

G. Steffgen & P. E. Sischka

University of Luxembourg

Contact: Philipp Sischka, University of Luxembourg, INSIDE, Porte des Sciences, L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette, philipp.sischka@uni.lu



UNIVERSITÉ DU
LUXEMBOURG

Working conditions and work-related anger: A longitudinal perspective

22th Workshop Aggression;

Limassol, CYPRUS November 29th



Phenomenon

Anger

- ...as an **emotional state**, varying across time, situation and intensity
- ... as a stable **personality trait**, reflecting a person's tendency to experience anger frequently or intensely
- ... is associated with **cognitive** (e.g. misappraisals and attributions of blame), **physiological** (e.g. hypertension), and **behavioral reactions** (e.g. fighting).



Anger at work

Anger at work leads to...

■ Less

- organizational commitment
- work satisfaction (Fisher, 2002; Zhao et al., 2007)

■ More

- Workplace deviance / Counterproductive work behavior (e.g. stealing; Fox & Spector, 1999; Lee & Allen, 2002; Penney & Spector, 2002)
- Workplace bullying/incivility (Penney & Spector, 2005)
- Turnover intention (Fisher, 2002; Zhao et al., 2007)
- Absence at work (Chen & Spector, 1992)

Anger at work

Risk factors

- Important situational release conditions of anger activation at work are the following:
 - job stress, frustration
 - unjust treatment, disrespect, incivility
 - incompetence of others
 - perceived injustice
 - blocking of goal attainment

Anger at work

Limitations of current studies on risk factors of anger at work

- Mainly diary studies
- Focus on high intensity anger events
- (Feelings of) anger often mixed with aggressive behavior
- Limited research on specific working conditions as predictor of anger

Study aim

- Investigate working conditions as predictors of work-related anger
 - Social support
 - Feedback at work
 - Participation
 - Mobbing
 - Time pressure
 - Mental demands
 - ...

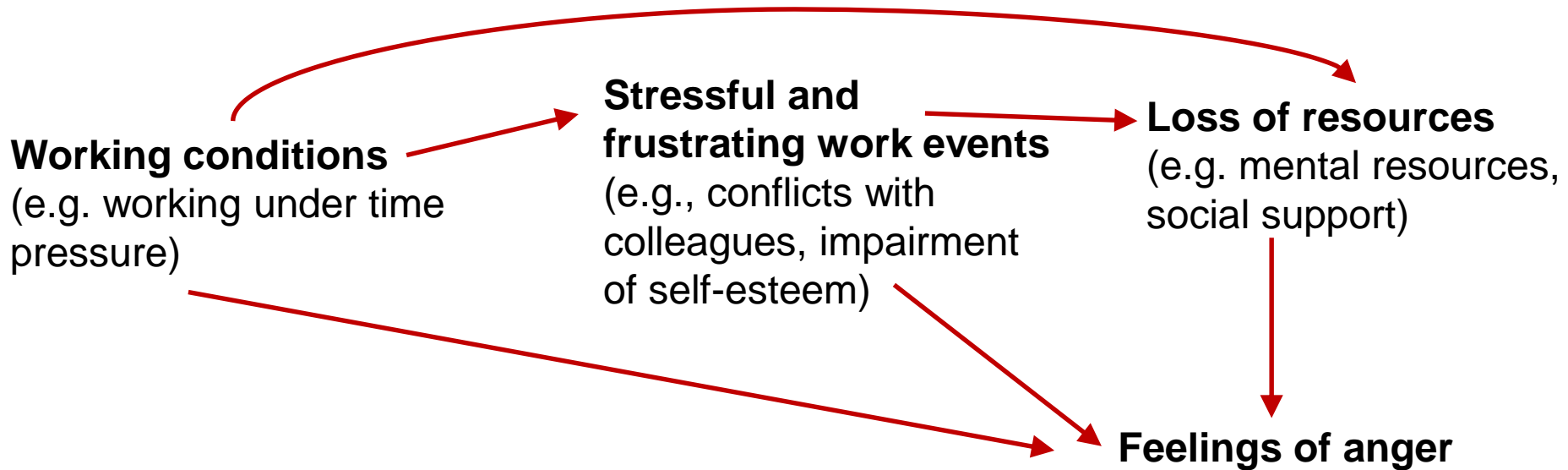


Explaining anger at work: Theoretical frameworks

- Job-demand-resource model (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)
 - Job demands "...having the potential to harm or block personal growth or gains, tend to trigger negative emotions (e.g., fear, anxiety, anger)" (Crawford et al., 2010, p. 837)
- Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996)
 - work environment and work events lead to affective reactions (e.g., anger), which then lead to work attitudes and behavior
- Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001)
 - Resource losses lead to anger (Lane & Hobfoll, 1992)

Anger at work: Mechanisms

Depending on theory, different mechanisms are possible



Study design – Sample

Quality of Work Study

- Representative study of employees working in Luxembourg (Luxembourg residents and persons of border countries)
- Annually (in part longitudinal) survey since 2013 (CATI)
- Wave 2015 and 2016
 - 706 employees participated in both waves
 - 53.7% male $n = 379$
 - Age: 18 to 64 years ($M = 45.8$, $SD = 8.3$)

Study design – Measures

■ Measures

- *Anger*
- Social support
- Participation
- Feedback
- Autonomy
- Mobbing
- Mental demands
- Time pressure
- Satisfaction with income
- Formation
- Promotion
- Workplace security
- Physical burden
- Risk of accident

■ Measures format

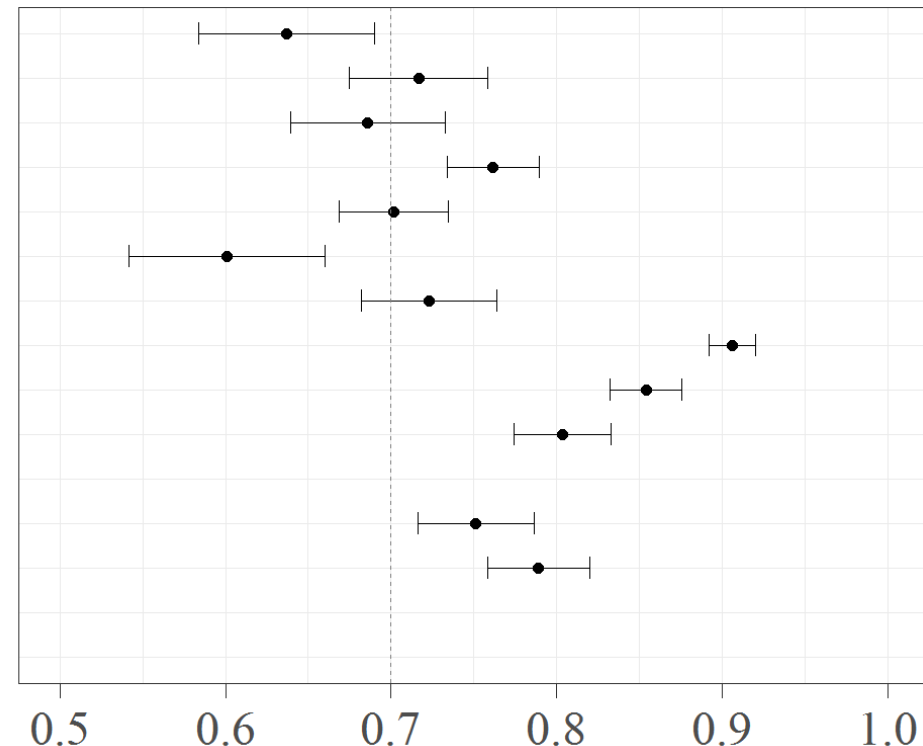
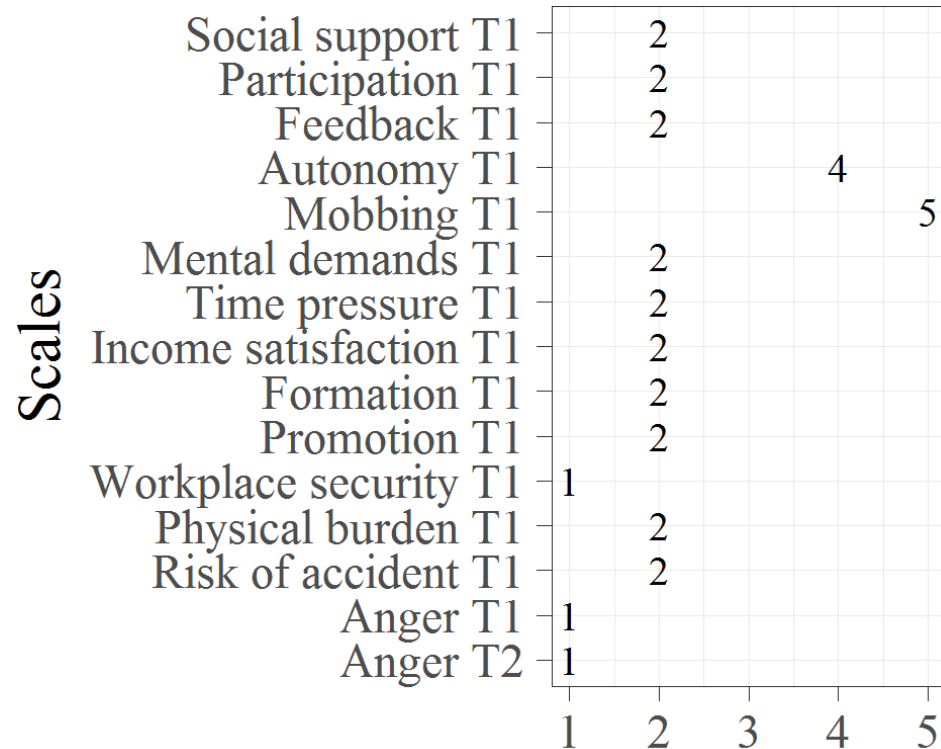
- Five-point Likert scales
- ranged from 1 (“never” / “at a very small extent”) to 5 (“almost at all times” / “at a very high extent”)

Reliability of measures

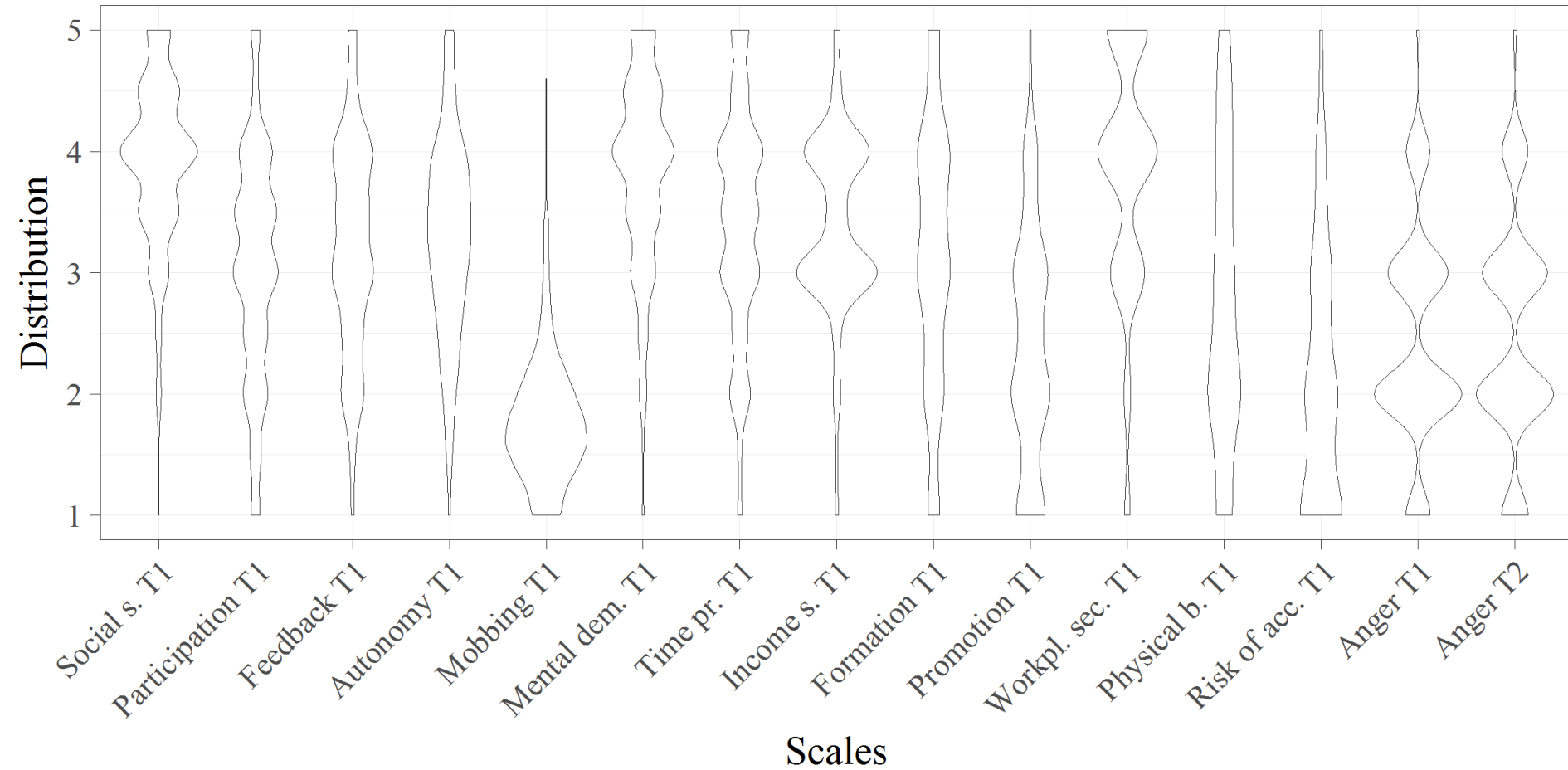
No. of items

Reliability

(Cronbach's Alpha)

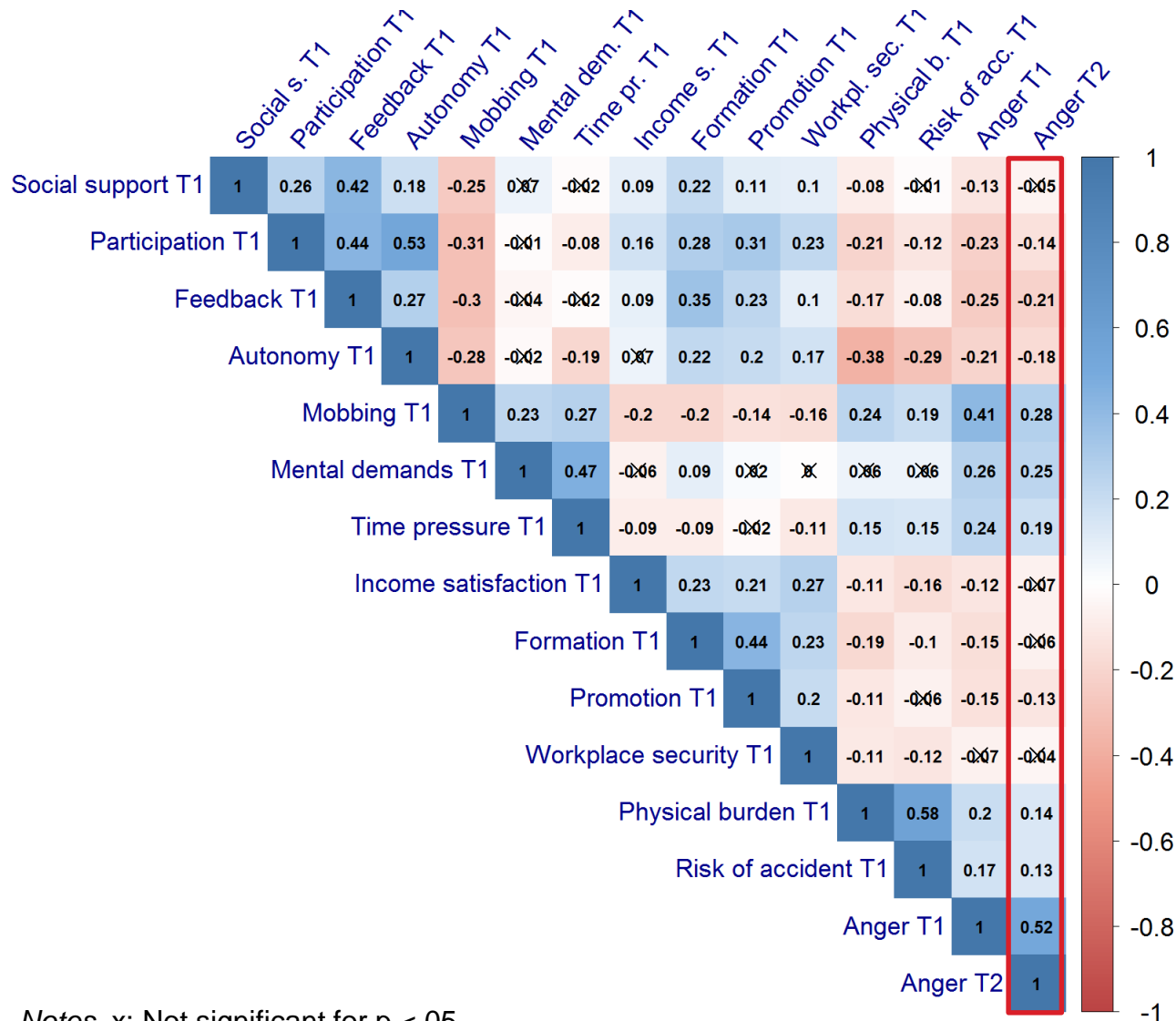


Distribution of measures



Notes. Kernel density plots.

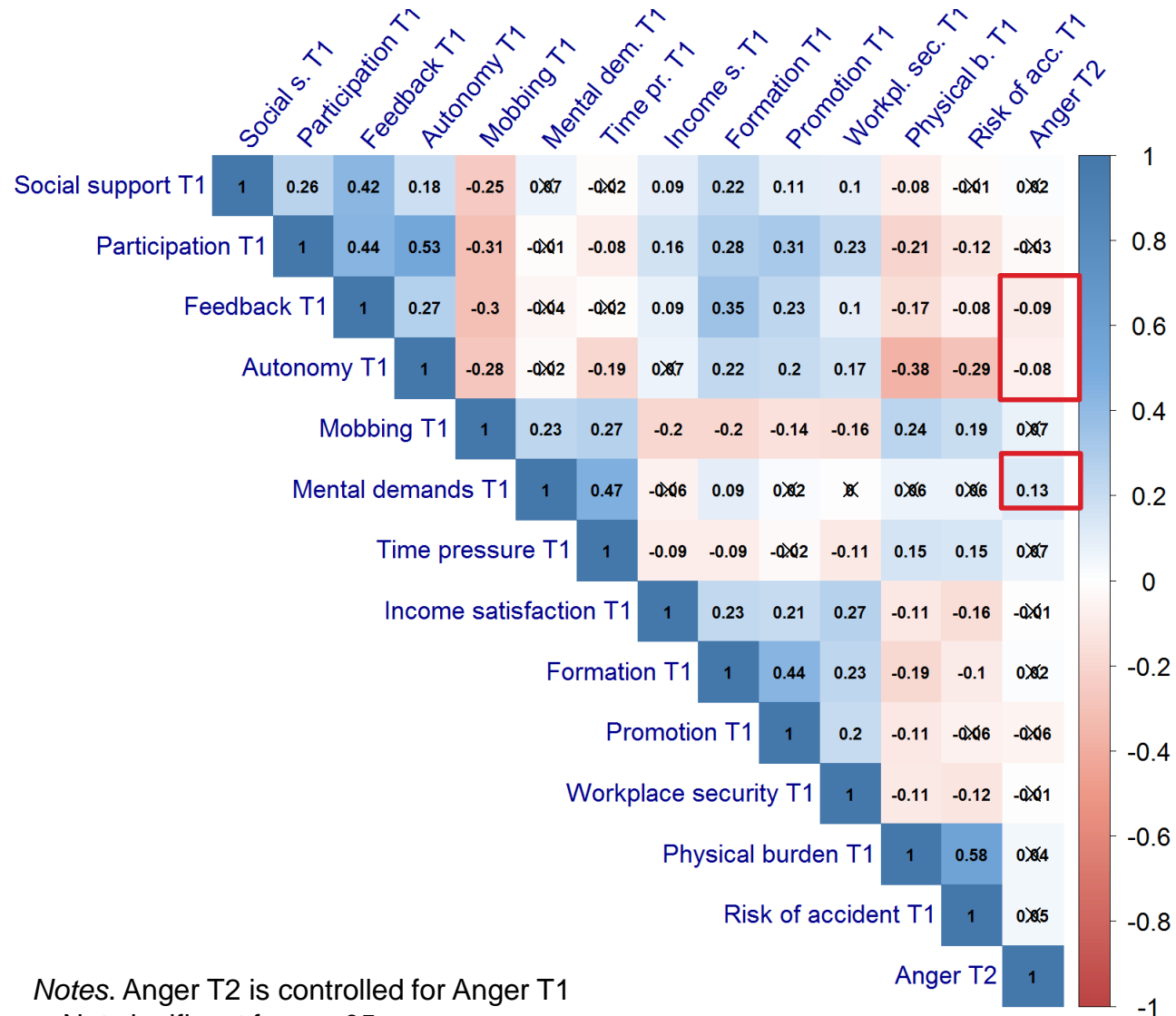
Results – Intercorrelations (1)



Correlations with Anger T2:
 -.21 (Feedback T1)
 .52 (Anger T1)

Notes. x: Not significant for $p < .05$.

Results – Intercorrelations (2)

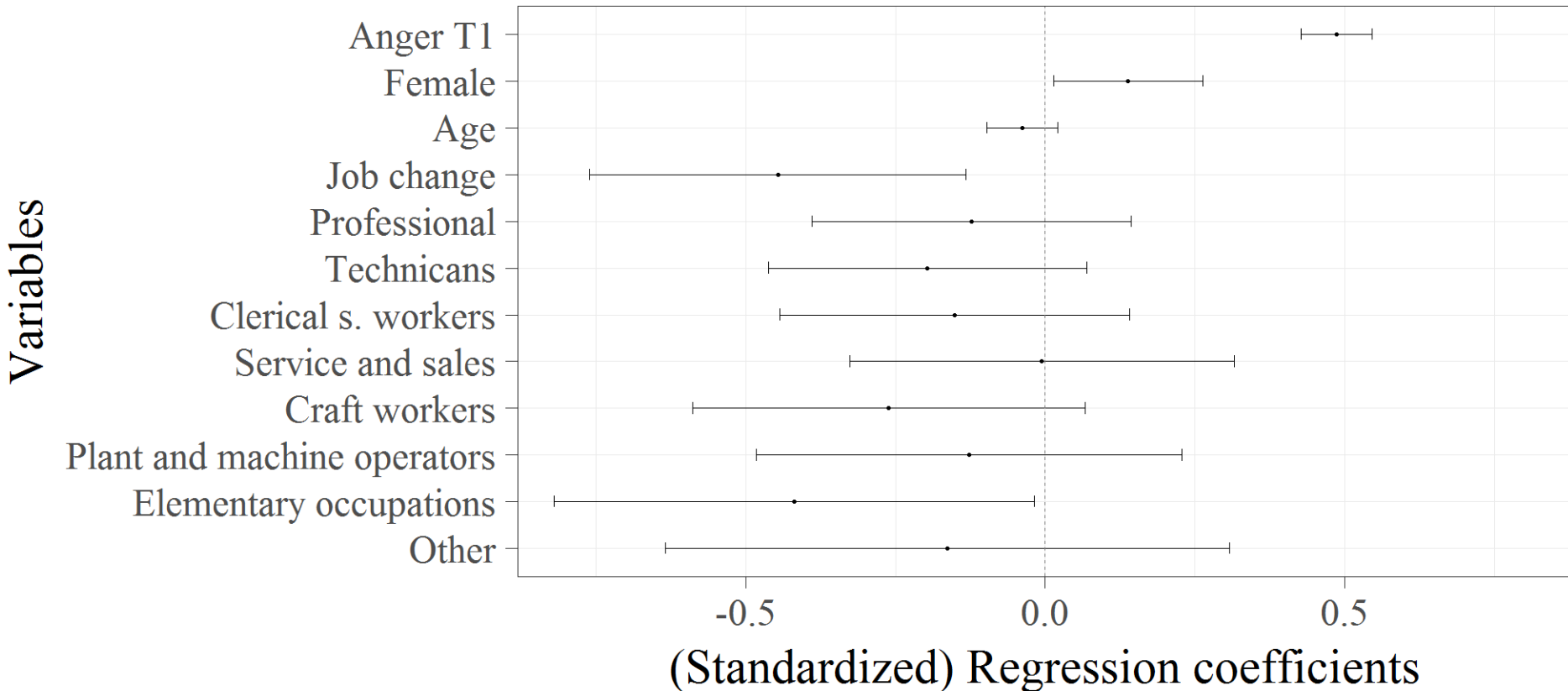


Correlations with Anger T2:
 -.09 (Feedback T1)
 .13 (Mental demands T1)

Notes. Anger T2 is controlled for Anger T1
 x: Not significant for $p < .05$.

Results – Regression Step 1

Outcome: Anger T2



F -statistic = 24.57***; $R^2 = .30$

Notes. Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals.

Results – Regression Step 2

Outcome: Anger T2



F -statistic = 21.76***; $R^2 = .32$; $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ***

Notes. Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

■ Summary & conclusion

- Mental demands and Feedback seems to be important predictors for work-related anger
- Job change reduces anger at work (at least in the short run)
- Job-demand-resource model and affective event theory receives support

■ Limitations of the study

- Imprecise measure of anger (1-item)
- One year interval was chosen for practical not for theoretical reasons
- Working condition measures were not mainly chosen to predict anger

Thank you for your attention!

Email: philipp.sischka@uni.lu



Literature

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model: state of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22*, 309-328.
- Carver, C. S., & Harmon-Jones, E. (2009). Anger is an approach-related affect: Evidence and implications. *Psychological Bulletin, 135*, 183-204.
- Chen & Spector, 1992
- Crawford, E. R., LePine, J. A., & Rich, B. L. (2010). Linking job demands and resources to employee engagement and burnout: A theoretical extension and meta-analytic test. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*, 834-848.
- Douglas S. C., & Martinko, M. J. (2001). Exploring the role of individual differences in the prediction of workplace aggression. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 547-559.
- Fisher, C. D. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of real-time affective reactions at work. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*, 3-30.
- Fitness, J. (2000). Anger in the workplace: an emotion script approach to anger episodes between workers and their superiors, co-workers and subordinates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 147-162.
- Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (1999). A model of work frustration-aggression. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 915-931.
- Glomb, T. M. (2002). Workplace anger and aggression: Informing conceptual models with data from specific encounters. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 7*, 20-36.
- Grandey, A. A., Tam, A. P., & Braunburger, A. L. (2002). Affective states and traits in the workplace: Diary and survey data from young workers. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*, 31-55.

Literature

- Halbesleben, J. R. B., Neveu, J.-P., Paustian-Underdahl, S. C., & Westman, M. (2014). Getting to the “COR”: understanding the role of resources in conservation of resources theory. *Journal of Management*, *40*, 1334-1364.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: advancing conservation of resources theory. *Applied Psychology*, *50*, 337-369.
- Kassinove, H., & Sukhodolsky, D. G. (1995). Anger disorders: Basic science and practice issues. *Issues in comprehensive pediatric nursing*, *18*, 173-205.
- Lane, C. & Hobfoll, S. E. (1992). How loss affects anger and alienates potential supporters. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *60*, 935-942.
- Lee, K. & Allen, N. J. (2002). Organizational citizenship behavior and workplace deviance: The role of affect and cognitions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*, 131-142.
- Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2002). Narcissism and counterproductive work behavior: Do bigger egos mean bigger problems? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *10*, 126-134.
- Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2005). Job stress, incivility, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB): the moderating role of negative affectivity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*, 777-796.
- Spector, P. E. (1978). Organizational frustration: A model and review of the literature. *Personnel Psychology*, *31*, 815-829
- Spector, P. E. (1997). The role of frustration in antisocial behavior at work. In R. A. Giacalone, & J. Greenberg (Eds). *Antisocial behavior in organizations* (pp. 1-18). London: Sage Publications.
- Spielberger, C. D., Reheiser, E. C., & Sydeman, S. J. (1995). Measuring the experience, expression, and control of anger. *Issues in comprehensive pediatric nursing*, *18*, 207-232.

Literature

- Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 18, 1–74.
- Zhao, H., Wayne, S. J., Glibkowski, B. C., & Bravo, J. (2007). The impact of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 60, 647-680.