

## Abstract

Around 20% of Hong Kong households live below the poverty line. Given the pervasive impact of COVID-19, Hong Kong's economy has been deteriorating. In July 2020, for example, the unemployment rate soared to 6.1%, the highest for 15 years. Increasing numbers of families will experience mounting economic pressure for months if not years to come. How will families be affected? How can families remain resilient in the face of money-related stressors? This proposed study is a test of an integrated model of family poverty that could provide the foundation for later interventions for low-income families.

Using a 3-wave longitudinal design, this study aims to examine a synthesized model based on both the family stress model and the parent investment model and test the moderating roles of parent mindfulness in the associations among family economic pressures, family processes, and child adjustment. Six kindergartens located in low-income districts will be recruited. Data will be collected from around 300 second-year students and their mothers, fathers, and class teachers at three time points in two consecutive years. At each time point, children will complete tasks on academic abilities (emergent literacy and numeracy skills), their class teachers will complete questionnaires on child socioemotional adjustment and school readiness, and their mothers and fathers will complete questionnaires on family economic pressures, psychological distress, marital conflict, harsh parenting, involvement in educational activities, provision of other cognitive stimulations, and mindfulness. Cross-lagged models will be used to analyze the panel data, (a) linking changes of family economic pressures to changes in child adjustment, (b) testing whether changes in family processes mediate the association of family economic pressures with child adjustment, (c) evaluating the necessity of each mediator and the goodness of fit of the overall model and (d) testing whether parent mindfulness moderates the associations between family economic pressures and parent psychological distress and between parent educational involvement and child adjustment.

Theoretically, this study will move the field forward by combining multiple lines of research toward a more comprehensive model on family economic pressures and resilience. Practically, our research will inform parent education, teacher training, and professional development of such practitioners as social workers and educational psychologists. Our research will also direct the development of interventions for low-income families. Based on the results of our study, for example, interventions can be designed to promote specific mediating processes and parent mindfulness to promote the resilience of parents and children.