

The Psychological Effect of Emotional Demands and Discrimination, and the Role of Job Resources among Asian Immigrant Microbusiness Owners

Authors : Il-Ho Kim, Samuel Noh, Kwame McKenzie, Cyu-Chul Choi

Abstract : Many members of immigrant minorities choose to operate microbusinesses that involve emotionally taxing interactions with customers and discriminatory exposures in the workplace. This study investigated the psychological risks of emotional demands and discrimination as well as the buffering roles of two types of job resources (job autonomy and job security) among immigrant microbusiness owners (MBOs). Data were derived from a cross-sectional survey of 550 Korean immigrant MBOs, aged 30 to 70, living in Toronto and its surrounding areas. Face-to-face interviews were conducted between March and November 2013. Results showed that emotional suppression and discrimination were positively associated with depressive symptoms. However, the direct effect of positive emotional demands was insignificant. For job resources, the beneficial effect of job security on depressive symptom was apparent, but the effect of job autonomy was trivial. Regarding the moderating effect, job security buffered the psychological harm of both emotional suppression and workplace discrimination. Although job autonomy buffered the link between discrimination and depressive symptoms, the buffering effect of job autonomy on the emotional suppression-depression link was insignificant. This study's finding implies that emotional demands and workplace discrimination seem to be important factors in contributing to occupational psychological problems, but the psychological impact can differ according to the types of emotional demands and job resources among immigrant MBOs.

Keywords : immigrant microbusiness owners, emotional demands, discrimination, job resources, depression

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