Mental health outcomes of job stress among Chinese teachers: role of stress resource factors and burnout

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Summary
This study examined the mental health outcomes of job stress among Chinese teachers in Hong Kong. A total of 269 Chinese teachers participated in Study 1 which provided cross-sectional data regarding the associations among stress resource factors, burnout, and negative mental health. Study 2 was a six-month longitudinal study which aimed to establish the direction of the associations among the hypothesized variables across two time points with a separate sample of 61 Chinese secondary school teachers. Results of the structural equation modelling analyses on the cross-sectional data at T1 showed that stress resource factors of self-efficacy and proactive attitude were negatively related to burnout, which in turn had a direct effect on negative mental health. Stress resource factors were also directly linked to mental health status of teachers. Results of similar analyses on the longitudinal data at T2 further indicated that burnout at T1 had a direct impact on burnout at T2, which in turn had a direct effect on negative mental health at T3. Findings and limitations of the study were discussed. Copyright © 2001 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Introduction

There is increasing evidence that teachers, in the course of their careers, experience a great deal of stress that may have obvious implications for their physical and mental health status (Borg, 1990; Byrne, 1999; Farber, 1991; Guglielmi and Tatrow, 1998; Vandenberghhe and Huberman, 1999). Teacher stress also affects the learning environment and interferes with the achievement of education goals as it may lead to teachers’ detachment, alienation, absenteeism, and ultimately the decision to leave the profession (Farber, 1991; Jenkins and Calhoun, 1991; Maslach and Leiter, 1999). This study examines the mental health effects of job stress among Chinese teachers in Hong Kong.

Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) have summarized several theoretical models on job stress. In general, these models can be termed as stress–strain interaction models, which view job stress as the result of an