

Citation

Mullen, P., Malone, A., Denney, A., & Santa Dietz, S. (2018). Job stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among student affairs professionals. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 36(1), 94-108.

Summary

As the field of student affairs establishes itself as a unified profession increased attention has been given to professional outcomes including job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Mullen, Malone, Denney, and Santa Dietz (2018) added to this growing body of knowledge with their recent quantitative study exploring the correlative relationship between job stress and burnout on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Their findings suggested that burnout had the greatest effect on both job satisfaction and turnover intention.

The study solicited 2,969 student affairs professionals from 122 randomly selected United States colleges and universities. 789 professionals completed the study, which consisted of a demographic questionnaire and four survey instruments (Stress in General Scale, Burnout Measure – short version, Overall Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, and five items constructed for the study related to turnover intentions). Each of the instruments were examined for reliability and previous examples of reliability were given.

Through the study it was determined that both job stress and burnout have significant effects on job satisfaction and turnover intention, but that in both cases burnout scores were a better predictor of the related outcome than job stress. A discussion on the implications of the study was given and limitations were acknowledged. Most notably the study was limited by its structure as a correlative study. The study did not measure or explore causative relationships.

The implications for this study within the field of student affairs is both broad and immediately actionable. First, the authors call for more intentional discussions about job roles and expectations, as they cite previous literature which suggests miscommunication of these

creates job stress. Second, the authors urge student affairs professionals to engage in interventional behaviors and practices intended to prevent burnout. Example practices from other research was given.

Personally, the study affected my current view of the profession through what the authored included as a passing statistical note. While the study focused its attention to the effects of job stress and burnout on job satisfaction and turnover intention, the research team also explored demographic relationships. Job stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention were not related to any demographic criterion, except two. In the case of turnover intention, age and years of experience in the field of student affairs both had a negative relationship. This suggests that as I begin my work as a student affairs professional, I will most likely experience the desire to leave the field strongest in my first few years. As an entry level professional, I must have the resilience to persevere through these predicted moments of turnover intention. The study gave instruction, through the measured relationship between burnout and turnover intention, of how to do so – through specific interventional practices and behaviors.

For my future professional career, I see this study affecting the way I view self-care. The article makes it clear that, student affairs professionals must make self-care an equal priority to caring for others, such as students. This clarity is established when the authors relate, through their literature review, the negative service effects related to burnout and job dissatisfaction. A note is also made which personally impacts my future desire to work in faculty and staff development, suggesting that dissatisfied and burnt professionals are less likely to engage in professional development. If we are to be the best professionals we can be, we must first be the best individuals we can be.