

## Abstract

Previous studies on burnout have mainly focused on personality and work characteristics as the antecedents of burnout. In this study, we hypothesized that the effect of discrete changes or events on burnout is mediated by one's cognitive appraisal process based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Cognitive Appraisal Theory. The issue was addressed by testing a theoretical causal model of psychological vulnerabilities (was operationally defined as computer attitude and computer anxiety due to their relevance to the event to be appraised), the process of cognitive appraisal (the introduction of information technology in teaching was the event to be appraised), burnout, social support and intention to leave. An alternative model was then tested against the theoretical model. Specifically, the alternative model suggested that social support only has direct effect on burnout, instead of the stressors (cognitive appraisal) and consequence of burnout (intention to leave). Three hundred and seventy-nine Hong Kong teachers were invited to fill out the questionnaires. Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the relationships among the constructs. Results supported the theoretical causal model as the most parsimonious representation of the effects of cognitive appraisal on burnout. In other words, the mediating role of cognitive appraisal on burnout was supported. Moreover, social support was found to have a differential protective effect upon burnout, the process of cognitive appraisal and one's intention to leave to job. The practical significance of the findings in organizational setting and the limitations of the current study were discussed.