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Abstract

School administrative staffs often have multiple roles, a phenomenon that leads to role conflict, ambiguity, burnout, and overload. More and more attention has been paid to these problems of school administrative staffs' mental health. This study used mixed methods research to examine the perception of 147 full-time school administrative staffs in a public university in Shanxi province, China. For the qualitative method, the researcher interviewed five administrative staffs in the university to collect information, and for the quantitative method, the author adopted three sets of questionnaires, Administrative staff Stress Index, Maslach Burnout Inventory, and Role conflict and ambiguity. From the preliminary interview, the administrative staffs in different departments reflected they were under work overload and burnout, with role conflict and ambiguity. The results of quantitative data showed that in the university, the administrative staff's role conflict and ambiguity were significant with overload (r = .314 Sig. 2-tailed was. 000), and there was a significant relationship between role conflict and ambiguity with burnout (r = .649 Sig. 2-tailed was. 000). Of these, administrative overload was greatest in the administrative constraint and responsibility areas. In terms of burnout, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are often places where stress is concentrated and the main cause of it. Measures to solve administrative staff's burnout and overload problems are provided in this article's discussion section.

Keywords: role conflict and ambiguity, administrative staff, overload, burnout, Shanxi, China

Introduction

With the continuous progress of modern society, people's work overload and burnout have gradually aroused attention because they harm many aspects of life. Lawrence, Kurt, Jocelyn, Lindsey, Shannon, and Bellar (2015) argued that one's career is an area of life that is most affected by burnout. School administrative staffs face very busy and highly unpredictable work, while many individuals and groups of interpersonal conflicts also take up a lot of their time. As school administrative staffs, they feel pressure to lead the school. School administrative staffs have inevitably encountered a great deal of professional pressure to determine a school's smooth operation from experience. In the study of Lawrence et al (2015), it was found that some of the specific problems that currently put work overload and burnout on school administrative staffs include: (1) poor outcomes from declining enrolment rates and funding problems in schools, for example, reduction of school budgets by reducing school

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service programs and employee benefits; (2) address resource shortages and shortfalls, such as classroom allocations; (3) control student unrest, vandalism, absenteeism, and other disciplinary issues. (4) dealing with personal conflicts and contradictions among teachers. (5) to take charge of a variety of tasks when human resources are insufficient.

In addition to overloading from within the school, school administrative staffs are also subject to overload from the external environment. School administrative staffs will be subject to various demands and pressure from the public. School administrative staffs are accountable in different ways to school boards, taxpayers, community organizations, parents, students, teachers, supervisors, other administrative staffs, school employees, and the government. The different expectations and demands of each group or organization lead to conflicting overload on school administrative staffs (Laurence, Courtes, Jocelyn, Lindsay, Shannon, and Berra, 2015). School administrative staffs' work overload and burnout have affected their behavior, such as anxiety, anger, fatigue, and even absenteeism, worry, and exhaustion. (Lokman, Mohd, Juhazren, Narina, and Yassin. 2019).

Several studies have supported this conclusion. For example, the study of Gmelch and Torelli in 1994 found a strong correlation between burnout with role conflict, ambiguity, and role ambiguity with personal achievement (Gmelch & Torelli, 1994). Similarly, the burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion was most strongly correlated with general stress levels, task stress, and conflict-mediated stress. There was a strong negative correlation between stresses and coping; that is, the more effective coping ability, the less stress experienced. Therefore, emotional exhaustion is the most sensitive central structure of job intensity variables (time, stress, and conflict), positively correlated with job satisfaction and effective coping. Depersonalization and decreased personal achievement were highly correlated, reflecting a similar effect from role ambiguity (Gmelch & Walter, 1994). Other study by John (2003) noticed that role ambiguity was not a significant stressor for participants. However, all participants showed varying and significant role conflicts between personal and professional roles, especially between life and work. John, Donald, and Joseph in 1985 noticed that conflict and ambiguity were big problems for most school principals. Challenges in principals' work may arise from achieving clear goals and daily work with staff, students, and school teachers, and the support of these groups and managers, rather than relationships and organization struggles (John et al, 1985).

In China, university administrative staffs face great work overload and suffer from work burnout caused by role conflict and ambiguity (Jing, 2015; Jian, 2009; Caiyun, 2004). In a public university of Shanxi, a focus of this research, the preliminary interview result showed that the university's administrative staff were also under great pressure. Therefore, this research took the school administrative staffs as the research object, first determining the key factors and the university manager's overload level in Shanxi. Secondly, it determined the key factors and degree of burnout of administrative personnel in a university in Shanxi province. This study aimed to explore the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity, Administrative staff overload, and burnout.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1) To determine the level of the administrative staff's overload in a public university in Shanxi, China.

2) To determine the level of the administrative staff's burnout in a public university in Shanxi, China.

3) To determine the level of the administrative staff's role conflict and role ambiguity in a public university in Shanxi, China.

4) To identify the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity with administrative staff overload and burnout in a public university in Shanxi, China.

Literature Review

The Concept of Administrative Staff's Role Conflict

Role conflict refers to the conflict between different role bearers. It is often caused by the opposition of role interests, the difference of role expectations, and people not acting according to role norms. Like the manager and the subordinate, the relationship is not handled properly, prone to conflict between the roles. Role conflict can be divided into two types: intra-role conflict and extra-role conflict. There are two forms of internal conflict: (1) the conflict between the individual's understanding of the ideal role and his actual role behavior; (2) the conflict between the old role and the new role when the individual changes the role. Intra-role conflict refers to the same role due to the social people's expectations and requirements for them, the role of the role-bearer understanding of the inconsistency, and a kind of contradiction conflict the role bearer's heart. The contradiction within the role itself often causes conflict within the role. There are two forms of external conflict: (1) the conflict caused by the possessors of different roles not having a common understanding of certain roles; (2) the multi-role conflict caused by individuals playing several roles at the same time (Celik, 2013).

Many role conflict situations are temporary and do not last long. However, certain positions may put pressure on their incumbents to engage in long-term role conflict. As a result, individual job satisfaction and organizational efficiency will decrease (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Role conflict stems from the nature of the position; few people can play two different roles simultaneously, such as teaching secretary and student counselor; too many different types of work can lead to role conflict school administrative staffs. Competing with principals and other administrative staffs for the school's resources, dealing with staff members with long-standing personal disagreements, dealing with student disciplinary issues, completing time-limited paperwork, preparing conference materials and speeches are typical of the day-to-day work of an executive who can lead to role conflicts (Burns, & Gmelch, 1994).

In short, when their leaders or colleagues ask managers to perform incompatible tasks, their jobs and responsibilities overlap with those of their positions. Another form of role conflict is when an executive is asked to perform tasks such as 1. Work considered by an executive to be unethical or unprofessional; 2. Jobs that administrative staffs do not want to do; 3. The administration does not consider the assigned work to be part of the description (Warner,

1980).

The Concept of Administrative Staff's Role Ambiguity

It refers to a lack of clear understanding of the expectations or requirements of a given role. Members of an organization need to know what their role is expected to know, how to get a role, and what the result of that role is, and so on. Role ambiguity occurs when information about a role does not exist or is not communicated effectively. In other words, role ambiguity refers to the personal experience of the uncertainty of job role positioning, including the uncertainty of job responsibility, the uncertainty of job objectives (Celik, 2013). As a negative stressor, role ambiguity is operationally defined as an imbalance between the amount of information an employee receives and the role they need to play at work. Examples of role ambiguity include uncertainty about one's administrative position; and conflicting expectations of a subordinate, fellow executive, or superior regarding a job role (Warner, 1980).

Role ambiguity can also occur in situations where inconsistent direction from a superior leads to increased anxiety, disagreement about leadership style, and decreased productivity. Besides, role ambiguity occurs when the information necessary for an employee to perform a task is unavailable or incomplete. Role ambiguity is an obstacle and difficulty in working when people's job needs are not clearly defined, making it impossible for employees to understand and describe their job roles (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Role ambiguity is associated with uncertainty, such as what tasks should be completed, prioritizing them, how best to perform the required tasks, and what information can be used to complete the tasks. Most school administrative staffs have not received the relevant professional training and guidance. Therefore, it cannot prepare for its administrative responsibilities and work requirements (Burns, & Gmelch, 1994).

Working in a role-ambiguous work environment can lead to three problems. French and Caplan (1973) argue that role ambiguity leads to stress and dissatisfaction with work and leadership, underutilization of human resources, confusion, and burnout in dealing with the organizational environment.

The Concept of Administrative Staff's Overload

If we compare an employee to a machine that processes information, we define it as an overloaded machine when a machine has too many tasks to handle and the system crashes. In other words, this very common role conflict is known as overload, when the demands of work take up too much of an employee's time, and resources and information are scarce, the employee's overload problem will showed in organizations. (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Work overload can be divided into two broad categories: quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative overload occurs when an employee finds that his supervisor has given him more work than he can accomplish in a given amount of time. In this situation, the employee is often not given enough time to complete the work; as long as there is enough time, he may have the necessary skills to complete the work. On the other hand, if an employee finds that his or her boss is demanding more from him or her than he or she can handle, no matter how long it takes, the employee will not be able to complete the task, resulting in a quality overload (Brandwein,

1969). Qualitative overload refers to work that is too complex or difficult. Simultaneously, in some cases, it is difficult to tell how much of a pure overload quantity or pure mass is (Caplan, 1971).

Overload is closely related to role ambiguity. Role ambiguity occurs when responsibilities and tasks of the job are not communicated. Work overload occurs when too many expectations and job responsibilities are passed on. In other words, role ambiguity itself can lead to overwork (Caplan, 1971). Work overloads include overwork projects, such as clerical work, student work, too much work to get done during school hours, attending meetings, and employees taking on too much responsibility (Borg & Riding, 1993). Quantitative overload occurs when there are too much demand and too much work to do. The research of Warner (1980) shown that "Overload" does not mean physical exertion, but rather that people are more responsible than they can handle.

The Concept of Administrative Staff's Burnout

Burnout refers to the state of physical and mental fatigue and exhaustion under the pressure of work. Simultaneously, the long-term emotional work and dealing with the improper handling of interpersonal relationships resulting from the psychological syndrome called burnout. It is generally believed that burnout is an extreme reaction when an individual cannot cope with the work pressure smoothly, and it is a state of exhaustion of emotion, attitude, and behavior that an individual brings along with the long-term stress experience. The most common burnout symptoms are three sections: first, loss of enthusiasm for work, emotional irritability, irritability, hopelessness in the future, and indifference to people and things around. Second, a negative work attitude, service or contact with the more impatient object, not soft, such as administrative staff tired of dealing with things, are not warm and even rude. Third, their work's significance and the value of evaluation decline, work are not active, often late to leave early, planning to job-hop or even changing careers (Jiangxia, 2003).

The classification of burnout includes the following three aspects: 1. Emotional exhaustion: lack of energy, enthusiasm for work, feeling that your emotions are in a state of extreme fatigue. 2. Depersonalization: refers to deliberately keep a distance between themselves and their work objects, work objects, and the environment to take an indifference, ignoring the attitude of the work of perfunctory, personal development stagnation, eccentric behavior, scheduling applications, and so on. 3. A sense of powerlessness or low personal accomplishment: a tendency to evaluate one negatively, accompanied by a decline in the experience of working ability and achievement, and a perception that work is not only a failure to exert one's abilities but also a tedious chore (Xiaoming, 2004). Burnout is commonly understood as a negative emotion related to all functioning areas (Savicki & Cooley, 1982). Burnout is usually classified into four distinct areas: physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Burnout harms the employees themselves and the school as a whole: when information is needed for work is not provided, lack of resources, time pressure, and increased workload lead to burnout. It shows that employees try to leave their jobs, call in sick from time to time, and suffer from anxiety and depression. Burnout affects not only mental health but also

physical health. People who show signs of burnout also show signs of chronic exhaustion. These include deep fatigue, insomnia, dizziness, nausea, allergies, breathing difficulties, and other problems (Yufang & Chongzeng, 2003).

McGrath's Four Stage Cycle Theory

In 1976, McGrath came up with the Four Stage Cycle Theory, which explained stress as a Four-Stage closed-loop process, with the first stage starting with the situation in the environment and the second stage with personal perception, the third stage is the response to the individual's choice, and the fourth stage is the closed-loop in which the outcome affects both the individual and the situation. Each of these four phases is linked through a process of cognitive assessment, decision-making, performance, and outcome. The four stages of McGrath's hypothesis provide a reasonable basis for the development of stress models. This study's basic theory is that stress results from the respondent's interpretation of stimuli and other environmental events.

Similarly, the administrative staff stress cycle (Gmelch, 1982) is based on McGrath. These four stages of the stress cycle guide the current study of educational administrative staffs' burnout. The first phase of the cycle is a series of demands or stressors on the administrative staff. The second stage consists of an individual's perception or interpretation of the stressor. Executives who find it harmful or demanding can create stress in their lives and work intensely. The third stage is to give the individual a choice. If a stressor is perceived as harmful, threatening, or demanding, managers will react to it. When individuals believe they can positively cope with stress, they use coping strategies. The fourth stage is the consequence of stress, taking into account the long-term effects of stress. The result can be burnout, anxiety, depression, and physical symptoms such as headaches and insomnia.

The theory uses factor analysis to identify four stressors similar to those of the dimensions of McGrath's hypothesis. First, role stress comes from the interaction of roles and the administrative staffs' beliefs or attitudes to their school roles. The second source of stress is the day-to-day, task-based administrative activities, ranging from telephone and staff interruptions, meetings, memoranda writing, and reports to school activities outside normal working hours. The third source of cross-border pressure comes from external conditions such as negotiations and public support for school budgets. Conflict mediation stress is a fourth source. The pressure comes from managers dealing with conflicts within the school, such as resolving disagreements between students, parent-school conflicts, and student discipline issues.

Person-Environment Fit Model

The model is defined as the degree to which personal characteristics match those of the environment. Personal characteristics include a person's physical or psychological needs, values, goals, abilities, or personality, while environmental characteristics include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, job or role requirements, cultural values, or other personal and collective characteristics of an individual social environment. In other words, the model has two main components, the individual and the environment. The first part is whether an individual's

working ability and skills meet the job's requirements and needs. The second part is whether the working environment meets the needs of the individual.

To better understand the effects of occupational stress, the "Person-environment or Role Fit Model" has been developed and applied to various occupational categories. Overload, burnout, and conflicting needs are all external forces that interact with school administrative staffs. The right amount of stress can lead to growth and achievement. Persistent stress or stress may manifest as job dissatisfaction, psychological symptoms, and physical symptoms. In this case, the match between the administrative staff and his or her management position is a "Mismatch.". However, it is generally accepted that adaptation to one's environment leads to positive outcomes such as satisfaction, performance, and job well-being.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study aimed to determine the key fact and level of administrative staff's overload and burnout and identify the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity with administrative staff overload and burnout in a public university in Shanxi, China. The researcher developed the conceptual framework, based on the McGrath's Four Stage Cycle Theory, and the concept of administrative staff's role conflict, role ambiguity, and overload, developed from the Four Stage Cycle Theory, was shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework of the Study
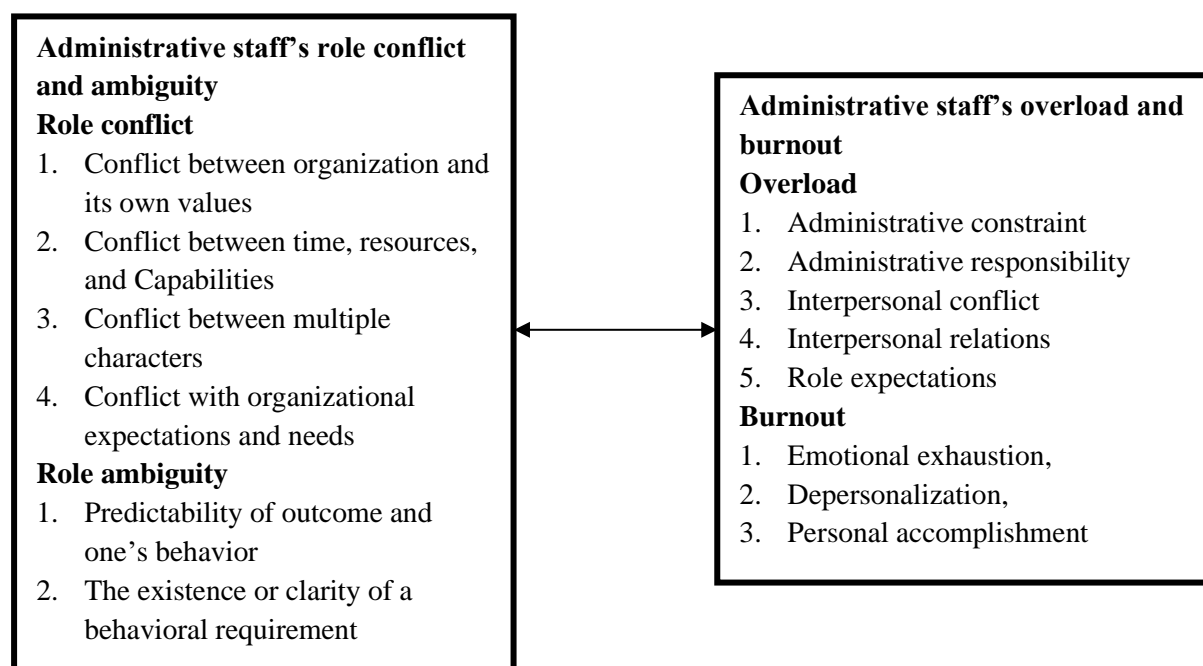
Methodology

Research Instrument

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect information. For the quantitative part, the researcher used a semi-structured interview with nine questions based on The Administrative staff Stress Index (Gmelch & Swent, 1984), The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, 1986), and The Role Questionnaire (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970). In order to determine the level of the administrative staff's overload, burn out, issue of rule conflict and ambiguity in a public university in Shanxi, the semi-structured interview were design to collect information before the questionnaires. The interview allowed the researcher to understand the overload problem and the administrative staff's burnout more concretely and the possible cause of the administrative staff role conflict and ambiguity. This interview enables interviewees to express their emotions and real thoughts to the researchers, thus making the study more accurate.

Question 1-3 was concerned with administrative staff's overload, the example of the question such as asked have you ever feeling that you are not fully qualified to handle your job. Question 4-6 was concerned with administrative staff's burnout, such as asked have you ever feel emotionally drained from your work and question 7-9 was concerned with role conflict and ambiguity, such as asked have you ever feel uncertain as to how your job is linked.

For the quantitative part, three questionnaires are used in this study.

Part 1. The Administrative staff Stress Index (ASI) of Gmelch & Swent (1984), with 35 items, five stress factors include administrative constraint, administrative responsibility, interpersonal conflict, interpersonal relations, and role expectations.

Part 2. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) of Maslach & Jackson (1981 &1986), with 22 items, three dimensions of burnout were assessed: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

Part 3. The Role Questionnaire of Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), with 30 items, includes both questions of role ambiguity and role conflict.

The IBM SPSS Statistics was used to analysis Mean, Standard Deviation and the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation in this study.

Table 1

Interpretation for the Scale and Level of School Administrative Staffs' Perceptions

Agreement Level	Score	Scale	Interpretation
Strongly Disagree	1	1.00-1.50	Very Low
Disagree	2	1.51-2.50	Low
Undecided	3	2.51-3.50	Moderate
Agree	4	3.51-4.50	High
Strong Agree	5	4.51-5.00	Very high

Validity and Reliability

In this research, the author adopted three questionnaires of ASI, MBI, and Rule questionnaires. All of the above questionnaires have proved highly reliable and have been used and validated in several studies (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970; Gmelch, and Torelli, 1994; Lawrence, Kurt, Jocelyn, Lindsey, Shannon. and Bellar, 2015; Snyder, 1999; Iwanicki, and Schwab, 1981). Table 2 showed the reliability of the previous study and the reliability of the current study.

Table 2

Questionnaire Reliability Report of the Previous Study and Current Study

Alpha coefficients	Previous study	Authors	Current study
Questionnaire 1 ASI	.70	Snyder, 1999	.96
Questionnaire 2 MBI	.73	Iwanicki, and Schwab, 1981	.85
Questionnaire 3 Role questionnaire	.80	Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970	.84
Total	.80	Gmelch, and Torelli, 1994	.95

Participants

For the interview, the key informants comprised five administrative staffs in the university that the researcher selected. One is working on student affairs for more than 5 years, two from academic affairs, one of them is deputy director general who works for 7 years, and another one is deals mainly with paperwork. Two works as teaching secretary in the school, both of them worked at the key development institution in the school, both of them work for 2 years in their position. In the school environment in China, the student affairs and the academic affairs department are two departments at the heart of the whole school. Both student affairs and academic affairs take important responsibility in the school, one serves the students and the other serves the teachers, so their jobs are busier and more stressful than those of other administrative staff. The teaching secretary is in balance between teacher and student, according to many Chinese universities, teaching secretary often assumes multiple roles, which may lead to their work pressure (Jing, 2015; Caiyun, 2004).

- One responsible for student affairs.
- Two works as teaching secretary
- Two works in the office of academic affairs.

For the questionnaire, the respondents comprised 155 full-time school administrative staffs in the Academic Year 2021 in a public university in Shanxi, China. The preliminary interview began in the mid of December 2020. The questionnaires were distributed to all those participants on Feb 20, 2021, through Wechat, by Chinese survey software, Wenjuanxing. Data collection ended up by Feb 23, 2021. All full- time school administrative staffs were invited to full the questionnaires in this study. Finally, 147 valid questionnaires were returned and

collected, and the recovery rate was 95%.

Findings

Research Objective One: The Level of Administrative staff's Overload in A Public University in Shanxi, China.

The study used the semi-structured interview with content analysis method to analysis the reply. Based on the preliminary interview; the 5 participants reported that they do have work overload problems. The one who works in student affairs noticed that she had an overloaded problem of trying to resolve parent and school conflicts and feel the stress of handling student discipline problems. The participants who work as teaching secretaries mentioned that they feel stressed about leaders believing that employees lack coordination and ability to deal with problems and often work overtime at the expense of personal time. The one who works in academic affairs mentioned that the issues normally let her feel overload was too much work to be done on the same day and too much work to be supervised and coordinated. In conclusion, the problems they mentioned are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Major Factors for Administrative Staffs' Overload Based on the Interview

Department	Number	Major Factors
Student Affairs	1	Interpersonal Conflict
Teaching Secretary	2	Role Expectations
Academic Affairs	3	Administrative Constraint

The data analysis showed that the administrative staffs in the university experience overload most from the administrative constraint factor. For the five factors that will give rise to administrative staff's overload, the Mean for administrative constraint was 3.80, in high-level interpretation. For the administrative responsibility, the Mean was 3.12, in the interpretation of a moderate level. For interpersonal conflict, the Mean was 2.98, at the moderate level. For interpersonal relations, the Mean was 2.97, at the moderate level, and role expectations, the Mean was 2.78, at the moderate level. The research data also showed that the key factors that lead to Administrative staff overload in the school are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

The Possible Factors for Administrative Staffs' Overload

Possible Factors	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	3.95	1.14	High
2.Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	3.69	1.12	High
3. Writing memos, letters, and other communications	4.03	1.15	High

4. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal workday	3.89	1.22	High
5. Feeling that meetings take up too much time	3.75	1.22	High
6. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork time	3.94	1.22	High
7. Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people	3.59	1.36	High

Research Objective Two: The Level of Administrative Staff's Burnout in a Public University in Shanxi, China

According to the preliminary interview, the five participants reported they were under burnout. The participant who works in student affairs said that she does not care if the people she serves are happy with her work schedule, and she felt that students and parents would blame administrative staffs for their problems. The participants who work as teaching secretaries said they feel burned out at work and depressed about their work. The administrative staffs who work in academic affairs said that when they face a new day of work, they feel very tired, and sometimes they cannot control emotions very well in work. In conclusion, the problems they mentioned are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Major Factors for Administrative Staffs' Burnout Based on the Interview

Department	Number	Major Factors
Student Affairs	1	Depersonalization
Teaching Secretary	2	Emotional Exhaustion
Academic Affairs	3	Emotional Exhaustion & Personal Accomplishment

The data analysis showed that the university administrative staffs experience burnout most from the emotional exhaustion factor; the Mean was 2.69, at the moderate level. For the depersonalization factor, the Mean was 2.17, at the low level. For the personal accomplishment factor, the Mean was 3.69, in the interpretation of high level. The result also showed the key factors that cause administrative staffs' burnout in the school, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

The Possible Factors for Administrative Staffs' Burnout

Possible Factors	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work	3.21	1.37	Moderate
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday	3.24	1.40	Moderate
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	2.87	1.40	Moderate
4. I feel I am working too hard on my job	3.81	1.18	High
5. I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems	2.71	1.47	Moderate

Research Objective Three: The Level of Administrative staff's Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity in a Public University in Shanxi, China

The five participants reported they have problems with role conflict and role ambiguity on account of the interview. The administrative staff who works in student affairs described that sometimes she works under vague instructions. Participants who work as teaching secretaries said that they receive incompatible requests from two or more people and lack staff. The administrative staffs who work in academic affairs also said that they do not have enough staff for work and lack policy support and work guidance. The problems are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Major Factors for Administrative Staffs' Role Conflict and Ambiguity Based on the Interview

Department	Number	Major Factors
Student Affairs	1	Role Ambiguity
Teaching Secretary	2	Role Conflict
Academic Affairs	3	Role Conflict and Ambiguity

The data analysis showed that for the university administrative staffs, the role conflict obtained the Mean of 2.68 and 3.01 for the Mean of role ambiguity. The key factors which cause Administrative staff burnout in the school, shown in Table 8.

Table 8

The Possible Factors for Administrative Staffs' Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Possible Factors	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I have enough time to complete my work	2.84	1.31	Moderate
2. I have to do things that should be done differently	2.90	1.50	Moderate
3. I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it	3.74	1.25	High
4. I have just the right amount of work to do	2.31	1.32	Low
5. I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently	3.16	1.28	Moderate
6. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people	2.78	1.47	Moderate
7. I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it	2.77	1.39	Moderate
8. I have to "feel my way" in performing my duties	2.78	1.33	Moderate
9. I have to work under vague directives or orders	2.71	1.42	Moderate
10. I do not know if my work will be acceptable to my boss	2.78	1.37	Moderate

Table 9 was the total Mean and standard deviations of each variable.

Table 9

 Means and Standard Deviations of the Level of Administrative Staff's Overload, Burnout, Rule Conflict and Role Ambiguity (n=147)

Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Overload	3.13	0.87	Moderate
Burn out	2.93	0.62	Moderate
Rule conflict and rule ambiguity	2.85	0.54	Moderate

Research Objective Four: The Relationship between Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity with Administrative staff's Overload and Burnout in A Public University in Shanxi, China

The data analysis results showed a significant relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity with Administrative staff overload in a public university in Shanxi, China. The result was shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Administrative Staff's Role Conflict and Ambiguity with Administrative Staff's Overload (n=147)

Correlation Test		Administrative staff's Overload	Conclusion
Administrative staff's Role Conflict and Ambiguity	Person Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	.314** .000	There is a significant relationship

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

The data result from the analysis showed a significant relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity with Administrative staff burnout in a public university in Shanxi, China. The result was shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Administrative staff's Role Conflict and Ambiguity with Administrative staff's Burnout (n=147)

Correlation Test		Administrative staff's Burnout	Conclusion
Administrative staff's Role Conflict and Ambiguity	Person Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	.649** .000	There is a significant relationship

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

Discussion

The study's findings noticed that administrative staffs in a public university in Shanxi, China, were at moderate levels of work overload and burnout. The administrative strain was the main cause of administrative overwork, with participants in the study reporting excessive telephone calls, interruptions at work, heavy paperwork writing work, and too many meetings are the major source of overload. The main cause of burnout is emotional exhaustion, among which exhaustion after work, facing a new day's work, and dealing with interpersonal relationships has become the main causes of burnout. In interviews, 80 percent of administrative staffs said they were understaffed at school, leading to conflict and ambiguity in their roles, with one person often is responsible for more than two responsibilities and tasks. Therefore, the author suggests that schools should arrange work tasks and assign people to the projects and tasks; for example, those who are responsible for student work should only be responsible for docking students, those who are responsible for clerical work should only be responsible for writing paperwork, and that more staff should be assigned to understaffed departments. At the same time, care more about the administrative staff, organize activities properly, and improve employees' relationship. Finally, the author suggests that schools improve their work efficiency and cut out unnecessary and routine meetings.

According to the results of the interview, administrative staffs working in the academic affairs office face more problems. For overload, they had the problem of administrative constraint. For burnout, they had the problem of both emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment problem. They also mentioned both role conflict and ambiguity issues in the interview; one of the key informants who were the administrative staff who works as teaching secretary expressed her feeling during the interview that:

> *"I have only been working at the school for two years, but it feels like ten years. I did not receive recognition from my work, and I have to bear the school leader's communication pressure and the leaders in my department. Overtime work is common; even during weekends, I cannot rest; I feel that my daily work is meaningless, I do not get any personal development from my work, and dealing with people is exhausting. When I wake up the next day to face a new day at work, I feel headache and want to escape".*

The one who works in academic affairs deals mainly with paperwork mentioned that:

> *"I have been a clerk in the academic affairs for five years. In these five years I have to face a lot of paper work in daily, every day when I get off work I feel very tired, both my eyes and spirit are very tired. However, the next day I had to get up to face the text again, which makes me feel very boring at work, sometimes the leaders asking urgent documents, I had to work overtime to complete them."*

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One administrative staff who works as the deputy director general said that:

"As the head of the department, I know that my subordinates are under great pressure of work. Sometimes I can hear them privately complaining that we have too much work to do. I understand their feelings, because I also face the work pressure from my superiors. Sometimes I get tired of people who don't understand the tasks I'm being asked to do, and I often worry about whether I'll get promoted or how my leader will judge my performance.

According to the results of the analyzed questionnaires showed that writing memos, letters, and other communications had the highest Mean, which is 4.03 for overload, and "being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are" had the lowest Mean, which is 2.45. For burnout, the highest Mean was the item of "I feel used up at the end of the workday," the Mean is 3.24, in the moderate level, the lowest item was "I feel like I am at the end of my rope," the Mean was 1.69, in the low level. The highest mean for role conflict and ambiguity was 3.74, the item was about receive and assignment without the manpower to complete it, the lowest was 1.82, which was work on unnecessary things. In conclusion, heavy paperwork, constant phone calls, and too many meetings led to a moderate sense of overload among university administrative staffs, according to an analysis of questionnaire data from 147 employees. Meanwhile, tiredness at the end of a day's work and anxiety, and resistance to going back to work the next day also contributed to burnout among the university's administrative staffs.

The results are not surprising, given the problems at many Chinese universities. For example, in a 2015 study in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, China, Jing pointed out that 200 administrative staffs and 30 administrative staffs surveyed universities to analyze the degree of burnout among administrative staffs at the grassroots level; among them, 65.6% of the grassroots administrative staffs were found to be under great work pressure, which was mainly caused by the increase in workload and burnout. Too many new things to learn, work not being understood by leaders, colleagues, and students were the key factors. A study by Jian in 2009 pointed out that because of the complexity, triviality, procedural nature, and time-consuming and energy-consuming nature of the tasks that administrative staffs are tasked with, it is easy to get bored, lost, and frustrated when administrative staff do this sort of thing for a long time. Caiyun, an administrative staff in the academic affairs office of a university in Zhejiang Province, China, said in a 2004 study that the phenomenon of burnout is unfavorable to the development of colleges and universities. Which expectations and demands from the outside world were too high, lack of recognition and respect for the role of the administrative staff as well as tedious tasks lead to the administrative staff's sense of burnout and overload.

However, the role conflict and ambiguity of university administrative staffs are also common in other countries. The overload and burnout of the administrative staff caused by this have also become the research direction of many researchers. In the United States, Gmelch and Torelli (1994) found in their studies of 1,000 school administrative staffs that role ambiguity and conflict were associated with overwork and burnout. A study of 3,225 school

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administrative staffs by Lindsey, Elise, and Catherine (2017) also found that job stress is generally higher among school administrative staffs. Among them, interpersonal relationships, self-efficacy, and demographic characteristics were significantly correlated with burnout. John et al. (1985), studied by 160 participants, also confirmed that role conflict and ambiguity could negatively affect schools, such as low productivity. In Turkey, Celik (2013) surveyed 200 vice principals and found that all respondents were affected by role conflict and ambiguity and burnout due to excessive work pressure and responsibilities.

Based on the analysis of the above cases and this study's data, the suggestions are as follows:

1) Reduce excessive workload of administrative staff and clarify their responsibilities, objectives and roles. As school administrative staffs, their role should be recognized by the school, parents, teachers, students, and colleagues. Schools should create a good atmosphere, constantly improve school administrative staffs' social status, respect their work, understand their grievances, and effectively solve their work and life difficulties; in particular, reduce their excessive workload and psychological load. School administrative staffs take more social responsibilities and expectations, as well as corresponding pressure.

2) Improve training mechanisms to make sure the administrative staffs have enough resources in their work. Colleges and universities can set up administrative personnel development centers; improve the training mechanism so that the training work is more targeted, scientific, and practical. To provide training on practical problems in administrative work; provide them with relevant information and assistance in their work, and scientifically set up training content, based on constantly improving the business ability and working methods of the administrative staff at the basic level, at the same time, cultivate the spirit of the administrative staff at the basic level, which is active and enterprising, united and cooperative, and making progress. The school can establish a sound evaluation, salary, and other systems. Such measures promote the professionalization of administrative staff management and stimulate the vitality of the administrative staff.

3) Assign more professional staff to the short of human resources posts and assign special duties to them. According to staff's personality, educational background, and specialty, a reasonable arrangement they are good at and like the job. Proper job rotation within the department will help to keep the administrative staff fresh and enthusiastic about their work. It will also help the administrative staff broaden their horizons, develop their multi-faceted skills, improve their ability to solve practical problems, and a comprehensive understanding of the school's work policy and operating procedures. Divide the work evenly, plan, and allow sufficient time for the administrative staffs to complete the tasks. Efforts have been made to avoid the occurrence of administrative staffs performing multiple functions.

Conclusion

This study first used the form of a preliminary interview, through the interview of 5 school administrative staffs, mentioned that students' affairs office, the academic affairs office, and other departments were short of human resources; usually, one staff has to do several jobs,

which lead to the problem of role ambiguity and conflict of the administrative staff of the university. During the interview, the administrative staffs expressed their fatigue to deal with the work and the pressure caused by the lack of time. It was clear that administrative staffs usually face different kinds of overload and burnout issues in different departments. The interview result found that the one who works in student affairs had an interpersonal conflict of overload and the problem from depersonalization factor of burnout. Unlike the staff in student affairs, administrative staffs who work as teaching secretary face more role expectations for overload and emotional exhaustion for burnout.

The data and reply of the study showed that the level of the administrative staff's overload in the school was high, the level of the administrative staff's burnout was moderate, and for role conflict and role ambiguity the level was moderate, it was clear to see that the significant relationship between role conflict and ambiguity with burnout, and the significant relationship between role conflict and ambiguity with overload.

The study may help the school principals understand administrative staffs' stress in work and be aware of their feeling and approach to work. Meanwhile, to help school principles to make the clear role of administrative staff in the school. After this study, school administrative staffs can self-evaluate their feelings on school work to improve their passion for work and commitment and help the administrative staff enjoy their daily work and feel the school's care. To improve the administrative staff's working efficiency, the future researchers will acquire functional background knowledge and information about the relationship between the role conflict and ambiguity with administrative staff overload and burnout.

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