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### **Client-Initiated Workplace Violence: The role of organizational resources on the coping ability of the coworkers**

Threats and violence at work are major concerns for employees in many human service sectors. While physical assaults are rather seldom, coworkers are often be confronted with daily hassles like verbal abuse and personal insults which go hand with self-esteem threats. Up on the demands-resources model the present study focused the interactions of client-initiated workplace violence (type, frequency), indicators of psychological well-being and irritability as well as strategies of self-regulation and coping factors of the organizational and social setting.

Data were collected online with the self-report questionnaire “Critical Customer Survey” which included e.g. type and frequency of client-initiated workplace violence, demands and resources (team, leadership, and organization), personal coping behavior and outcomes variables.

A sample of 467 German workers, 36,5 % men and 63,5 % women, was obtained from various branches (e. g. public administration (39 %), railway (34%), medical services (7,4%)). Interactions and moderator effects were tested by e. g. multilevel logistic regression analyses.

The results of the study underlines the importance of including the psycho-social work environment in order to improve the coworkers’ coping ability as a supplement to existing violence prevention methods and interventions aimed at reducing work-related violence. Despite its value, the study had several limitations for instance the self-reported retrospective method and the sample size. Vagaries in memory or the common method bias may also alter the data.

# Client-Initiated Workplace Violence: The Role of Organizational Resources and coworkers' Coping Abilities

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## Purpose

Threats and violence at work are major concerns for employees in many human service sectors. While physical assaults are rather seldom, coworkers are often confronted with daily hassles like verbal abuse and personal insults which go hand in hand with self-esteem threats. Based on the demands-resources model the present study focused on interactions of client-initiated workplace violence (type, frequency), indicators of affect (positive, negative) and interactions with strain as well as strategies of self-regulation and coping resources of the organizational and social setting.

## Methods

Data was collected online with the self-report questionnaire "Critical Costumer Survey" which included e.g. type and frequency of client-initiated workplace violence, demands and resources (team, leadership, and organization), personal coping behavior and outcomes variables such as positive/negative affect (state) and emotional and cognitive strain (longterm). (1 to 5 Likert-type response scale; Cronbachs Alpha  $\alpha=.65-.92$ )

A sample of 467 German workers, 36,5 % men and 63,5 % women, age (M=43; SD=10) was obtained from various branches (e.g. public administration=39 %), railway =34%, medical services =7,4%).

## Results

Table 1  
Pearson Correlation

Measure	Strain_emot	Strain_kogn	Affect_negative	Affect_positive
Beh. Revenge	.12*	-.01	.13	.02
Beh. Doubt	.13**	.03	-.04	-.05
Cop_dysfunctional	.53***	.38***	.61***	-.18***
Cop_functional	-.08	-.06	-.05	.31***
Culture_Prevention	-.43***	-.43***	-.64***	.05
ResTEAM	-.30***	-.33***	-.44***	.08
ResLEADER	-.31***	-.33***	-.47***	.05
Decision_Latitude	-.35***	-.33***	-.57***	.14**
Meaning	-.44***	-.33***	.40***	.23***
CIV	.35***	.32***	.72***	.10*

Note: Res= Resource, CIV= Client-Initiated Workplace Violence, Cop= Copingstyle, Beh.= Behavior;  $p<.05^*$ ,  $p<.01^{**}$ ,  $p<.001^{***}$ ; n=386-390, Cronbachs-Alpha: Revenge  $\alpha=.65$ , Doubt  $\alpha=.45$ , all others  $\alpha=.80-.91$

The negative affect summarize emotions caused of client-initiated workplace violence (CIV) directly.



Table 2  
Predictors of negative affect

Variable	Affect_negative	
	B	95% CI
Constant	.00***	[-.90, 2.55]
CIV	.45***	[-.38, .55]
Meaning	-.02	[-.10, .07]
Decision_Latitude	-.07	[-.22, .03]
ResLEADER	-.04	[-.11, .05]
ResTEAM	-.11**	[-.19, -.04]
Culture_Prevention	-.10	[-.25, .02]
COP_functional	.00	[-.12, .11]
Cop_dysfunctional	.23***	[-.19, .44]
Beh. Doubt	.05	[-.01, .12]
Beh. Revenge	-.04	[-.16, .05]
R <sup>2</sup>	.64	
F	67.88	

Note: CI= Confidence Interval, Res= Resource, CIV= Client-Initiated Workplace Violence, Cop= Copingstyle, Beh.= Behavior;  $p<.05^*$ ,  $p<.01^{**}$ ,  $p<.001^{***}$ ; n=386-390.

Table 3  
Predictors of cognitive strain

Variable	Kognitive Strain	
	B	95% CI
Constant	.00***	[3.13, 8.28]
CIV	.06	[-.12, .39]
Meaning	-.09	[-.45, .06]
Decision_Latitude	.05	[-.24, .52]
ResLEADER	-.02	[-.28, .21]
ResTEAM	-.15**	[-.57, -.09]
Culture_Prevention	-.24**	[-.99, -.16]
COP_functional	.01	[-.34, .39]
Cop_dysfunctional	.16*	[.07, .86]
Beh. Doubt	.12*	[.06, .47]
Beh. Revenge	-.08	[-.60, .03]
R <sup>2</sup>	.26	
F	13.31***	

Note: CI= Confidence Interval, Res= Resource, CIV= Client-Initiated Workplace Violence, Cop= Copingstyle, Beh.= Behavior;  $p<.05^*$ ,  $p<.01^{**}$ ,  $p<.001^{***}$ ; n=386-390.



Cognitive strain summarize the psychological long-term effects

## Conclusions

The results of the study underline the importance of including the psycho-social work environment (e.g. support of the team, culture of prevention) as well as the individual coping strategies in order to improve the coworkers' coping ability as a supplement to existing violence prevention methods and interventions aimed at reducing work-related violence.

Despite its value, the study has several limitations for instance the self-reported retrospective method and the sample size. Memory Effects or common method bias may also potentially reduce validity of the data.