Assessment of Burnout for Chinese Human Service Professionals: A Study of Factorial Validity and Invariance

Catherine So-kum Tang
Chinese University of Hong Kong

The present study used both exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic procedures to assess the factorial and construct validity of the MBI in Chinese human services professionals (N = 612). The classic three dimensions of burnout were supported, and the deletion of items 12, 14, and 22 yielded a better fitting model. This new 19-item MBI for Chinese resembled the original 22-item MBI in the pattern of factor correlations and yielded satisfactory internal consistency estimates. Tests of equivalence of item measurements and theoretical structure of the revised 19-item MBI were also performed across gender. Results supported the invariance of the three-factor structure for men and women. Only items measuring the Depersonalization dimension were equivalent, whereas items of the Emotional Exhaustion and Lack of Personal Accomplishment dimensions were partially invariant across gender. ©1998 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. J Clin Psychol 54: 55–58. 1998.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) define burnout as a syndrome of emotional depletion (EE), a sense of lack of personal accomplishment (PA), and being cynical and callous toward one’s work (DP). They also devised the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure the burnout syndrome. Subsequent exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic studies of the MBI have supported the original 3-factor structure (e.g., Byrne, 1991, 1993, 1994; Evans & Fisher, 1993) as well as the 2-factor solution in which EE and DP dimensions are treated as one single factor (e.g., Corcoran, 1985; Dignam, Barrera, & West, 1986). Fewer researchers have argued for a 1-factor structure of the MBI, and direct tests are limited and with contradictory results (Gar-