

Research Article

Assessing the Professional Personality of College Counselors: A Student-Oriented Psychological Scale

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This study is aimed at identifying the structure and traits of college counselors' professional personality. Following existing methodology in conducting face-to-face and open-ended interviews, specialist evaluations, and a literature review, we develop a pilot test questionnaire measuring college counselors' professional personality traits (79 questions) based on salient data collected from a random sample of 2372 university/college students across China. We also conduct explorative factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to construct the formal "scale for college counselors' professional personality traits" (SCCPPT, 45 terms) using SPSS 20.0 and LISREL 8.80 software. The results show that this scale features a second-order, 5-factor structure covering the following five dimensions of professional personality: dutifulness, loyalty, affinity, dedication, and innovation. The findings indicate that the reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of these five factors ranges from 0.741 to 0.952 and that their validity is supported. Identifying their professional personality enables college counselors to have a more sustainable career and promote the faster growth and higher quality development of students, and the SCCPPT can be used as a measurement tool, supporting research on college counselors' professional personality. Thus, this study expands both the theoretical and practical literature concerning professional personality traits. It can also provide a novel perspective, which can help global educators understand Chinese higher education; it is also a reference with international implications for professional groups of student affair administrators or instructors.

1. Introduction

College counselors are referred to as "Fu Dao Yuan" in Chinese. This term is a unique name for a position with Chinese characteristics usually known as the "student affairs administrator or instructor" in other countries [1–3]. Playing an important role in higher education in China, they guide, support, and promote the holistic development of students. By providing services such as psychological counseling, personal growth counseling, and career planning, they help students solve problems, adapt to their learning and living environment, and enhance their overall quality and ability. However, amid the continuous development of Chinese higher education and the increasingly complex needs of students, the work of college counsellors is also

facing increased challenges. Therefore, it is critical to study the professional personality traits of college counsellors to improve their work effectiveness and quality. It is well known that research scales are crucial for innovation and the theoretical development of professional personality. Indeed, there are many comprehensive professional personality scales, such as the Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire (16PF), Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), Five Factor Model (FFM), and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). These generalized personality scales, however, are more appropriate for measuring the professional personalities of general populations; they might not always be applicable to specific occupational groups. Moreover, in the Chinese context, college counsellors greatly differ from other groups, as they are not exactly college teachers nor exactly college administrators. Their service

targets, working environments, professional skills, and career paths are significantly different from those of many professions.

Given the lack of research on the development of a scale specifically tailored to college counselors' professional personality traits, the aim of this paper is to explore, on an experimental basis, the construction of such a scale for college counselors in China. That is, this study develops a scale measuring the professional personality of college counselors, which is vital for both university/college student growth and the enhanced quality of higher education [4]. Based on the concept of "student-centered" education and the definitions and connotations of college counselors' professional personality, to evaluate the structure and traits thereof, we develop the scale for college counselors' professional personality traits (SCCPPT). This research therefore provides comprehensive insights into the professional traits of college counselors, enriching the theoretical and practical research on professional personality. Given that the concept of college counselors' professional personality is still very much in an initial development phase in China (and in other countries), this study also provides a timely opportunity to discuss the professional development of these counselors and to expand its horizon and relevance as a field of study. This paper can also serve as a reference for other similar professional groups.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a review of the literature on college counselors' professional personality in China. Section 3 outlines the data source and adopted method for the formulation of the scale. Section 4 presents the results of factor analysis. In Section 5, we discuss the sustainable development of college counselors' professional personality across five dimensions (dutifulness, loyalty, affinity, dedication, and innovation). Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Professional Personality. Professional personality refers to a stable attitude on the part of the individual who matches the requirements of his or her occupation and behavior [5]. It is a personality trait that matches the nature of an individual's profession. Clearly, different types of professions are associated with different personality types. Individuals' personality type, interests, and occupation are closely related, and all people have a distinct personality structure. Therefore, it is important for people to find the right occupation based on their personality with the aim of achieving a "person-job match" [6]. Trait-factor and career anchor theories also suggest that their values and personality traits are the keys to individuals' career choices [7, 8]. Overall, the better the match between an individual's personality traits and his or her occupation is, the more successful that individual's professional sustainable development tends to be [9]; the worse such a match is, the more likely the individual's career path is to be hindered. Indeed, each individual has unique personality traits. Given their disparate natures, environments, conditions, and methods of work, all occupations require different abilities, knowledge, skills, personalities, temperaments, and psychological well-being among workers. An individual's assessment of his or her match with

his or her job is a source of self-evaluation and is thus important in his or her positive reinforcement of individual self-concept [10]. In addition, different professions have particular personality requirements. A person is able to utilize his or her strengths and talents fully in a position and achieve better performance when his or her personality traits are properly adapted to his or her occupation [11, 12]. In contrast, mismatches between individuals and occupations can have a negative impact on employees' work attitudes and productive behaviors, rendering them more susceptible to feelings of unfairness and deprivation [13], the willingness to leave [14], and disengagement behaviors [15].

2.2. College Counselors. College counselors, the backbone of ideological and political education in China, have a professional personality that is not only an endogenous motivation for career sustainable development but also a core quality [16, 17]. The college counselor profession is associated with the context of higher education with Chinese characteristics. In China, college counselors become life coaches and friends who promote the growth and success of college students. In other words, the college counselor has a unique identity, both a teacher and a supervisor, combining the functions of education, management, and service [18]. In contrast to full-time teachers, who engage mainly in teaching, college counselors, who also engage in teaching tasks on a part-time basis, focus mainly on ideological and political education. College counselors are on the front line of student work and provide educational and administrative services to students in classes [19]. Thus, the college counseling profession is comprehensive in terms of job responsibilities, ground level in terms of professional activities, comprehensive in terms of professional content, and interactive; its aim is to accompany students all the way through their process of growth [20, 21]. As a result, the influence of college counselors on students is full-range and deep-rooted.

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government attach great importance to the career sustainability of college counselors, entailing that the sustainable development of college counselors is crucial in the construction of two varieties of workers in Chinese higher education (teaching staff and administrative faculty). In recent years, China has developed a series of policies and systems that require the sustainable improvement of the professional excellence and vocational capacity of college counselors, facilitated via a range of high salaries, training opportunities, and development space. Chinese Ministry of Education data show that as of March 2022 [22], there were 240,800 college counselors in China. Today, this number is still increasing rapidly, leading to the formation of a large professional group across universities and colleges. However, some college counselors exhibit low vocational awareness, a weak occupational identity, and a negative professional attitude, e.g., powerlessness, anxiety, confusion, and bewilderment or even disappointment [23]. As a result, an increasing number of scholars have highlighted the importance of studying the sustainable professional personality of college counselors [24, 25].

2.3. The Professional Personality of College Counselors. The professional personality of college counselors refers to the

unique set of traits, characteristics, and dispositions that are essential for competent and effective counseling practice in the higher education context [26]. It encompasses the personal cognition, emotions, qualities, skills, and attitudes that enable counselors to establish rapport, provide guidance, and facilitate student development. This professional personality is often formed and developed through organizing, implementing, and guiding the daily ideological and political education of students [27]. In other words, this professional personality manifests the professional requirements of the college counselor. Moreover, this personality is also the result of an inevitable choice that college counselors must make in their professional activities and work scenarios as well as a necessary manifestation of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in this context [16]. Nevertheless, few studies have explored the connotation and importance of professional personality for college counselors [28]. Their main findings are as follows: (1) Empathy always plays a crucial role in college counselors' professional personality, as it involves the ability to understand and share the emotions of students by demonstrating genuine care and concern. College counselors who possess high levels of empathy tend to establish stronger therapeutic relationships and promote positive student outcomes [29]. (2) Self-reflectiveness and self-awareness are both fundamental aspects of college counselors' professional personality. Self-reflective counselors are more likely to engage in ongoing self-improvement and provide quality services to students [30]. (3) Concerning ethics and professionalism, college counselors must adhere to ethical guidelines, maintain confidentiality, and demonstrate professional conduct. Scholars have highlighted the significant role of college counselors' ethical decision-making and adherence to professional standards in ensuring the trust and well-being of students [31]. Such studies on college counselors' traits and characteristics can contribute to effective counseling practice and positive student outcomes in higher education settings.

In addition, scholars have attempted to develop a professional personality scale for college counselors. Some studies, based on functionalism and career orientation perspectives, have subjectively assessed college counselors' professional personality traits according to salient job content, such as charisma, role orientation, and ecological personality [32, 33]. Other scholars have used generalized personality questionnaires or scales, such as the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Short Form (EPQ-RSC) or the short version of the Big Five Personality Questionnaire, to determine the generalized personality traits that influence college counselors' competency [34–36]. Additionally, constructivist theory and self-developed questionnaires or scales have been adopted to identify the aspects of personality that influence counselors' development, such as morality [37]. Accordingly, while scholars have extensively studied college counselors' professional personality, the literature has primarily focused on extant general scales and personality traits without developing a specialized scale. However, given the increasing emphasis on this profession in China, regarding the special characteristics of college counselors' professional development and the formation of their professional personality [38], it is both

necessary and perhaps more scientific to develop a professional personality scale from students' perspective. As a result, we propose and develop the SCCPPT, a scale for analyzing and discussing the psychological well-being and career sustainability of college counselors.

3. Method

3.1. Data Source. First, in regard to college counselors' professional personality traits, we collected data from three sources: 246 interviewees (college counselors, administrators, faculty, and students), 10 specialists, and more than 72 articles. In this process, 79 terms were obtained for use in the trial measurement scale for the SCCPPT.

Second, we distributed the pilot scale to a random sample of 17 universities with a total of 2510 students across China obtaining 2372 valid questionnaires (Table 1). We used these data for explorative factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Ultimately, we reduced the 79 terms for professional personality traits to 45 terms for the formal application of the SCCPPT.

3.2. Method. Personality trait theory has been widely used in personality research; scholars in this context have primarily explored what personality is and what constitutes it [39]. For example, Allport's (1931) theory of personality traits pioneered the study thereof by using terms or lexical words [40]. Cattell et al. used the statistical method of factor analysis to identify 16 root traits and developed the Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire (16PF) [41]. H. Eysenck and S. Eysenck constructed a theoretical model of personality structure based on the three dimensions of "extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism" and developed the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) [42]. Costa and McCrae also developed the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) based on the Five Factor Model (FFM) [43]. Following this research, this study used the abovementioned method to develop the SCCPPT with the aim of investigating the personality traits of college counselors in China. This study entailed open-ended interviews, the formulation of the pilot test scale, and, finally, the development of the formal scale.

3.2.1. Open-Ended Interviews and the Formulation of the Pilot Test Scale. First, we used face-to-face open-ended interviews, specialist evaluations, and a literature review to identify college counselors' professional personality traits (Figure 1). Specifically, we selected 246 interviewees including college counselors (as well as their leaders and subordinates), administrators, faculty, and students. They were asked to describe, to the greatest extent possible, terms that refer to college counselors' professional personality traits (a total of 102 terms). Subsequently, we merged and summarized all these terms by (1) merging synonymous or similar terms and (2) deleting ambiguous, vague expressions, and overly colloquial expressions [44]. Following this screening process, 87 terms remained (Table 2).

Second, 10 experts in ideological and political education or psychology were invited to evaluate all the terms. Based on their suggestions, we optimized the expressions and

TABLE 1: Demographics of scale participants ($N = 2372$).

		Quantity	Percentage (%)
University	The first batch of universities	514	21.7
	The second batch of universities	1070	45.1
	College	788	33.2
Gender	Male	906	38.2
	Female	1466	61.8
Grade	Freshman	719	30.3
	Sophomore	920	38.8
	Junior	524	22.1
	Senior	209	8.8
Type of discipline	Arts and sciences	883	37.2
	Science and engineering	771	32.5
	Art	100	4.2
	Medicine	221	9.3
	Engineering	397	16.7
Household registration	Urban area	744	31.4
	Rural area	1628	68.6

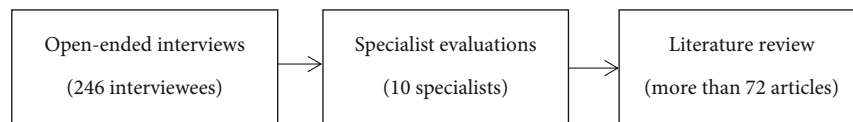


FIGURE 1: The 3 steps involved in the formulation of the pilot test scale. Source: authors' compilation.

TABLE 2: Results of the interviews.

Dimension	Descriptive terms	Main references
Career perceptions (16)	Knowledgeable, rational, professional, culturally knowledgeable, pioneering, organized, responsible, hard thinking, studious, high accomplished, wide range of interests, resilient, visionary, methodical, planned	Zhang et al. [45]; Li [18]
Career emotions (21)	Sincere, caring for students, kind, optimistic, sincere, friendly, approachable, confident, humorous, respectful, easy-going, caring, gentle, truly, proactive, amiable, straightforward, humble, passionate, tolerant, warm	Zhang et al. [46]; Hu [47]
Career will (18)	Fair, conscientious, dutiful, rigorous, disciplined, persevering, upright, self-reflective, exemplary, courageous, committed, self-aware, impartial, persistent, high moral character, united, bold, indifferent to fame and fortune	Wang [48]; Lian et al. [49]
Career beliefs (16)	Passion for the ruling party, patriotic, discerning, truthful, conscious, principled, firm, honest, calm, obedient, responsible, high ideals and beliefs, steady, dedicated, devoted, insistent	Zhou et al. [50]; Zhou and Wang [51]
Career behavior (16)	Selfless, innovative, diligent, pragmatic, up-to-date, motivated, law-abiding, practicing, active, collaborative, industrious, factual, practical, helpful, stringent, elegant	Huang et al. [52]; Xie [20]

deleted nine terms. For example, the terms “high moral character”, “factual”, “resilient”, “pioneering”, and “indifferent to fame and fortune” were deleted, while the terms “culturally knowledgeable” and “knowledgeable” were merged into “knowledgeable”.

Finally, to further improve the quality and objectivity of this measurement of college counselors' professional personality traits, we referred to the literature (more than 72 articles) to standardize the terms concerning professional personality traits, e.g., amending colloquial expressions to

academic descriptions. This study ultimately retained 79 terms, whereby a pilot test version of the SCCPPT was compiled. This version of the SCCPPT is divided into five dimensions: career perceptions, career emotions, career will, career beliefs, and career behavior (Table 3).

3.2.2. Development of the Formal Scale. Based on the pilot test SCCPPT, we used the Likert self-rated 5-point scoring method (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not sure, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree) to test 2510 students in 17

TABLE 3: The terms included in the pilot test version of the SCCPPT.

No.	Terms
1	Passionate about the ruling party
2	Calm
3	Honest
4	Witty and humorous
5	Firm
6	Insistent
7	Obedient
8	Patriotic
9	Principled
10	Rational
11	Studious
12	Amiable
13	Tolerant
14	Self-aware
15	Humanized
16	Introverted
17	Sober
18	Competitive minded
19	Persistent
20	Dictatorial
21	Flexible
22	Courteous
23	Approachable
24	Thrifty
25	Incorruptible
26	Pristine
27	Enthusiastic
28	Truly
29	Professional
30	Prestigious
31	Innovative
32	Optimistic
33	Fluent
34	Decisive
35	Powerful in writing
36	Knowledgeable
37	Confident
38	Self-improvement
39	Modest
40	Diligent
41	Dedicated
42	United
43	Practical
44	Committed
45	Quick-witted
46	Caring for students
47	Efficient
48	Discerning

TABLE 3: Continued.

No.	Terms
49	Observant
50	Thoughtful
51	Peaceful
52	Impartial
53	Wide range of interests
54	Lively
55	Rigorous
56	Disciplined
57	Stringent
58	Gentle
59	Courageous
60	Self-respecting
61	Well-coordinated
62	Assertive
63	Friendly
64	Passionate
65	Visionary
66	Striving
67	Planned
68	Conscientious
69	Practicing
70	Proactive
71	Persevering
72	Law-abiding
73	Dutiful
74	Exemplary
75	Upright
76	Active
77	Responsible
78	Methodical
79	Self-reflective

Note: the bold terms were included in the formal scale.

universities or colleges in China during the period between June 2018 and June 2022, and 2372 valid scales were obtained, for a return rate of 94.5%. Subsequently, we divided the 2372 valid scales into two parts (Table 4). (1) The first part contained 1201 samples, which were subjected to explorative factor analysis using SPSS 20.0 software to initially construct a model of college counselors' professional personality. (2) The second part contained 1171 samples, which were employed in confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.80 software and to correct the theoretical model. Simultaneously, the second part of the data was also used to measure reliability, validity, and other metrics. Based on this analysis, a final version of the formal scale was developed (45 terms).

4. Results

4.1. *Analysis of Explorative Factors.* We first tested the feasibility of explorative factor analysis [53]. The results showed

TABLE 4: Demographics of scale participants.

		N = 1201 (the first part)		N = 1171 (the second part)	
		Quantity	Percentage (%)	Quantity	Percentage (%)
University	The first batch of universities	305	25.4	235	20.1
	The second batch of universities	519	43.2	599	51.2
	College	377	31.4	337	28.7
Gender	Male	409	34.1	497	42.4
	Female	792	65.9	674	57.6
Grade	Freshman	461	38.4	257	21.9
	Sophomore	486	40.5	434	37.1
	Junior	213	17.7	310	26.5
	Senior	41	3.4	169	14.4
Type of discipline	Arts and sciences	466	38.8	417	35.6
	Science and engineering	408	34.0	362	30.9
	Art	54	4.5	45	3.8
	Medicine	126	10.5	95	8.1
	Engineering	147	12.2	95	8.1
Household registration	Urban area	344	28.6	397	33.7
	Rural area	857	71.4	774	66.3

that $KMO = 0.981$ (Table 5). Furthermore, Bartlett's spherical test indicated that the approximate $X^2 = 33971.564$ ($df = 990$, $p < 0.001$), i.e., these data are suitable for factor analysis.

Based on the explorative factor analysis, we performed dimensionality reduction using the following criteria, i.e., terms with the following conditions were eliminated: (1) terms with low weights on all factors and a load value of less than 0.40, (2) commonality less than 0.30, (3) the same item cannot have high weights on 2 or more factors (i.e., higher than 0.330), and (4) a factor or factors featuring only 1 to 2 terms. The basic principles of item deletion were as follows: first, terms with low weights on all factors were deleted, followed by terms with the largest weights across factors and ultimately factors with fewer than 2 terms, and second, starting from the least important to the most important, from bottom to top, only one item or one factor was deleted each time.

We deleted all nonconforming terms based on the above criteria. Thereafter, following the gravel plot analysis, the study ultimately retained 45 questions pertaining to 5 dimensions. The cumulative variance explained by all dimensions was 58.32%, and the weights of each item ranged from 0.439 to 0.889 (Table 6). According to the connotations of these different dimensional factors, the five dimensions can be broadly classified as follows: (1) Dutifulness reflects the personality traits of college counselors in terms of performing their work with devotion. (2) Loyalty reflects college counselors' attitude or political behavior toward the Communist Party of China. (3) Affinity describes the interpersonal relationships of college counselors, especially their treatment of students. (4) Dedication reflects the perception of college counselors of how they serve students. (5) Innovation captures college counselors' awareness of their professional knowledge and abilities.

TABLE 5: KMO values and Bartlett's sphericity test results ($N = 1201$).

KMO value	Bartlett's sphericity test value		
	X^2	df	p
0.981	33971.564	990	0.000

4.2. Analysis of Factors. We selected 1171 data points for factor analysis (Table 4). The correlation coefficient between each item score and the corresponding subscale score was calculated by using the Pearson correlation as an indicator of factor discriminability. The discriminability of the terms ranged from 0.549 to 0.719, suggesting that the scale terms exhibit good discriminability (Table 7).

4.3. Analysis of Confirmatory Factor. This study selected scale data from the formal implementation test ($N = 1171$, see Table 4) and used LISREL 8.80 to develop a structural equation model for confirmatory factor analysis [54] of the factor structure of the five dimensions of college counselors' professional personality.

Given that we found that these 5 factors were correlated with each other to some degree, it was necessary to determine whether college counselors' professional personality explained the pattern of relationships among them. As second-order models have some advantages over first-order models [55], they can obviously be used to test whether higher-order factors explain the pattern of relationships among first-order factors. In addition, second-order models can simplify the interpretation of complex measurement structures [56]. Therefore, in this study, we developed

TABLE 6: The weights of factors for professional personality traits.

Dutifulness		Loyalty		Affinity		Dedication		Innovativeness	
No.	Weights	No.	Weights	No.	Weights	No.	Weights	No.	Weights
77	0.736	5	0.763	23	0.585	41	0.889	36	0.563
71	0.721	3	0.705	12	0.585	42	0.854	53	0.446
79	0.691	2	0.690	58	0.523	40	0.674	31	0.439
73	0.690	1	0.690	27	0.523	43	0.534		
56	0.683	7	0.653	28	0.513	44	0.449		
76	0.678	8	0.652	46	0.506				
57	0.669	9	0.612	63	0.490				
65	0.665	6	0.598	13	0.450				
66	0.649	14	0.536						
69	0.646	10	0.480						
74	0.627								
72	0.626								
55	0.617								
70	0.606								
68	0.600								
78	0.594								
67	0.574								
75	0.565								
52	0.506								

a 5-factor first-order model alongside a second-order model. The fit coefficients of the two models are shown in Table 8.

In addition to the model fit index, a combination of cross validity analysis and Akaike’s information criterion is necessary to determine the optimal model [57, 58]. As a result of such analysis and comparison, the structure of college counselors’ professional personality was ultimately determined: a second-order 5-factor model (Figure 2).

4.4. Reliability and Validity Test. First, we conducted the reliability test [59]. These results showed that the internal consistency α coefficients of the SCCPPT were all above 0.7 and that the internal consistency α coefficient of the whole scale was 0.985. The internal consistency coefficients of the five subdimensions were 0.952, 0.912, 0.904, 0.840, and 0.741 (Table 9), indicating that the internal consistency reliability of the scale was very high.

Second, we conducted validity tests based on the results for the five factors derived from the explorative factor analysis. This study revealed moderate correlations among these factors (Table 10), demonstrating that the scale exhibited good structural validity.

5. Discussion and Implications

The above results show that college counselors’ professional personality, as perceived by college students, consists of five dimensions. In Table 11, the 19 factors in the first column reflect the personality traits of college counselors in terms of how they perform their jobs. The 10 factors in the second column indicate the performance of college counselors regarding the political aspects of their work. The 8 factors

in the third column describe the interpersonal relations of college counselors, especially their treatment of students. The 5 factors in the fourth column measure the dedication of college counselors to providing ideological and political education to students. Finally, the 3 factors in the fifth column indicate college counselors’ creativity of their professional knowledge and competence. Accordingly, we categorize these five dimensions as follows: dutifulness, loyalty, affinity, dedication, and innovation.

5.1. Sustainable Development of Professional Personality: Five-Dimensional Factors. First, dutifulness includes the following terms: responsible, persevering, self-reflective, dedicated, disciplined, active, stringent, visionary, striving, practicing, exemplary, law-abiding, rigorous, proactive, conscientious, methodical, planned, upright, and impartial. The mission of college counselors is to cultivate new citizens in the contemporary era capable of bearing the great responsibility of the nation, a task that is related to the future development of the country and society as a whole. Only a high degree of dutifulness allows college counselors to work for college students more effectively. Dutifulness allows college counselors to be more conscious of their job responsibilities and more willing to devote time and energy to their sustainable career. A college counselor with a high level of dutifulness is often capable of overcoming difficulties more effectively and sustainably, mentoring students, and supporting their growth and success.

Second, the terms included in the dimension of loyalty are as follows: firm, honest, calm, passionate about the ruling party, obedient, patriotic, principled, insistent, self-aware, and rational. This dimension reflects how college students

TABLE 7: Discriminability of terms for professional personality traits.

Dutifulness		Loyalty		Affinity		Dedication		Innovation	
No.	Discriminability	No.	Discriminability	No.	Discriminability	No.	Discriminability	No.	Discriminability
77	0.705	5	0.672	23	0.710	41	0.591	36	0.549
71	0.682	3	0.680	12	0.697	42	0.633	53	0.611
79	0.681	2	0.633	58	0.688	40	0.646	31	0.672
73	0.692	1	0.577	27	0.697	43	0.691		
56	0.708	7	0.660	28	0.686	44	0.719		
76	0.694	8	0.589	46	0.681				
57	0.713	9	0.686	63	0.688				
65	0.692	6	0.697	13	0.697				
66	0.701	14	0.704						
69	0.687	10	0.709						
74	0.685								
72	0.645								
55	0.693								
70	0.670								
68	0.624								
78	0.701								
67	0.675								
75	0.653								
52	0.676								

TABLE 8: Fit indices for confirmatory factor analysis of the structural model ($N = 1171$).

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	NFI	NNFI
First-order model	4390.96	935	4.696	0.86	0.99	0.056	0.98	0.99
Second-order model	4108.06	940	4.370	0.86	0.99	0.056	0.98	0.99

expect college counselors to focus primarily on their ideological and political education. In college administration in China, loyalty is the centralized expression of college counselors' professional beliefs, reflecting the confidence of this professional group in the practice, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics [54]. Simultaneously, loyalty indicates that college counselors should firmly support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and resolutely uphold the authority and centralized leadership of the Party Central Committee. Moreover, they should love the country, its people, and the Party's educational plan and should actively practice and promote socialist core values.

Third, the dimension of affinity contains the following terms: approachable, amiable, gentle, enthusiastic, truly, caring for students, friendly, and tolerant. Affinity indicates that a college counselor is expected by college students to have the personality traits of sincere friendliness and amiability. Affinity is a vivid portrayal of professional emotions that mirrors the closeness of the college counselor, allowing students to approach him or her willingly. The personality traits associated with affinity tend to be exhibited by college counselors who are very caring, enthusiastic, active, and optimistic toward students. The stronger a college coun-

selor's affinity is, the greater the positive influence thereof on students [60]. In other words, an active professional mindset is useful in establishing cordial, sustainable teacher-student relationships. Meanwhile, this trait enables a college counselor to fully exert his or her initiative and creativity, thereby improving the efficiency and sustainability of his or her work.

Fourth, the terms included in the dimension of dedication are as follows: dedicated, united, diligent, practical, and committed. This dimension reflects the personality traits of college counselors, who are expected to provide college students with thoughtful and enthusiastic services in a sincere manner. Dedication refers to the sincere desire of college counselors to take the initiative to care for and help students, thus promoting their self-worth. College counselors' work is a kind of labor aimed at shaping the soul with the soul and cultivating the personality with the personality. A college counselor with high dedication is meticulous, diligent, and hardworking in educational practice and skilled in educating and guiding people as well as sustainably caring for, helping and serving them.

Finally, innovation includes the following terms: knowledgeable, wide range of interests, and innovative [61]. This dimension is a reflection of the personality traits that college students expect college counselors to have and concern

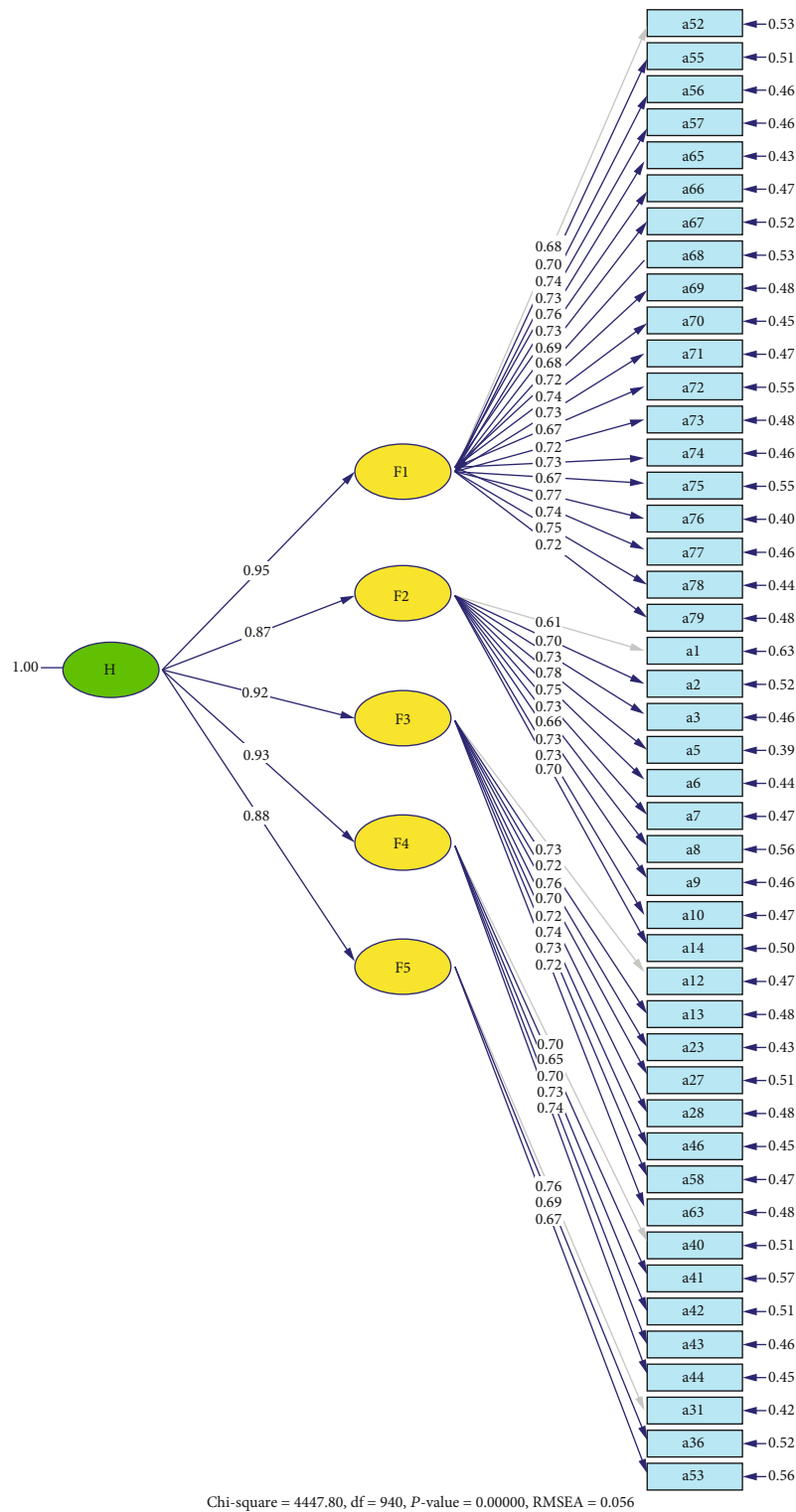


FIGURE 2: The second-order 5-factor model of college counselors' professional personality.

TABLE 9: The internal consistency α coefficients of the SCCPPT ($N = 1201$).

	Dutifulness	Loyalty	Affinity	Dedication	Innovation	Total score
α coefficient	0.952	0.912	0.904	0.840	0.741	0.985

TABLE 10: Correlation coefficients among the factors of SCCPPT ($N = 1201$).

Factor	Dutifulness	Loyalty	Affinity	Dedication	Innovation
Dutifulness	1.000				
Loyalty	0.653***	1.000			
Affinity	0.501***	0.428***	1.000		
Dedication	0.639***	0.538***	0.424***	1.000	
Innovation	0.235***	0.155***	0.114***	0.182***	1.000

Symbol *** indicates $p < 0.001$.

TABLE 11: Terms pertaining to the five dimensions of the formal SCCPPT (45 terms in total).

Dutifulness (19)	Loyalty (10)	Affinity (8)	Dedication (5)	Innovation (3)
Responsible	Firm	Approachable	Dedicated	Knowledgeable
Persevering	Honest	Amiable	United	Wide range of interests
Self-reflective	Calm	Gentle	Diligent	Innovative
Dedicated	Passionate about the ruling party	Enthusiastic	Practical	
Disciplined	Obedient	Truly	Committed	
Active	Patriotic	Caring for students		
Stringent	Principled	Friendly		
Visionary	Insistent	Tolerant		
Striving	Self-aware			
Practicing	Rational			
Exemplary				
Law-abiding				
Rigorous				
Proactive				
Conscientious				
Methodical				
Planned				
Upright				
Impartial				

being intelligent and knowledgeable with a wide range of interests. Innovation requires college counselors to keep up with the times consistently, sustainably strengthen their sense of innovation, cultivate creative thinking, proactively acquire various types of knowledge, and explore new ways and means of solving problems. In turn, this trait encourages college counselors to take full advantage of their own interests to approach and attract students and promote students' resonance with their common interests. Accordingly, via innovation, they can more effectively and sustainably integrate themselves into the studies and lives of college students and enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of ideological and political education.

5.2. Student-Oriented Professional Personality: The Path to a Sustainable Profession for College Counselors. The relationship between professional characteristics and professional personality involves two-way interactions. Depending on the kind of profession in which people are engaged, they exhibit repetitive and continuous behavior characteristics. These in turn constitute the basic content of their professional activities and

thus influence their professional personality [16]. Similarly, college counselors' professional personality cannot be separated from their professional characteristics. Based on face-to-face open-ended interviews with students and the results of the proposed professional personality model, we suggest that the professional characteristics of college counselors mainly include political, moral, emotional, service-oriented, and specialized traits. These personality traits are mostly derived from the expressions of university and college students, the work targets of college counselors. In other words, these student-oriented professional personality traits represent students' psychological expectations of the counselor profession. Hence, the higher the degree of the satisfaction of these psychological expectations is, the better the physical and mental well-being of students, and the more conducive counseling is to the healthy and sustainable development of higher education. Therefore, the development of counselors' professional personality should also focus on cultivating excellent political quality, high moral integrity, harmonious teacher-student emotions, diligent student nurturing, and superb professional skills.

5.2.1. *Dutifulness.* Dutifulness, also known as conscientiousness or responsibility, is clearly an important professional personality trait. Many well-established professional personality theories or models also emphasize the importance of dutifulness or conscientiousness. The FFM identifies conscientiousness as a fundamental personality trait [62], whereby individuals high in conscientiousness are often diligent, reliable, organized, and committed to their work responsibilities. The HEXACO model is an extension of the FFM that also includes a dimension called dutifulness, which emphasizes integrity, responsibility, and a willingness to fulfill obligations [63]. In the theory of work-related values [64], dutifulness aligns with the “conformity” value, the belief in following rules, fulfilling obligations, and maintaining order in the workplace. The use of dutifulness in this paper is thus largely consistent with the connotations in the above theories or models. Nevertheless, by tracing our 19 subterms to the original interview content, we have discovered numerous differentiating features: (1) College counselors are substantially expected to have a strong sense of professional dutifulness by students rather than the college counselors themselves. In our interviews with students, they focused on the dutifulness of college counsellors significantly more than counselors’ professional requirements entail. (2) In China, moreover, the high-spirited professional dutifulness of college counselors often plays an intuitive role in demonstrating information to college students. Therefore, college counselors must act as exemplars and influence students by conveying positive and optimistic words and actions. Specifically, the following two aspects are necessary: First, college counselors should always bear in mind their dutifulness in teaching and educating students, devote themselves to improving the level of ideological and political education, and respect individual differences among students while guiding their healthy growth by providing good moral demonstrations. Second, they should exhibit high-quality professional ethics, which not only reflects their personal image but also influences their cultivation of college students’ personalities. The words and deeds of college counselors should follow the norms of teacher ethics, and their actions should serve as good examples for students. In general, an important professional characteristic of college counselors in China is their tendency to care for students sincerely, treat them fairly, be strict with them, and be a good teacher and friend to them. In this way, they can truly accomplish their duty and develop a better sustainable professional personality.

5.2.2. *Loyalty.* Next, college counselors require the political characteristic of loyalty, which corresponds to loyalty in the SCCPPT. As a spiritual practice aimed at shaping students’ minds and souls, in ideological and political education, loyalty is presented as a goal that determines the kind of person one becomes and the kind of spiritual realm that one inhabits. As ideological and political workers in universities and colleges, college counselors must adopt a clear political stance, be loyal to the political party and the state, and adhere to the truth. Based on their practice in China, college counselors who adopt a loftier political perspective tend to have a stronger sense of professional mission. As a result, they also have a more ideal professional personality;

in this way, they are able to sincerely cultivate their students’ correct worldviews and outlooks on life and values. This factor differs significantly from many existing models of personality traits, and most of the research on many professional personalities, which attributes, suggests loyalty to individuals, teams, or professions [65, 66]. In this study, however, we find that the loyalty of college counselors has many political connotations that reflect loyalty to the Communist Party of China. This finding is consistent with the results of many theoretical studies in the Chinese context, which suggest that college counsellors must be loyal to the Communist Party of China. Loyalty is thus as important as dutifulness, and loyalty to the Party has increasingly become the most important personality trait for college counselors [67].

5.2.3. *Affinity.* Love for students is an important sustainable professional characteristic of college counselors in China. A harmonious teacher-student relationship causes students to trust college counselors more, facilitating the sustainable development of good study and living habits and regulating students’ daily behavior. In addition, practice shows that affinity can provide students with better guidance on politics, ideology, psychology, academic guidance, life coaching, good behavior, safety protection, and career development. This finding is consistent with many studies that fully emphasize the importance of affinity as a professional trait among college counselors [68–70]. Many studies have also shown that numerous occupations have this personality trait, all of which can have a significant positive effect on career development. Notably, during this study, we also found that an impersonal teacher-student relationship tends to lead to negative professional emotions and behavior, causing college counselors to view their work only as a means of obtaining a livelihood and to lack a positive attitude, upward motivation, or sense of responsibility [71]. These were the intuitive feelings of many interviewees, which suggests that the possession of affinity is very important. The absence of affinity as a personality trait among college counsellors may result in a significant reduction in their quality and motivation in work, not to mention their professional growth and career development [16]. These negative professional emotions undermine the sustainable development of their professional personality, as they are not in line with the ideal professional characteristics of college counselors.

5.2.4. *Dedication.* The duties of college counselors have shifted from the single function of providing “education” to the integration of the three main duties of “education, management, and service.” The reason the central word associated with college counselors is “counseling” instead of “management” is that service and education are the basic duties and essential features of this profession [72]. In the interviews with the students, we found that college counselors must be able to think positively, from the perspective of students, as well as to fully understand, value, and care for students’ personal interests. In other words, their professional characteristics are associated with a student focus and wholeheartedly helping student solve practical problems

pertaining to life, study, and emotions. In addition, college counselors should focus on the goal of holistic student development, take the fundamental interests of students as their starting point, strive to develop students' potential, and meet their reasonable needs in material and spiritual terms. Although the factor of dedication is present in many existing professional personality theories and scales, in this study, the students demanded a much higher degree of dedication than other professions. This may be related to the fact that China constantly highlights students' subject position [16]. This is a notable and typical feature of the ongoing reform and development of higher education in China. It is thus precisely by placing sufficient emphasis on the dedication of college counselors to students that China reinforces the subject position of students [73]. In sum, the professional characteristics of high dedication require college counselors to focus on all aspects of students' learning, life, and development and to fully understand their psychological and behavioral characteristics to address the actual needs of students and promote their sustainable growth and holistic development.

5.2.5. Innovation. Finally, college counsellors not only require a high level of dutifulness but also the ability to innovate in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. This finding shares similarities with innovation theories but has key differences. In the working context of Chinese college counsellors, professional innovation from the student perspective is a more integrated innovation that may go beyond the college counselor profession itself. Specifically, college counselors should have not only a profound grasp of a broad range of knowledge and an ideological and political education but also deep humanistic qualities and broad subject knowledge in psychology, education, management, and sociology. Simultaneously, they must apply this knowledge skillfully in ideological and political education work [73]. The stronger their occupational competencies are, the more conducive they are to professional innovation. Considering the comprehensive nature of professional innovation among college counsellors and students' expectations of them and their professional characteristics, regarding students' future development, counselors should focus on the following aspects to promote sustainable professional innovation: (1) learning innovation, ensuring that students not only excel in the field of knowledge and learning but also undergo holistic physical and mental well-being development; (2) educational innovation, adopting a more multidimensional approach to the task of organizing, implementing, and guiding the daily ideological and political education of students; and (3) service innovation, whereby college counselors should be skilled in identifying and addressing students' reasonable needs in a timely manner, in establishing the concept of education everywhere and at all times, in helping students solve practical problems and difficulties with enthusiasm, and in striving to become life tutors and heartfelt friends to promote students' sustainable growth.

6. Conclusions

The goal of this study was to develop a scale for assessing the professional personality of Chinese college counselors and to

thereby improve their professional sustainability. Therefore, using SPSS 20.0 and LISREL 8.80 software, we exploratively developed a scale of the professional personality traits (the SCCPPT) exhibited by this group. This second-order 5-factor model consists of the following dimensions: dutifulness, loyalty, affinity, dedication, and innovation. In terms of psychometric indicators, the scale exhibits relatively good reliability and validity as well as other metrics and could thus be used as a tool for college counselor professional personality research. This scale deepens the rational understanding of the college counselor profession in China, serving as a reference for international comparisons of professional groups and expanding and enriching research on professional personality theory.

However, this study has certain limitations. We only used one method to test the structural validity of the scale, whereby further optimization of the personality trait scales via different methods may be required. In addition, given the specificity of the college counselor profession in the Chinese context, the generalizability of the findings may be limited in other cultural or educational settings, as the focal professional personality factors are likely to differ from those in Western countries. Thus, further comparative studies are probably needed.

Data Availability

The labeled data set used to support the findings of this study is available from the corresponding authors upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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