

An Empirical Study on the Core Competencies of College Counselors in China



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An Introduction to Related Studies in China and Abroad

With the introduction of “core competencies” and the release of the document on the “core competencies of student development” issued by the Ministry of Education of China, the research on “core competencies of students” has become a hot issue in Chinese academic circles, and this has also aroused some scholars’ interest in and concern about the core competencies of college counselors.

1. Research on Core Competencies

Internationally speaking, the wording “core competencies” first appeared in United Kingdom. In 1979, based on the need of vocational education development, the British College of Continuing Education first stipulated the core technical requirements of Vocational education. It pointed out that in the era of the rapid development of science and technology and the continuous prosperity of culture, all people should have some qualities that can benefit them for life. In 1997, the OECD carried out a project study on the definition and selection of competencies, which clearly pointed out that core competencies consist of three levels and nine elements. In 2010, the CC-SSO and NGA jointly formulated the Common Core State Standard (CCCS) concerning the core competencies requirement with regard to mathematics and English. In the 21st century, the European

Union has gradually developed the concept of “core competencies,” which include eight aspects: foreign language, mother tongue, scientific and technological and mathematical literacy, information literacy, civil and social literacy, artistic literacy, learning ability and entrepreneurship.

In China, the Opinions on Fully Deepening the Curriculum Reform and Implementing the Fundamental Task of moral education issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2014 clearly emphasized the core competencies system of students’ development, and scholars began to study and put forward the core competencies system of students’ development in each area. The seventh issue of *People’s Education* in 2015 holds that “core competency” is not a general literacy. The core competency emphasizes students’ self-cultivation, family and country feelings, and social care. It highlights students’ independent development, cooperative participation and creative practice. It is the key ability and necessity of students’ lifelong development requirements and social development needs. Professor Cheng Shangrong (2015) claims that core competency is a basic characteristic and ability. According to Lin Chongde (2017a), core competency mainly refers to the essential characteristic and key ability that students should possess to meet the needs of lifelong development and social development. Through comparative analysis and empirical investigation, Lin Chongde (2017b) points out that the general framework of Chinese students’ core competency system includes six indicators in three major areas. In his book “Research on Core Competencies of Student Development in the 21st Century”, Lin Chongde (2016) explores the core competency from the connotations associated with core competency, international comparison, excavation of traditional culture, and realistic needs.

1.1 Research on the quality of college counselors

In developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, there are no “college counselors” as personnel positions. Instead, certain teaching staff are involved in students’ wellbeing, and are referred to as, for example, “college student affairs managers”. David Warner and David Palfreyman (1996) believe that the basic task of college student affairs staff in Britain is to determine the scope of university student services, integrate the contents of university student services in various departments, and establish a unified university student service system. After a great deal of data analysis and literature research, Olga Rybalkina (2004) concluded that the most important tasks of British student affairs managers fall under four areas: leadership, human resources management, diversity and communication. At the same time, they also need to have the ability to apply professional theory, to guide, and to train. The most effective way to improve the self-development of student affairs managers is curriculum learning.

In China, scholars have different opinions on the quality of college counselors. According to the Ideological and Political Education of College Students compiled by Shanghai Higher Education Bureau, for a political counselor in Colleges and universities,

there are four key qualities: political, ideological, knowledge and ability. According to Zhang Wenqiang (2007), the qualities that college counselors should possess are moral accomplishment, ability, knowledge and psychological quality. Peng Qinghong (2006) believes that the quality of college counselors includes three dimensions: management ability, professional knowledge and personal ideological and political education. Yu Lei (2016) believes that the quality of college counselors should be the sum of political, ideological, moral, legal, psychological and physical qualities, as well as other basic conditions and abilities. Zhang Rongrong believes that college counselors should have a strong sense of career and social responsibility (Rongrong 2005). Mo Yuan believes that the political quality of college counselors is a major issue related to personnel training (Mo Yuan 2017). Liu Dige (2016) believes that the moral accomplishment of college counselors should include four aspects: personal morality, family virtue, professional morality and social morality. Wang Miaozi (2016) believes that in the ideological and moral quality system of College counselors, political determination is the premise and moral character is the core. Wang Wu (2014) believes that college counselors should have a multi-knowledge structure. Liu Qian (2014) believes that communicative ability is the key to the smooth development of ideological and political education and the daily management of college counselors. Zhang Yaocan (2014) also put forward the concept of quality structure. He thought that the quality structure of college counselors can be classified into political, moral, ideological, legal, physical, aesthetic and psychological qualities, along with knowledge and labor skills.

1.2 Research on the core competencies of college counselors

From the perspective of college counselors' work responsibilities, Zhang Xiulai considers that their core competencies include ideological and political education, management ability and professional knowledge, and points out that the cultivation of college counselors' core competencies needs to optimize internal and external factors (Zhang Xiulai 2016). Wang Xiaolan (2017) analyzed the core competencies of college counselors from the following four aspects: ideological and moral, ideological and political, professional knowledge, and professional ability; and put forward opinions and suggestions on the cultivation of this group's core qualities.

From the point of view of the existing research, scholars are more concerned with the core competencies of students and the quality of college counselors, while the research on the core competencies of college counselors is still in its infancy, and there is not a great deal of related research, and there is a lack of systematic and in-depth exploration and research, especially in terms of empirical research. Then, can we really explore the core competencies of college counselors through empirical research? Can we construct the structure model for the core competencies of college counselors? This has aroused the authors' interest and deep thinking.

2. A Survey of the Core Competencies of College Counselors

The authors took 450 students and student management personnel from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou Sport University and South China Business College of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies as subjects, conducted some relevant investigations, and made an empirical study on the core competencies of college counselors. The study sought to explore the composition of the core competencies of college counselors and attempted to construct the structure model for the core competencies of college counselors.

2.1 The design and implementation of the questionnaire

2.1.1 Developing the Predictive Questionnaire of College Counselors' Core Competencies

Firstly, an open questionnaire was originally designed by the authors to test counsellors, college students and managers. Approval was received for survey-based research with human subjects of Institutional Board of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. 121 college counselors, college students and managers, including 22 college counselors, 82 college students and 17 student managers were recruited randomly on four universities. The form of informed consent was presented to all participants. In total, 121 questionnaires were distributed and 121 questionnaires were retrieved. Personal data were anonymized and protected by the principal investigator. The study was conducted in 2019/2020.

The key words of the college counselors' core competencies were obtained through an open questionnaire, and the occurrence frequency of key words was more than 10 times (see Table 1), and the characteristic items were preliminarily determined.

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Key word	Frequency
Fairness and justice	113
Responsibility	91
Love students	91
Be good at listening	82
Have a large stock of information	78
Charming personality	76
Spirit of utter devotion	68
Humanistic competencies	65
Political competencies	61
Ideological and moral cultivation	20
Positive and optimistic	20
Conscientiousness	18
Proficiency on work	16
Care for students	16
Communication skills	15
Organizational coordination capacity	14
Patient	14
Love and devote oneself to one's work	14
Understanding students	13
Caring	13
Affinity	13
Excellent psychological quality	12
Have wide range of knowledge	11
Endure hardships and be capable of hard work	11
Open personality	10

Table 1: Statistical table of keywords with a frequency of more than 10 in open-ended questionnaires on college counselors' core competencies.

Referring to the above open-ended questionnaire results, they were combined with the authors' work experience as college counselors, consulting a wide range of literature on college counselors and related policy documents, and integrating the relevant information and information from this study. 66 feature summary projects were selected, plus 2 lie detection projects. Sentences were organized to explain each project, and the "Predictive Questionnaire of Survey and Research on College Counselors' Core Competencies" was compiled.

2.1.2 Test and analysis of the predictive questionnaire

(i) Predictive questionnaire test

A total of 63 college counselors, college students and student work related managers from different universities in Guangzhou were tested with a predictive questionnaire, including 7 college counselors, 52 college students and 4 managers. The subjects were instructed to fill in the Predictive Questionnaire of College Counselors' Core Competencies, according to the 7-point subscale (1=very disagreeable, ... 7=very agreeable). They were asked to score each item and evaluate "What do you think the core competencies of college counselors should include?". A total of 63 questionnaires were sent out and 63 questionnaires were recovered, of which 59 were valid, and the effective rate was 93.7%.

(ii) Reliability and validity test

The reliability of the test questionnaire is tested to examine whether each item of the test questionnaire is a direct topic and has a consistent orientation. The aim was to eliminate invalid questionnaires and basic information items, and to analyze the reliability of the remaining items. In the small sample test, the internal reliability Cronbach's Alpha is 0.987. Generally, scholars believe that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient >0.8 suggests very good reliability. The reliability coefficient of this study is 0.987. Therefore, there is consistency within the questionnaire.

The content validity of the questionnaire is tested to examine whether each item of the questionnaire can reflect one aspect of the content of the questionnaire. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, basic information items and lie detection items, we made a factor analysis of the remaining items. In the small sample test, KMO and Bartlett's Spherical Test showed that the KMO of the sample was 0.816, greater than 0.6. Through Bartlett's Spherical Test with significant p value less than 0.05, the data were suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis method uses the principal component analysis method. The standard of factor extraction is that the feature root be greater than 1. The rotation method chooses the maximum variance method, and the number of the factor extraction is not limited. The cumulative variance contribution rate is 79.427% and the total explanatory power is more than 70% when nine factor components are formed by factor rotation. It is generally believed that the cumulative variance contribution rate, the total explanatory power of more than 70%, can explain most of the information of the indicators. Combined with the results of the rotation matrix, the factor load of each item is more than 0.4, which shows that the items of the questionnaire have a good discrimination, so the test questionnaire is valid.

(iii) preliminary analysis of exploratory factors

After eliminating basic information items and lie detection items, the sample questionnaire is suitable for exploratory factor analysis. According to the principal component factor analysis, the extraction criteria are based on eigenvalue greater than 1. The rotation method uses the maximum variance method to carry out repeated exploratory analysis of samples. According to the results of the principal component analysis, the following deletions are made: delete common items whose factor load is greater than 0.4, delete only one factor in a component. For items with sub-loads greater than 0.4, the factor with sub-loads less than 0.4 is deleted. So many operations, a total of 12 items, were deleted. After factor analysis dimensionality reduction, the cumulative variance contribution rate is 73.572%, the total explanatory power is more than 70%, and tends to be stable when four factor components are formed. According to the result of factor analysis, the load values of 54 project factors are more than 0.4. Therefore, all 54 projects can be involved in the exploratory factor analysis.

(iv) Revision of the predictive questionnaire

According to the test and analysis of the predictive questionnaire, the remaining 54 items that can enter the exploratory factor analysis model are modified in a small part of the sentence content while maintaining four dimensions. Also lessons were drawn from the lie scale, two lie detection items were compiled, the items were randomly arranged, the Likert 7-point scoring method was adopted, and finally a formal questionnaire containing 56 items of “College Counselor’ Core Competencies Survey and Research” was formed.

2.1.3 The implementation of the Formal Questionnaire

By stratified sampling, 450 people from four universities including Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou Sport University and South China Business College of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies were investigated by the Formal Questionnaire. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and 450 were received. Through lie test screening, 414 valid questionnaires were screened; the effective rate was 92%. The valid questionnaires included those from 76 counselors, 35 managers related to student work, 5 full-time teachers, and 298 college students (259 undergraduates and 39 postgraduates).

2.2 Results

2.2.1 Analysis and discussion of Formal Questionnaire survey

(i) The reliability and validity of the Formal Questionnaire

The reliability of the Formal Questionnaire was tested by SPSS22.0 software, and the reliability of the whole questionnaire and each common factor (dimension) was analyzed. The results are shown in Table 2. Its internal reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, is more than 0.9, which indicates that the reliability of this study is very good. Therefore, the Formal Questionnaire has internal consistency. The authors believe that the Formal Questionnaire of college counselors has good reliability and can be used in its entirety.

Term	Cronbach's Alpha
General Questionnaire	.981
Common factors 1	.974
Common factors 2	.949
Common factors 3	.905
Common factors 4	.901

Table 2: Reliability statistics of formal questionnaires.

The content validity of the Formal Questionnaire was tested. By means of eliminating basic information items and lie detection items, a multifactorial analysis was made for the remaining items. KMO and Bartlett's Spherical Test were carried out on all the questionnaires (see Table 3 for details). From the test results, the KMO of the sample was 0.935, greater than 0.6. Through Bartlett's Spherical Test with significant p value less than 0.05, it was established that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Principal component analysis is used to extract factor analysis. The standard of extracting factors is that the eigenvalue is greater than 1. The maximum variance method is selected by the rotation method, and the number of factor extractions is not limited. The cumulative variance contribution rate is 74.487% and the total explanatory power is more than 70% when four factors (see Table 4) are formed by factor rotation, which can explain most of the information of the indicators. Combined with the results of rotation matrix, the factor load of each item is more than 0.4. The Formal Questionnaire item has a good discrimination, so it is valid.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Sufficiency		.935
Bartlett's Spherical Test	Approximate Chi Square	4085.706
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

Table 3: Formal Questionnaire KMO and Bartlett's Spherical Test.

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Ingredients	Initial eigenvalue			Extract Square Sum Loading			Rotating Square Sum Loading		
	Total	Variance%	Cumulative%	Total	Variance%	Cumulative%	Total	Variance%	Cumulative%
1	21.610	61.742	61.742	21.610	61.742	61.742	10.210	29.170	29.170
2	1.888	5.393	67.135	1.888	5.393	67.135	6.093	17.409	46.579
3	1.351	3.859	70.994	1.351	3.859	70.994	5.496	15.703	62.283
4	1.222	3.493	74.487	1.222	3.493	74.487	4.271	12.204	74.487
5	.854	2.440	76.927						

Table 4: Total variance of Formal Questionnaire interpretation.

(ii) Factor naming of Formal Questionnaire

According to the analysis and the specific content of each project, the author tries to name each component factor. Component 1 mainly concerns ideological awareness and values, so it is named “Values”. The items of Component 2 mainly refer to professional ethics, moral accomplishment, quality, character and attitude, so they are named “Moral quality”. Component 3 refers to various abilities in work, so it is named “Vocational ability”. Component 4 involves knowledge, culture and consciousness, so it is named “Cultural knowledge”.

(iii) Frequency calculation and the analysis of Formal Questionnaire data

The frequency of Formal Questionnaire items was calculated and analyzed according to the four dimensions of values, moral quality, vocational ability and cultural knowledge. The results of the factor frequency distribution of each dimension (see Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, Table 8 for details) were as follows:

Dimension 1	Factor (question)	Options (very disagreeable→very agreeable)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Love the national system.	7 (very agreeable)	255	61.6
	Strong ideological awareness.	7 (very agreeable)	248	59.9
	Rich sense of social responsibility and national consciousness.	7 (very agreeable)	187	45.2
	Love the motherland, with lofty patriotic feelings.	7 (very agreeable)	254	61.4
	Have a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values.	7 (very agreeable)	294	71
	Have strong collectivist spirit and overall consciousness.	7 (very agreeable)	144	34.8

Table 5: Statistics table of frequency distribution of factors of “values” in dimension 1.

From the above statistics, we can see that in the dimension of “Values”, the most recognized are “Have a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values”, “Love the national system”, “Love the motherland, with lofty patriotic feelings”, “Strong ideological awareness”, and other factors are about 60%, showing a high level.

Dimension 2	Factor (question)	Options (very disagreeable→very agreeable)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Love and devote oneself to one’s work, love the ideological and political education of College students.	7 (very agreeable)	248	60
	Insist on people-centered education, care for students’ real needs and love them sincerely.	7 (very agreeable)	299	72.2
	Being a model for teachers, having a decent style, and setting an example for students in the field of personality learning.	7 (very agreeable)	252	60.9
	Diligence and eagerness to learn, study assiduously.	7 (very agreeable)	216	52.2
	Integrity and self-discipline	7 (very agreeable)	217	52.4
	Work hard and perseveringly, Diligent and thrifty	7 (very agreeable)	210	50.7
	Unity of knowledge and action, match words to deeds.	7 (very agreeable)	276	66.7
	Courtesy and friendship, respect for students.	7 (very agreeable)	240	58
	Amiable and easy to approach, be friends with students.	7 (very agreeable)	234	56.5
	Observe law and discipline, have strong sense of discipline and rule.	7 (very agreeable)	216	52.2
	Fairness and justice, be upright and fair.	7 (very agreeable)	294	71
	Honesty and trustworthiness, sincerity in dealing with others.	7 (very agreeable)	253	61.1
	Has aesthetic sentiment and artistic accomplishment.	7 (very agreeable)	109	26.3
	Positive and optimistic attitude.	7 (very agreeable)	253	61.1
	Have the spirit of unity and cooperation.	7 (very agreeable)	234	56.5
	Think empathically and treat students with empathy.	7 (very agreeable)	222	53.6
	Has a rigorous and serious work style.	7 (very agreeable)	252	60.9
	Has a very charming personality and has a great influence on students.	7 (very agreeable)	174	42
	Devote oneself to cultivating students.	7 (very agreeable)	235	56.8
	Has a tolerant heart, tolerant of students’ differences, tolerant of students’ shortcomings and mistakes.	7 (very agreeable)	211	51
	Be patient and tireless with students.	7 (very agreeable)	222	53.6
	Has the spirit of reflection, timely total experience and lessons.	7 (very agreeable)	188	45.4
	Have the courage to assume their responsibilities, not to shirk.	7 (very agreeable)	249	60.1
	Can effectively control emotions and maintain a rational and peaceful mind.	7 (very agreeable)	204	49.3
	Full of the spirit of reform and innovation.	7 (very agreeable)	163	39.4

Table 6: Statistical table of frequency distribution of each factor of “moral quality” in dimension 2.

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From the above statistics, in the dimension of “Moral quality”, “Insist on people-centered education, and “Care for students’ real needs and love them sincerely” are the most recognized, accounting for 72.2%. Next came “Fairness and justice, be upright and fair”, that could account for 71%. “Unity of knowledge and action, match word to deed”, “Positive and optimistic attitude”, “Honesty and trustworthiness, sincerity in dealing with others”, “Being a model for teachers, having a decent style, and setting an example for students in the field of personality learning”, “Has a rigorous and serious work style”, “Love and devote oneself to one’s work, love the ideological and political education of College students” are six key factors. Some samples are “very agreeable”, accounting for more than 60%.

Dimension 3	Factor (question)	Options (very disagreeable→very agreeable)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Care for students, pay attention to the cultivation of students’ self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline, self-improvement of good character and various abilities.	7 (very agreeable)	252	60.9
	Has strong ability to resist pressure and frustration.	7 (very agreeable)	234	56.5
	Has keen observation, the ability to discriminate.	7 (very agreeable)	179	43.2
	Has a strong ability to investigate and research, and can independently carry out scientific research, and guide students to carry out investigation and research.	7 (very agreeable)	174	42
	Has strong organizational and managerial ability, organizes and carries out various activities, and guides the construction of Party, Communist Youth League and classes.	7 (very agreeable)	224	54.1
	Familiar with the common developmental psychological problems of College students, with the ability to engage in psychological counseling and counseling.	7 (very agreeable)	198	47.8
	Has a strong ability to deal with emergencies in a timely manner.	7 (very agreeable)	197	47.6
	Has the ability to carry out employment guidance and service, and provides students with efficient and high-quality employment guidance and information services.	7 (very agreeable)	186	44.9
	Has a very high problem-solving ability, can solve students’ growth, career choices, friends, healthy life and other practical problems.	7 (very agreeable)	222	53.6
	Does things in a planned manner, has a strong sense of forward-looking.	7 (very agreeable)	198	47.8
	Has strong language and text expression ability.	7 (very agreeable)	168	40.6
	Has strong communication and coordination, communication skills, resolves contradictions and conflicts.	7 (very agreeable)	216	52.2
	Has the ability to disseminate excellent Chinese culture and traditions.	7 (very agreeable)	213	51.4
	Familiar with the characteristics and rules of network language, good use of network new media technology.	7 (very agreeable)	132	31.9

Table 7: Statistical table of frequency distribution of each factor of “vocational ability” in dimension 3.

From the above statistics, in the dimension of “vocational ability”, the proportion of “very agreeable” is the highest in “Caring for students, paying attention to the cultivation of students’ self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline, self-improvement of good character and various abilities”, which is 60.9%, showing the most recognition. In turn, the higher degree of recognition was demonstrated regarding the following items: “Has strong ability to resist pressure and frustration”, “Has strong organizational and managerial ability, organizes and carries out various activities, and guides the construction of Party, Communist Youth League and classes”, “Has a very good problem-solving ability, can solve students’ growth, career choices, friends, healthy life and other practical problems”, “Has strong communication and coordination, communication skills, Resolves contradictions and conflicts” and “Has the ability to disseminate excellent Chinese culture and tradition” and other factors. As a result, the proportion of “very agreeable” was more than 50%.

Dimension 4	Factor (question)	Options (very disagreeable→very agreeable)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Have knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, understand and familiarize with excellent traditional Chinese culture.	7 (very agreeable)	217	52.4
	Wide-ranging basic knowledge, such as philosophy, pedagogy, psychology, management, politics, law, etc.	7 (very agreeable)	126	30.4
	Be able to understand and embrace multiculturalism.	7 (very agreeable)	198	47.8
	Mastering basic safety knowledge.	7 (very agreeable)	236	57
	Have the consciousness of safety protection and pay attention to the safety of students’ personal and property.	7 (very agreeable)	211	51
	Knowledge of laws and regulations, familiar with relevant national laws and regulations and school rules and regulations.	7 (very agreeable)	180	43.5
	Familiar with college students’ ideological and political education related knowledge.	7 (very agreeable)	238	57.5
	Can understand the students’ professional knowledge, master the training plan, professional prospects and so on.	7 (very agreeable)	223	53.9
	Master the basic knowledge of computer and network new media.	7 (very agreeable)	174	42

Table 8: Statistical table of frequency distribution of each factor of “Cultural knowledge” in dimension 4.

According to the above statistical analysis, we can see that in the dimension of “Cultural knowledge”, the item “Familiar with college students’ ideological and political education related knowledge” is the most recognized, that is, “very agreeable”, which accounts for 57.5%. Secondly, in terms of “Mastering basic safety knowledge,” 57% of them think “very agreeable”. In turn, the factors with higher recognition are: “Can understand the students’ professional knowledge, master the training plans, professional prospects and so on”, “Have knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, understand and familiarize with excellent traditional Chinese culture”, “Have the consciousness of safety protection and pay attention to the safety of students’ personal and property”; regarding them, the recognition rate was more than 50%.

In the reliability analysis of the Formal Questionnaire, the internal reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha, is more than 0.9, which shows that the questionnaire has very good reliability. In the exploratory factor analysis of the Formal Questionnaire, we can see that the KMO of the sample is 0.935, greater than 0.6. The Bartlett's Spherical Test with significant p value less than 0.05 shows that the results of the exploratory factor analysis are reliable. The structure of the four dimensions of the Formal Questionnaire on College Counselors' Core Competencies is clear. The factor load of each item is greater than 0.4. The total explanatory power of the four dimensions is 74.487%. The contents of each dimension are clear and explanatory. The largest percentage of variance of factor rotation was factor 2 (moral quality), accounting for 29.170% of the cumulative rate of variation.

The four dimensions of this study: values, moral quality, vocational ability and cultural knowledge, cover the thoughts, consciousness, quality, knowledge, ability and attitude of college counselors. Among the statistical results of the questionnaire survey, "Have correct world outlook, outlook on life and values", "Love the national system", "Love the motherland, have lofty patriotic feelings", "Strong ideological awareness", "Insist on human-centered education, "Care for students' real needs and love them sincerely", as well as as "Fairness and justice, be upright and fair", "Unity of knowledge and action, match word to deed", "Positive and optimistic mentality", "Honesty and trustworthiness, sincerity in dealing with others", "Being a model for teachers, having a decent style, and setting an example for students in the field of personality learning", "Has a rigorous and serious work style", "Love and devote oneself to one's work, love the ideological and political education of College students", "Care for students, pay attention to the cultivation of students' self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline, self-improvement of good character and various abilities", "Has strong ability to resist pressure and frustration", "Has strong organizational and managerial ability, organizes and carries out various activities, and guides the construction of Party, Communist Youth League and classes", "Has a very high problem-solving ability, can solve students' growth, career choices, friends, healthy life and other practical problems", "Has strong communication and coordination, communication skills, resolves contradictions and conflicts", "Has the ability to disseminate excellent Chinese culture and tradition", "Familiar with college students' ideological and political education related knowledge", "Mastering basic safety knowledge", "Can understand the students' professional knowledge, master the training plan, professional prospects and so on", "Have knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, understand and familiarize with excellent traditional Chinese culture", "Have the consciousness of safety protection and pay attention to the safety of students' personal and property" is close to that of other factors: more than 50%.

Therefore, the authors believe that these can be said to be the core competencies of college counselors. "Values" is the essential requirement of college counselors, which is

embodied in ideological awareness and correct views. “Moral quality” reflects the personal accomplishment of college counselors, through self-righteousness, impacting on college students and giving full play to the function of educating people. “Vocational ability” is the comprehensive ability of college counselors to accomplish their daily work and tasks, which involves training, development, guidance, management, service, communication, coordination, communication, bearing, practice and so on. “Cultural knowledge” is the basis for college counselors doing a good job, and also the theoretical basis for their professionalization.

2.2.2 The research findings of the survey

Through the above analysis and discussion, the authors believe that the Formal Questionnaire of Research on College Counselors’ Core Competencies has good reliability and validity, meets the higher requirements of surveying, and can be used as a measuring tool for research on college counselors’ core competencies.

According to the analysis of the questionnaire, the core competencies of college counselors are composed of four dimensions: values, moral quality, vocational ability and cultural knowledge. “Values” includes two aspects: ideological awareness and values, which are specifically divided into four indicators: patriotism, love the national system, ideological awareness, and three-point correctness. “Moral quality” includes three aspects: professional ethics, moral accomplishment, character and attitude, which are specifically divided into nine indicators: educating people-oriented, being a teacher, loving and being dedicated to work, unity of knowledge and practice, honesty and trustworthiness, fairness and justice, positive and optimistic, courageous in taking responsibility, rigorous and serious, etc. “Vocational ability” includes three aspects: cultivating development ability, management service ability and communication ability, which are specifically divided into six indicators: cultivating students’ various qualities and abilities, strong ability to resist pressure and frustration, building the management ability of Party and League classes, solving practical problems, communicating and coordinating ability, and communication and guiding ability. “Cultural knowledge” includes two aspects: theoretical knowledge and basic knowledge of humanities, which can be divided into four parts: ideological and political education-related knowledge, students’ professional knowledge, traditional culture, safety knowledge, etc. The results of this study are close to the conclusion that college political instructors should possess political literacy, ideological literacy, knowledge literacy and ability literacy, which is pointed out in the book *Ideological and Political Education of College Students* edited by Shanghai Higher Education Office. In this study, it can also be concluded that moral quality is the most important dimension of college counselors’ core competencies. This is close to the important qualities of college counselors emphasized by scholars such as Liu Dige’s (2016) and Wang Miaozi’s (2016) conclusion.

3. The Spatial Structure of the Structure Model for the Core Competencies of College Counselors

Based on the questionnaire survey and discussion of college counselors' core competencies, the authors believe that college counselors' core competencies can be summarized into four dimensions, 10 levels and 23 basic indicators. The spatial structure of the structural model is as follows (Table 9):

Values		Moral quality				Vocational ability		Cultural knowledge	
Ideological awareness	Values	Professional ethics	Moral accomplishment	Character and attitude	Cultivating development ability,	Management service ability,	Communication ability	Theoretical knowledge	Basic knowledge of humanities
love national system, ideological awareness	patriotism, three-point correctness	educating people-oriented, being a teacher, loving and dedicating to work,	unity of knowledge and practice, honesty and trustworthiness, fairness and justice	positive and optimistic, courageous in taking responsibility, rigorous and serious	cultivating students' various qualities and abilities, strong ability to resist pressure and frustration	building management ability of Party and League classes, solving practical problems	communicating and coordinating ability, communication and guiding ability	ideological and political education related knowledge, students' professional knowledge	traditional culture, safety knowledge

Table 9: The spatial structure of College Counselors' Core Competencies Model.

The summary of the four dimensions includes values, vocational ability, cultural knowledge and moral quality, forming a comprehensive community. The authors believe that this is a highly concise summary of the core competencies of college counselors and grasps the essence and key of the problem. First of all, values form the basic requirement of the role and mission of college counselors and the basis and premise of their work; secondly, moral quality is the concentrated reflection of college counselors' self-cultivation, pursuit of value and working attitude, and is the important condition for college counselors and college students to develop; thirdly, vocational ability is the key ability of college counselors to accomplish the fundamental task of building morality and cultivating people, and the essential requirement of the work content of college counselors. It reflects the responsibility of college counselors and the essential requirements of college counselors and college students' career development. Finally, cultural knowledge is the source and basis of knowledge, cultural heritage and innovation. It is the guarantee for college counselors to grasp the law of education and teaching, and the core force for promoting the all-round development of college counselors and college students.

To summarise, 10 levels and 23 basic indicators of the refinement of college counselors' core competencies are mainly based on empirical research and practical situation of college counselors' core competencies. Through a thorough and meticulous analysis, exploration, and induction, the pyramid-shaped frame structure is formed from bottom to top, and from top to bottom, which extends and expands step by step from layer to layer. Among them, each downward level is the partial display and detail filling of the upper level, and is also the concentrated reflection and content support basis of the upper structure of each level. Therefore, each dimension, each level reflects clearly, each exerts

its best effect. The whole group constitutes a structure model for the core competencies of college counselors with a clear hierarchy, clear context and comprehensive integrity, which is centralized and effective, having certain scientific and reference value. The key elements of the structure model for the core competencies of college counselors are interrelated and prominent. They capture the relationship between development, the whole and the part, so that the overall and specific characteristics of the core competencies of college counselors are fully displayed.

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An Empirical Study on the Core Competencies of College Counselors in China

Abstract: From the perspective of empirical research, this paper conducts a specific study on the core competencies of college counselors. 450 participants from 4 universities participated the research. A questionnaire of college counselors' core competencies from the aspects of the design of open questionnaire was designed and implemented, a predictive questionnaire was tested and analyzed, and a formal questionnaire was implemented. The results of the formal questionnaire show that component one mainly concerns ideological awareness and values, component two mainly concerns professional ethics, moral accomplishment, quality, character and attitude, while component three refers to various abilities at work, and component four involves professional and cultural knowledge. Through analysis and discussion, it is concluded that the key elements of college counselors' core competencies include values, moral quality, vocational ability and cultural knowledge, and a structural model of their core competencies is constructed.

Key words: college counselors, core competencies, empirical research, college education in China

Ethics in Progress (ISSN 2084-9257). Vol. 11 (2020). No. 1, Art. #9, pp. 157-174

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DOI:10.14746/eip.2020.1.9