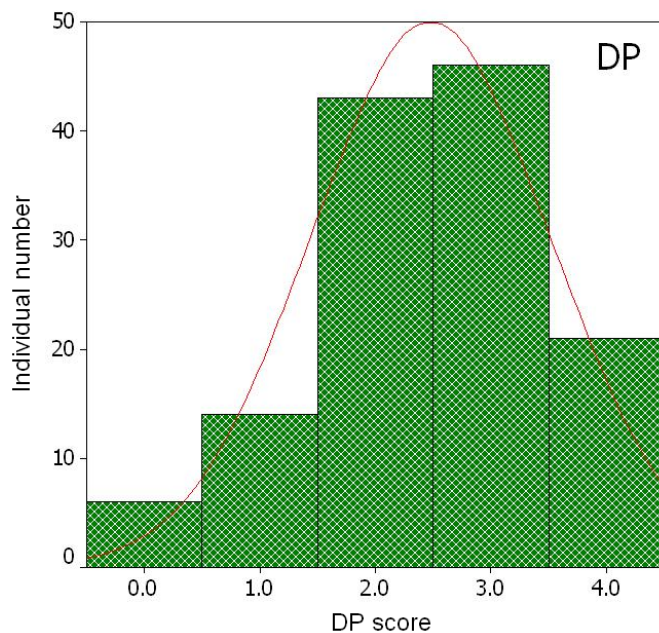
Frequency distribution

The collected data were used to draw frequency distribution graphs, and the result was displayed in Figure 1, 2 and 3, representing EE, DP and LPA, respectively. From the contents of the three graphs, it was found that the 130 data agreed with normal distribution in EE, DP and LPA. The result indicated that most of librarians had slight job burnout, and only few librarians showed no job burnout or serious job burnout.
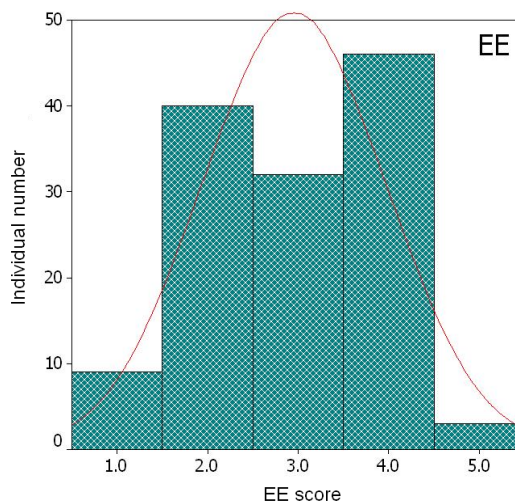
Fig-1: the frequency distribution graph of emotional exhaustion in 130 librarians. The horizontal axis indicating the score of emotional exhaustion, while the vertical axis indicating individual number

Fig-2: the frequency distribution graph of depersonalization in 130 librarians. The horizontal axis indicating the score of depersonalization, while the vertical axis indicating individual number
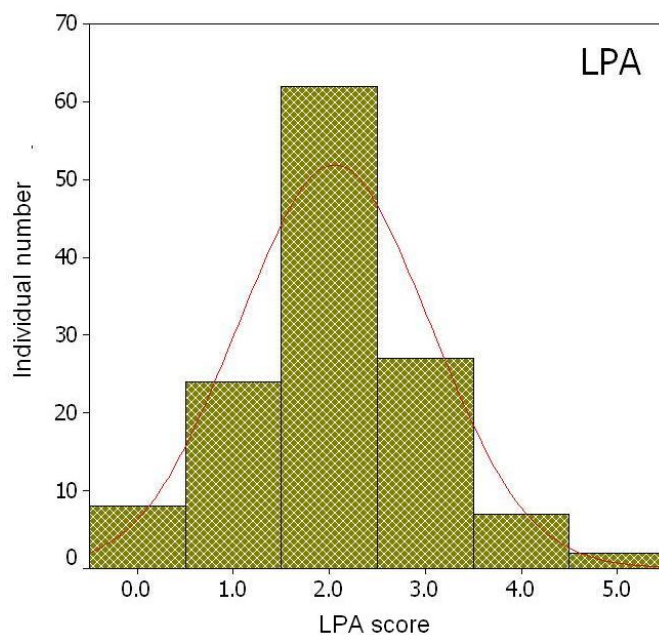
Fig-3: the frequency distribution graph of lack of personal accomplishment in 130 librarians. The horizontal axis indicating the score of lack of personal accomplishment, while the vertical axis indicating individual number

Descriptive statistics in different librarians

From Table 2, it was shown that female librarians had lower values in EE, DP and LPA than those of male librarians. According to age, these librarians possessing age from 51-60 had the least values in EE and DP, and the LPA value is also very low. From academic degree, the librarians having doctor degree presented the least values in EE, DP and LPA. Additionally, from professional title, these librarians titled by professor possessed the least values in all the three subscales of job burnout.

Table 2: symptoms of job burnout in different librarians

Category	Variables	N	EE		DP		LPA	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Gender	Men	40	2.98	1.07	2.50	1.11	2.23	1.27
	Women	90	2.90	0.98	2.42	0.97	1.94	0.84
Age	Age (21-30)	19	3.00	0.82	2.68	0.67	2.47	0.96
	Age (31-40)	46	2.91	1.07	2.39	1.06	1.83	1.06
	Age (41-50)	49	3.02	1.03	2.53	1.10	2.16	0.94
	Age (51-60)	16	2.81	1.11	2.31	1.14	1.88	0.89
Academic degree	Under bachelor	16	2.75	0.93	2.19	0.98	1.75	0.68
	Bachelor	49	2.84	1.03	2.33	0.99	1.9	1.14
	Master	59	3.14	0.97	2.73	0.98	2.31	0.86
	Doctor	6	2.67	1.51	2.00	1.67	1.67	1.37
Professional title	Assistant Librarian	18	3.00	1.08	2.50	0.99	2.33	1.28
	Librarian	53	2.98	0.95	2.45	1.01	1.92	0.94
	Associate professor	43	3.00	1.05	2.65	1.07	2.19	0.96
	Professor	16	2.69	1.14	2.06	1.06	1.81	0.91

EE: emotional exhaustion; DS: depersonalization, LPA: lack of personal accomplishment; SD: standard deviation.

Correlation analysis in male and female librarians

Correlation analysis was conducted using the collected data from the 130 librarians among EE, DP and LPA in male and female librarians, respectively. According to the correlation coefficients in Table 3 and 4, it was found that any two data among EE, DP and LPA presented positive correlation at 0.01 probability level. For male librarians, the correlation coefficient between DP and LPA was the maximum, while the value between EE and LPA displayed is the least. Different result was found in female librarians, the correlation coefficient between EE and DP was the maximum; the value between EE and LPA displayed is the least, similar to male librarians.

Table 3: correlation analysis on job burnout among EE, DP and PA for male librarians

	DP	LPA
EE	0.850 (**)	0.662 (**)
DP		0.900 (**)

** Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
EE: emotional exhaustion; DS: depersonalization, LPA: lack of personal accomplishment; SD: standard deviation

Table 4: correlation analysis on job burnout among EE, DP and PA for female librarians

	DP	LPA
EE	0.819 (**)	0.596 (**)
DP		0.736 (**)

** Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
EE: emotional exhaustion; DS: depersonalization, LPA: lack of personal accomplishment; SD: standard deviation

DISCUSSION

Many research results showed that most of librarians in university had job burnout phenomenon to some extent [16, 17], same result was found in this study. Job burnout will affect librarians' physical and mental health, and the construction and development of a library. More importantly, it will affect information transfer from library to reader, which will impede scientific development and social progress. Therefore, it is very necessary to relieve librarians' job burnout. Some important reasons and solutions were put forward here, and the related contents were listed as follows.

The reasons resulting in librarians' job burnout
Bad conventional views on library inducing librarians' job burnout

Library is the literature center in a university, and the academic institution providing information requirement for teaching and research [18]. Additionally, it is one of the most important evaluation indexes for a university. After entering the 21st century, the professional environment of library has great changes [19]. Firstly, the main transmission media of information in library has changed from paper media to electronic media in information storage and search.

Secondly, the professional activities in library need to invest more intellectual, owing to the change of work organization mode and content. However to this date, most people deem that the work in library is only some simple, mechanical and low-level repeated operation, because of the influence of conventional views. Thus, university library is only confirmed as a teaching-assisted department, not an independent academic institution. Presently, many librarians still belong to disadvantage group related to teachers, owing to long-term lacking social esteem and low economic income. These realities cause librarians' job burnout.

Low professional ability inducing librarians' job burnout

Library business is a kind of science, including wide contents and processes. For paper information, including many procedures such as collection, classification, cataloging, arranging order, circulating and returning frame. For electronic resources, including the design of homepage, database construction, information integration, information search, etc. All these tasks must be finished by librarians themselves. Moreover, librarians' jobs have the characters standardization and normalization, this requires librarians to invent lots of physical and mental labors, as well as possess high professional quality. However, some librarians have only low professional ability, which will lead to their job burnout.

Inappropriate management system inducing librarians' job burnout

Conventional management system in most university library thinks that work experience is more important than work ability for librarians, the related administrators often ignore the development and utilization of human resources, and pay attention to the service and management level, not librarians' professional development. Generally, the mechanism survival of the fittest is lacking in university library, so librarians' initiative and creativity are not be stimulated adequately. Additionally, librarians' academic title evaluation mainly depends on scientific achievements, not work performance. Furthermore, the benefit evaluation on library work is lagging and complicated, and the result is that librarians' achievements have ambiguous and lagging characteristics. The result suggested different librarians possessing different work attitude, work efficiency or work capacity could not be distinguished immediately. These inappropriate management systems in partial university library will reduce librarians' work initiative, and bring about their job burnout.

Some solutions to librarians' job burnout
Changing library function

University library is not only a service department, but also an academic institute. In order to adapt to the reform of higher education in new era, university library must strength scientific research, change traditional culture transmission function into knowledge creation function, and provide literature resources guarantee for the development of higher education. So the research function of a university library should be affirmed by related administrators, librarians' occupation image must be remodeled, and librarians' social status must be promoted, up to the level same as other teachers in a university. These countermeasures are beneficial for relieving librarians' job burnout to some extent.

Strengthening library culture construction

Every library has its culture spirit and concept belonging to itself, including work style, value idea and behavior mode. Thus, it is necessary to stimulate the sense of belonging, enthusiasm and creativity of a librarian, in order to enhance the working efficiency of librarians. Furthermore, library culture can promote the management and development of a library. So some important library culture should become the rules and regulations of a library, and must be abided strictly by librarians. Under an working environment with a good operating mechanism and the internal cultural atmosphere, the enthusiasm and creativity of librarians will be stimulated, and librarians' job burnout can also be alleviated effectively.

Improving librarians' professional ability

The university library should combine librarian's career development goal and the library development goal, and provide the guarantee for the librarian's career planning. Therefore, continuing education and various forms of training are two very important aspects in improving the service ability of a librarian. According to the requirements of individual development in libraries, library should provide many learning and training opportunities for them, to improve their professional quality. This practice can contribute to reducing librarians' job burnout to some extent.

SAMMARY

Presently, the social function and service content of library are undergoing profound changes, due to advanced information communication, and the development of the library in university must not only depend on the application of modern technique, but also need the elite librarians' job spirit and professional ability. Today, however, job burnout phenomenon is prevalent in the library of university, because of bad conventional views, low professional skill, or inappropriate management system. For relieving librarians' job burnout, it is necessary to enhance library research function, strengthening library culture construction, and improving librarians' professional ability. Only in this way, we can improve librarians'

well-being, and further promote library' management and service levels.

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