



Impact of Counselor Competence on Job performance in Higher vocational Colleges

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Abstract

To improve the competency level of higher vocational counselors, stimulate the work enthusiasm and improve the work performance is an important issue that scholars and practice managers pay attention to. Based on social exchange theory and competency model, this paper discusses the influence of competency on job performance, the mediating role of self-efficacy and the moderating role of organizational support. Through the empirical analysis of 407 counselors' survey data, the results show that: competence has a positive impact on job performance; Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between competence and job performance. Organizational support positively regulates the relationship between competence and job performance.

The conclusion of the study provides useful enlightenment for deepening the relevant theoretical research on the performance of higher vocational counselors and improving the effectiveness of performance evaluation management practice. Recommendations to Each dimension of the competency of higher vocational counselors has a positive impact on their work performance. Knowledge and skills are the external ability conditions for counselors to obtain work performance, while personal traits and attitude and motivation are the internal factors and potential competency elements, which together have a direct positive impact on counselors' work performance.

Keywords: Competence; Job Performance; Self-efficacy; Perceived Organizational Support

Introduction

At present, China is moving from a manufacturing power to a manufacturing power, and the deep integration of information technology and manufacturing needs to vigorously develop vocational education, cultivate a large number of high-quality technical talents, help enterprises transform and upgrade, and support China's transformation from an economic power to an economic and technological power (Zeng & Gan, 2021).Counselors in higher vocational



colleges are the closest to students, spend the longest time with students, have the most in-depth and comprehensive understanding of students' thoughts and studies, and are the guides on the road of students' healthy growth. How to scientifically evaluate the work of higher vocational counselors according to their competence, so as to fully tap their own potential, optimize their knowledge structure and improve their work performance, plays an important role in focusing on the fundamental task of building moral and cultivating people, serving the cultivation of high-quality talents and promoting the development of the school.

Research Objectives

1. Analyze the influencing factors of job performance of higher vocational counselors. Under the background of China's education system, this study aims to construct a holistic theoretical framework among competence, organizational support, self-efficacy and job performance, taking domestic higher vocational counselors as the research object.
2. Analyze the relationship and mechanism between the competence, self-efficacy and job performance of higher vocational counselors. Verify the direct effect of competence on job performance; The mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between competence and job performance; The moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between competence and job performance.
3. Study the strategies to improve the performance of higher vocational counselors. This study intends to put forward feasible suggestions and measures for the construction of counselor team and the improvement of work performance from the aspects of external environment and internal individuals.

Literature Review and concepts

1. Competency and job performance

The competence of higher vocational counselors refers to their inherent, stable and measurable characteristics, including values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, self-image, characteristics and motivation. These characteristics are closely related to the performance of the student work done by the counselors, and can promote the healthy development of college students' psychology and the realization of the goal of college talent training. Its connotation is proposed based on its impact on job performance. Therefore, scholars believe that each dimension of competency has a significant positive impact on job performance. Li & Ye (2013) proposed that each dimension of the competency of managers in telecommunications enterprises can significantly affect their job performance, that is, the competency of managers in telecommunications enterprises is an important correlation variable affecting their performance. Zhang, Han & Zhang. (2015) verified through empirical analysis that all levels



of competency factors can significantly predict the overall job performance, and significantly affect the dimensions of task performance and internal drive performance. Lian (2018) empirically tested that the competence of university administrators has a significant positive impact on their job performance: among them, knowledge and other dimensions are related to task performance; The trait dimension is related to interpersonal performance. Educational responsibility and other dimensions are related to job dedication performance. Based on this, this study proposes the following research hypothesis:

H1-a: The attitude motivation of higher vocational counselors has a significant predictive effect on their job performance;

H1-b: The individual trait of higher vocational counselors have a significant predictive effect on their job performance;

H1-c: The knowledge and skills of higher vocational counselors have a significant predictive effect on their job performance.

2. The mediating role of self-efficacy

In the study on the relationship between various dimensions of competency and self-efficacy, Zhao (2013) found that proactive personality is highly connected with academic self-efficacy, and academic self-efficacy serves as an intermediate in the relationship between proactive personality and academic achievement based on an empirical examination of students. The above data was subjected to regression and structural equation analysis. Chu (2016) came to the conclusion that self-efficacy acted as a moderator in the interaction between the three characteristics of competence, knowing-why, knowing-how, and knowing-whom, and subjective and objective professional success. As can be observed, self-efficacy influences an individual's tenacity and level of effort in their employment. Individuals with high self-efficacy might endeavor to overcome numerous occupational problems and achieve greater work performance. On this foundational point, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H2-a: Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between attitude motivation and job performance of higher vocational counselors;

H2-b: Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between personal traits and job performance of higher vocational counselors;

H2-c: Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between knowledge and skill and job performance of higher vocational counselors.

3. The moderating effect of organizational support

The idea that organizational support is a social exchange theory has also been reflected in the field of enterprise management. Organizational support plays an important role in employees' career competency. Employees' perceived organizational support affects their cognition of organizations and careers. A higher sense of organizational support encourages skilled personnel to transform the perception of organizational support into a sense of



responsibility to the organization and a sense of loyalty to the profession, resulting in higher organizational commitment, and thus working harder, generating a higher level of self-efficacy, and ultimately promoting work performance (Jolly, Kong & Kim, 2021). Due to the fierce market competition, organizations will invest in employees for the need of sustainable development, but such training or investment opportunities are not equal for every employee. Therefore, employees who are well supported by their superiors, have the opportunity to receive skills training, and work in large and growing organizations are more likely to improve their work performance (Shao, 2011). At the same time, employees perceive that the organization provides them with various human resources activities, and they will return to the organization by improving their ability to participate in organizational activities and improve their performance level. Based on the above analysis, this paper believes that the perceived organizational support has a positive moderating effect between various factors of competence and job performance, so the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3-a: Perceived organizational support is having a moderating influence on higher vocational counselors' attitude motivation and job performance.

H3-b: Perceived organizational support is having a moderating influence on higher vocational counselors' personal traits and job performance.

H3-c: Perceived organizational support is having a moderating influence on higher vocational counselors' knowledge abilities and their job performance.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the above analysis, the following conceptual model is proposed in this study (Figure1).

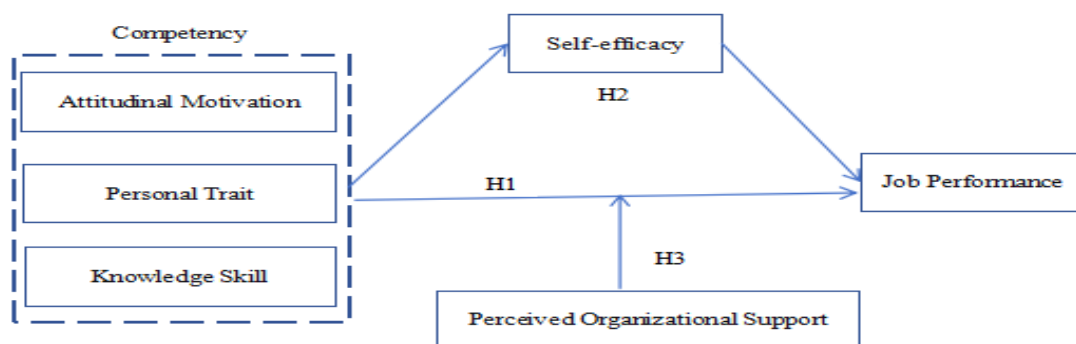


Figure1 Research Concept Framework

Research Methodology



Research Objective

An empirical study was carried out by questionnaire Star on the counselors of 47 higher vocational colleges in Shanxi Province. A total of 445 questionnaires were distributed. By reviewing and screening the questionnaire results of the platform, The questionnaire was further screened according to the criteria of "whether the questionnaire content is complete", "whether there is any omission of information", "whether there is an unreasonable short answer time", "whether the results of the items filled in have a large proportion of continuous repetition", etc. 38 invalid questionnaires were eliminated, and finally 407 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective rate of 92.5%. Of the 407 valid samples, 122 were male counselors and 285 were female counselors.

Research Design

In this study, mature scales were used. All scales were scored using Likert-5 points, where 1 means "completely inconsistent" and 5 means "completely consistent".

Competence uses the scale revised by Luo (2019), which has 3 dimensions and 20 items. Among them, 8 items of knowledge and skills, 6 items of personal traits, 5 items of attitude and motivation.

Self-efficacy uses the scale revised by Liang (2012), which contains 17 items and 3 dimensions of student management, interpersonal coordination and emotional regulation.

Perceived organizational support uses the scale revised by Cao(2023) , the scale includes 18 items in three dimensions: perceived organizational system support, perceived school leadership support and perceived school colleagues support.

Job performance adopts the scale revised by Han (2006), which contains 31 items in 4 dimensions including task performance, relationship performance, learning performance and innovation performance.

Research Process

In terms of data statistics and analysis methods, firstly, SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 24.0 were used for reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, including convergent validity and discrimination validity. Secondly, SPSS 26.0 software was used for correlation analysis to provide preliminary support for the research hypothesis. Finally, AMOS 24.0 software was used to construct a structural equation model of causality of latent variables for hypothesis testing.

Research Results

1. Reliability analysis



In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the reliability and validity of the scale selected in the study should be tested before hypothesis testing. The statistical analysis results of SPSS26.0 software showed that Cronbach's α coefficients of competence, self-efficacy, Perceived organizational support and job performance were 0.935, 0.935, 0.952 and 0.951, respectively. The reliability coefficient value of research data was higher than 0.8, indicating that the data reliability quality was high and could be used for further analysis.

Table 1 Reliability Test of Each Research Variable

Variables	Dimensionality	Item	Cronbach's α
Competency	Attitude motivation	5	0.935
	Personal Traits	6	
	Knowledge and Skills	8	
Self-efficacy	Student management self-efficacy	5	0.935
	Interpersonal Coordination Self-efficacy	6	
	Emotional management self-efficacy	6	
Perceived Organizational support	Organizational system support	6	0.952
	School leadership support	6	
	School colleagues support	6	
Job Performance	Relationship performance	9	0.951
	Task performance	7	
	Learning performance	7	
	Innovation performance	8	

2. Validity analysis

In order to test the validity of the questionnaire, this study conducted confirmatory factor analysis on four variables: competence, self-efficacy, Perceived organizational support and job performance through AMOS24.0 software. The standardized factor load on the measurement constructs of all questions was significant at 0.001 level, and the CR value of all scales was greater than 0.7, and the AVE value was greater than 0.5, which reflected that the scales selected in this study had good aggregation validity. Meanwhile, the AVE average root values of all constructs are calculated. The results show that the AVE average root value is greater than the maximum value of the absolute value of the correlation coefficient between the factors, indicating that each measurement construct has good discriminative validity. The above results indicate that the core variables of this study have good validity.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	χ^2/df	RESE A	GFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	PNFI
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Competency	3.221	0.074	0.891	0.950	0.965	0.965	0.828
Self-efficacy	1.612	0.039	0.947	0.966	0.987	0.987	0.824
Perceived Organizational Support	0.870	0.046	0.938	0.956	0.979	0.979	0.825
Job Performance	2.173	0.054	0.891	0.893	0.939	0.939	0.822

3. Correlation analysis

SPSS 25 software was used to conduct correlation analysis on organizational support, career self-efficacy, subjective well-being and job performance, and the correlation coefficients among the variables were obtained (see Table 3). The following conclusions can be drawn from the data in Table 4: There is a significant positive correlation between attitudinal motivation and job performance ($r=0.434$, $P<0.001$). There is a significant positive correlation between personal traits and job performance ($r=0.373$, $P<0.001$). There is a significant positive correlation between knowledge skills and job performance ($r=0.469$, $P<0.001$). There is a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and job performance ($r=0.547$, $P<0.001$). There is a significant positive correlation between attitudinal motivation and self-efficacy ($r=0.406$, $P<0.001$), There is a significant positive correlation between personal traits and job performance ($r=0.318$, $P<0.001$). There is a significant positive correlation between knowledge skills and job performance ($r=0.406$, $P<0.001$). These significance results provide pre-test support for the hypothesis testing below.

Table 3 Correlation Coefficients for Each Variable

	AM	PT	KS	SE	POS	JP
AM	1					
PT	0.335***	1				
KS	0.371***	0.308***	1			
SE	0.406***	0.318***	0.406***	1		
POS	0.066	0.002	0.011	0.068	1	
JP	0.434***	0.373***	0.469***	0.547***	0.090	1

Note: * $p<0.05$ **, $p<0.01$ ***, $p<0.001$. AM stands for attitude motivation, PT stands for personal trait, KS stands for knowledge and skill, SE stands for self-effect, POS stands for perceived organizational support, JP stands for job performance.

4. Hypothesis testing

4.1 Test of the direct effect of competence on job performance. In this paper, AMOS 24.0 was used to verify the direct effect between the competency and job performance of higher



vocational counselors. The three dimensions of competency were used as predictive variables and job performance was used as outcome variables to conduct structural equation modeling (see Figure 2). The model fitting index $\chi^2/df=2.657$, RMSEA=0.064, IFI=0.963, CFI=0.963, RFI=0.935, NFI=0.943, GFI=0.889, PNFI=0.835, indicating that the structural equation model of vocational college counselors' competence and job performance fit well.

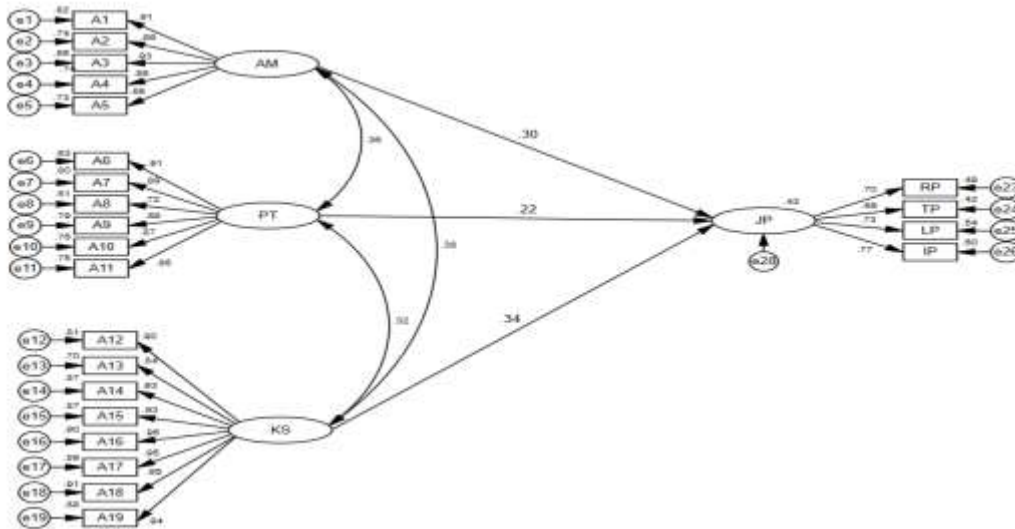


Figure 2 Direct effect model

Table 4 Direct effect fitting results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	Std.Estimate	C.R.	P
JP <--- AM	0.155	0.028	0.304	5.588	***
JP <--- PT	0.097	0.022	0.224	4.330	***
JP <--- KS	0.183	0.029	0.339	6.338	***

注: *** $p < 0.001$. AM stands for attitude motivation, PT stands for personal trait, KS stands for knowledge and skill, JP stands for job performance.

As can be seen from Table 4, attitudinal motivation has a significant positive impact on job performance ($\beta=0.304$, $P<0.001$). Hypothesis H1-a is verified; Personal traits had a significant positive effect on job performance ($\beta=0.224$, $P<0.001$), and the hypothesis H1-b was verified. Knowledge and skills have a significant positive effect on job performance ($\beta=0.339$, $P<0.001$), and the hypothesis H1-c is verified.

4.2 Testing the mediating effect of self-efficacy. Referring to the mediation effect verification method proposed by Chen(2023), this study adopted the Bootstrap sampling method in AMOS software, set the sampling times to 2000 times, and adjusted the confidence interval on the mediation effect test path to 95% to test whether the confidence interval of direct and indirect effects contained 0, so as to investigate whether the mediation effect was



significant. Based on the conceptual model of the relationship between competence, self-efficacy, organizational support and job performance, the initial structural equation model was drawn (Figure 3).

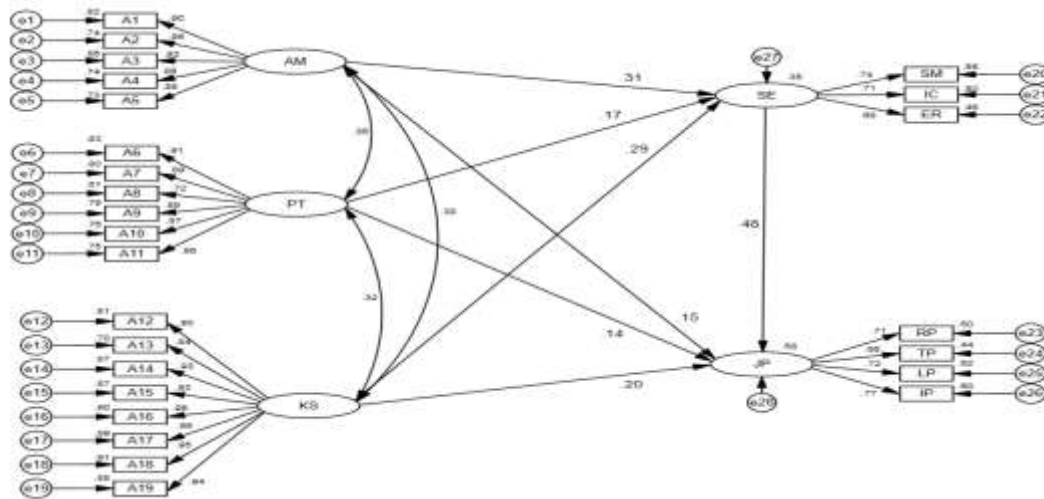


Figure 3 Structural equation mode

Table 5 Test Results of the Mediating Effect of Self-efficacy

Types of Effects	Paths	Efficiency Value	Bias-corrected CI	
			lower bound	upper bound
Direct effects	JP <--- AM	0.079	0.018	0.145
	JP <--- PT	0.063	0.023	0.109
	JP <--- KS	0.109	0.047	0.185
Indirect effects	SE <--- AM	0.076	0.035	0.139
	SE <--- PT	0.034	0.012	0.072
	SE <--- KS	0.076	0.032	0.147
Total Effect	JP <--- AM	0.155	0.089	0.236
	JP <--- PT	0.098	0.053	0.15
	JP <--- KS	0.184	0.11	0.271

Note: The Bias-corrected test method is adopted for 95% confidence interval. AM stands for attitude motivation, PT stands for personal trait, KS stands for knowledge and skill, SE stands for self-effect, POS stands for perceived organizational support, JP stands for job performance.

It can be seen from Table 5 The direct effect of attitudinal motivation on job performance has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.079, P < 0.01, CI = [0.018, 0.145]$), and the indirect effect has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.076, P < 0.01, CI = [0.035, 0.139]$). Therefore, self-efficacy has a partial mediating effect between attitudinal motivation and job performance.



Hypothesis H3-a is verified. The direct effect of personal characteristics on job performance has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.063, P < 0.01, CI = [0.023, 0.109]$), and the indirect effect has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.034, P < 0.01, CI = [0.012, 0.072]$). Self-efficacy has a partial mediating effect between personal traits and job performance. Hypothesis H3-b is verified. The direct effect of knowledge and skill on job performance has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.109, P < 0.01, CI = [0.047, 0.185]$), and the indirect effect has 95% confidence interval without 0 ($\beta = 0.076, P < 0.01, CI = [0.032, 0.147]$). Self-efficacy has a partial mediating effect between knowledge skills and job performance, and hypothesis H3-c is verified.

4.3 Testing the moderating effect of perceived organizational support. This study uses the PROCESS method proposed by Hayes to examine the moderating effect of organizational support on attitudinal motivation and job performance. In this study, Model 8 was used in the SPSS macro program PROCESS to control the population characteristics variables, and the sampling was set to 2000 runs. The results showed that perceived organizational support had a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between attitudinal motivation and job performance ($\beta = 0.618, p < 0.01$), assuming that H3-a was supported. Further, this study clearly reveals the moderating effect of different levels of organizational support on attitudinal motivation and job performance through the interaction effect graph (Figure 2). As can be seen from Figure 2, compared with low sense of organizational support, attitudinal motivation has a more significant increase on job performance when sense of organizational support is high (the slope value of the line is larger), indicating that there are significant differences in the impact of attitudinal motivation on job performance when the sense of organizational support is different.

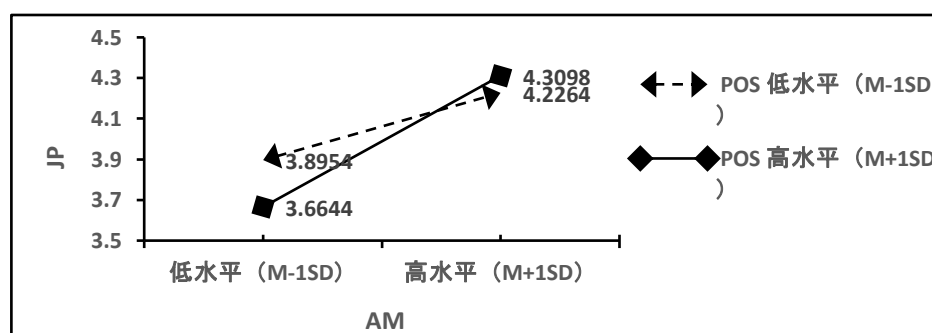


Figure 4 The relationship between AM and JP regulated by POS

In this study, Model 8 of PROCESS was used to examine the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on personal traits and job performance. The results showed that perceived organizational support had a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between personal traits and job performance ($\beta = 0.013, P < 0.01$), assuming that H3-b was supported. Further, this study clearly reveals the moderating effect of different levels of



perceived organizational support on personal traits and job performance through the interaction effect graph (Figure 3). As can be seen from the figure, compared with the low sense of organizational support, when the sense of organizational support is high, the impact of personal traits on job performance increases more significantly (the slope value of the straight line is larger), indicating that there are significant differences in the impact of personal traits on job performance when the sense of organizational support is different.

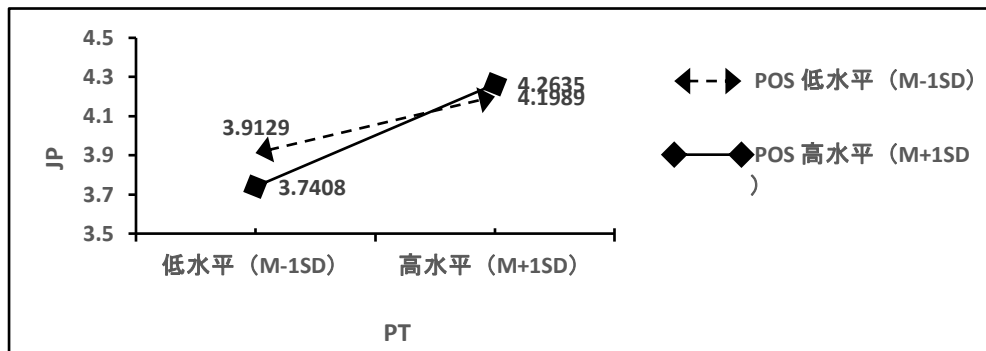


Figure 5 The relationship between PT and JP regulated by POS

In this study, Model 8 in PROCESS was used to examine the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on knowledge skills and job performance. Table 9 shows that perceived organizational support has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between knowledge skills and job performance ($\beta=0.013$, $P<0.01$), assuming that H3-b is supported. Further, this study clearly reveals the moderating effects of different levels of perceived organizational support on personal traits and job performance through the interaction effect graph (Figure 4). As can be seen from Figure 4, compared with low perceived organizational support, knowledge and skills have a more significant impact on job performance when perceived organizational support is high (the slope value of the straight line is larger), indicating that there are significant differences in the impact of knowledge and skills on job performance when perceived organizational support is different.



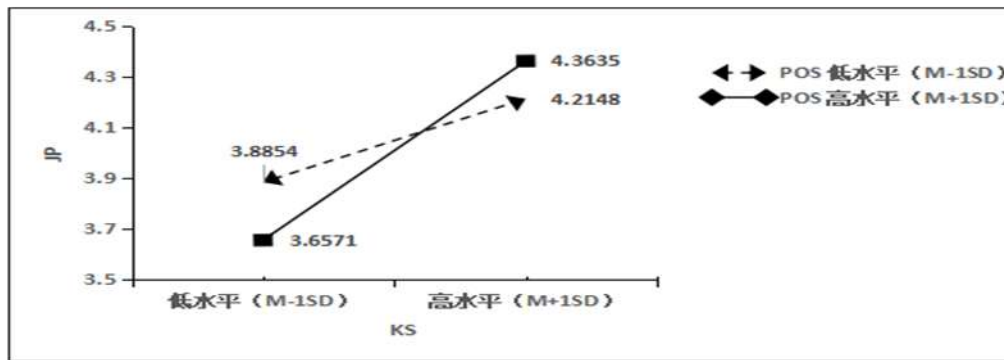


Figure 6 The relationship between KS and JP regulated by POS

Research Discussion

This study explores the relationship between vocational college counselors' competence and job performance, and examines the mediating role of self-efficacy and the moderating role of organizational support. The following conclusions are drawn from the analysis:

1. Each dimension of the competency of higher vocational counselors has a positive impact on their work performance. Knowledge and skills are the external ability conditions for counselors to obtain work performance, while personal traits and attitude and motivation are the internal factors and potential competency elements, which together have a direct positive impact on counselors' work performance.

2. Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between various dimensions of competency and job performance of higher vocational counselors. It can be seen that self-efficacy is an important factor affecting the work performance of higher vocational counselors, that is, without a strong sense of self-efficacy, although they have a certain level of professional competence, they may not be able to achieve better work performance.

3. Perceived organizational support has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between various dimensions of competence and job performance of higher vocational counselors. Specifically, the higher the perceived level of organizational support, the stronger the influence of each dimension of counselor's competence on job performance; On the contrary, the lower the level of organizational support, the weaker the influence of each dimension of counselor's competence on job performance.

Conclusion

1. Continuously improve competency level. According to the above analysis, the competency of counselors is significantly positively correlated with job performance, and affects job performance in various ways. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously improve the



competency of counselors. Counselors need to keep pace with The Times and possess a wide knowledge structure and diversified professional qualities according to the dynamic changes of work objects and social environment; It is necessary to have the work motivation of respecting, caring, understanding and treating students well and firm ideals and beliefs that match the position. Personal traits such as keen insight and a sense of innovation are required.

2. Enhance individual self-efficacy. The above research shows that there is a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and job performance, and self-efficacy plays a partial mediating role in the process of the effect of competence on job performance. For higher vocational counselors, on the one hand, they should increase the successful experience and correctly attribute their own successful experience to improve their sense of self-efficacy. On the other hand, we should learn and be good at using verbal persuasion to stimulate self-efficacy and enhance self-confidence.

3. Focus on improving your sense of organizational support. According to the research conclusion, the perceived organizational support has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between the various dimensions of competence and job performance of higher vocational counselors. Therefore, schools can help counselors gain professional recognition by improving their job satisfaction and helping them achieve work-family balance. In the process of obtaining professional identity, I will work hard to return to the school and bring higher organizational performance, which is conducive to the improvement of talent training quality and the sustainable development of the school.

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