The Influence of Emotional Dissonance and Resources at Work on Job Burnout Among Chinese Human Service Employees

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The authors extended Hobfoll’s Conservation of Resources (COR) model to examine the influence of emotional dissonance and work resources on burnout among 392 Chinese human service employees. Bivariate correlation results showed that emotional dissonance correlated positively with display rules and burnout, but negatively with work resources, specifically, satisfactory work relations and job rewards. Results of structural equation modeling analyses supported the extension of the COR model to study the dissonance-resources-burnout association. In the revised model, display rules had a direct impact on emotional dissonance, which in turn influenced burnout indirectly through the mediation of work resources. Limitations of the study and implications for work stress management are discussed.

Keywords: burnout, emotional dissonance, work resources, conservation of resources model

The management of emotions at work has become a topic of interest to scholars and practitioners in organizational behaviors and human resource management (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Emotional dissonance occurs when there is a discrepancy between organizational sanctioned emotions and genuine emotions of employees (Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Martini, & Isic, 1999). It often associates with psychological and physical ill-health as well as adverse job outcomes (Abraham, 1998; Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini, & Holz, 2001). For the present study, we aimed to extend the Conservation of Resources (COR) model (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998) to examine the relationship between emotional dissonance and burnout.