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PSYCHOSOCIAL WORKLOAD IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

Aims: The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychosocial strain among full-time and volunteer work council members in Germany and compare them to the average of all professions.

Methods: We administered the German short form of the COPSQQ survey to work council members employed by the trade union IG Metal in Germany. The survey was conducted from September to October 2011 and included 113 full-time and 196 volunteer works council members. Using data from the survey, we conducted multivariate linear regression analyses to examine the psychosocial stress and strain between full-time and part time work councils, accounting for relevant cofactors.

Results: In general work councils indicate significant adversely values in most scales on psychosocial strain compared to the average of all professions. Due to the profession, full-time and volunteer work councils assign substantial differences in the values.

Conclusion: The profession of being work council leads to higher psychosocial strain compared to the average of all professions. This effect varies between full-time and

volunteer work councils. Work councils' self perceived job demands differ significantly due to the profession. Hence, preventive strategies to reduce psychosocial stress and strain for the profession of work councils should consider the specific demands conditioned to full-time and volunteer work councils. Addition studies may be needed to further characterize this association, including examining the impact of training courses on psychosocial stress among work council members.

Keywords: Coping, psychosocial workload, social dialogue, work councils

Topic Group: Industrial relations, working conditions, human resource management

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, Western industrial countries are confronted with numerous, partly fundamental changes of working conditions (Burk et al. 2008). Shifting the kind of employment from production sector to service sector these changes also involve significant changes for employee's representatives, work councils' work (Haipeter 2011). Rising demands for employees for knowledge, flexibility and time thus lead to rising demands regarding the managerial and human resource skills for work councils. In context of these changes psychosocial demands have markedly increased. The days of disability of work and the treatment costs related to the field of psychology are increasing. So the DAK-health report 2011 (DAK = German employee insurance company) focusing psychological factors states psychological diseases with 12,1% as number four of major diseases. These changes, both working conditions and the changing demands of employees have serious effects on the Industrial Relations. In Germany the framework in Industrial Relations is set upon two columns. One is the centralized collective bargaining by trade unions, second works councils and plant-level codetermination. While bargaining the central wage agreements is lead to decrease the competition of wages, it is the job of work councils to adept these masters agreements on work place by keeping worker's interest. This leads to a demand of highly skilled works councils, so this role of the representative interest is associated with mental strength, competence and control. Helplessness and failure are perceived as disadvantageous (Tietel 2006; Minssen et al. 2005). In fact there are two different types of works councils: full-time and volunteer workers representatives, which are confronted with both, changing demands of employees and changing working conditions. Due to these developments the strain of work councils changes. However, while there are many studies investigating changes in working conditions, to the best of our knowledge there are only few studies (Rabe et al. 2011) that compare the individual psychological strain among those who undertake a role on work councils compared to the average of all professions. Therefore, this study investigates psychological stress and strain between both work councils, volunteer and full-time, as compared to the average of all professions.

BACKGROUND

In occupational health the research of psychosocial risk factors is becoming more and more in the focus of scientific community. Due to the fact that these psychosocial risk factors do have a significant effect on health, health inequalities and the in the beginning outlined change of working conditions, there is a rising sensitivity for research and prevention (Lavicoli et al. 2006; European Agency for Health and Saftey at Work 2001). Analysing workplace-related physical and psychosocial exposures and conditions, it is of vital importance to be aware and to have an extensive knowledge about of the individual terms of work and the relevant influences. So, Moncada et al. (2010) found out that the kind of work,

the job conditions and physical and mental workload is connected to sick-leave days and healthy mental situation (Head et al. 2007; Andersen et al. 2004). Assessing psychological workload, the use of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) offers important advantages. Due to the fact that there are different scientific approaches for assessing stress and strain at workplace, for example the "demand-control-support model" by Karasek et al. (1990; 2007) the "Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) model" by Siegrist et al. (1986a;1986b) or the model of resource conservation by Hobfoll (1988; 2005), a comprehensive investigation needs to be "theory-based, but not attached to one specific theory, ...should include dimensions of related to work tasks, the organization of work, interpersonal relations at work, cooperation and leadership, ...[and] should cover potential work stressors , as well as resources" (Burgoon et al. 2009, p. 439). Due to Kristensen et al. it is designed so "there should not be any significant 'white spots' in the picture painted" (Nübling et al. 2005, p. 439). There are less quantitative researches on psychological stress and strain of work councils and few studies using COPSOQ to compare work councils to certain reference groups, so this study is meant to the best knowledge of the author to be one of the first investigation using a comprehensive and comparable quantitative instrument.

AIMS

The purpose of this investigation is to compare psychosocial workload among specific professions in industrial relations. It is to investigate whether the kind of being work council, full-time or volunteer, is different in the self-perceptive psychosocial stress and strain. Furthermore, we want to analyse different kinds of work councils to the average of all professions of a selected database.

HYPOTHESIS

The development of hypotheses is based on the complex job-related tasks and responsibilities of volunteer and full-time works councils. Tietel (2005) describes this as the so-called "triadic relationship", where employees' representatives have to bargain and mediate against employer's and trade union's interests. Jirhan (2009) and Haipeter (2011) assume this situation as potential factor for the emergence of psychosocial stress and strain. Taking these assumptions into account it is the aim of the study to analyse psychosocial workload of works councils and compare the results to the average of all professions.

Hypothesis 1: Work councils have higher stress and strain than the average of all professions.

Additional the research focuses the profession of works councils in detail. In contrast to detailed and deep analysis of employees' physical and mental work situation, their representatives are not in the main focus of scientific research. Their vital means for employees' coping strategies is reported (Holler 2012), but there just few attempts on distinguish psychosocial workload between full-time and volunteer works councils (Seidl 1999; Giesert et al. 2001). So the second hypothesis is meant to analyse these aspects in detail:

Hypothesis 2: Full-time work councils experience psychosocial stress and strain less than volunteer work councils.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The authors used the German standard version of COPSQ for assessing psychosocial stress and strain among work councils. This instrument was validated in 2003 – 2005 by Nübling et al. (2005; 2006). For the majority of scales the assessment of reliability, generalizability, constructs validity and criterion validity good measuring qualities were found. An overview of the structure and functioning of this instrument is free for access on the German COPSQ website: <http://www.copsoq.de>.

Nübling et al. (2010, p. 3) describes the instrument as following:

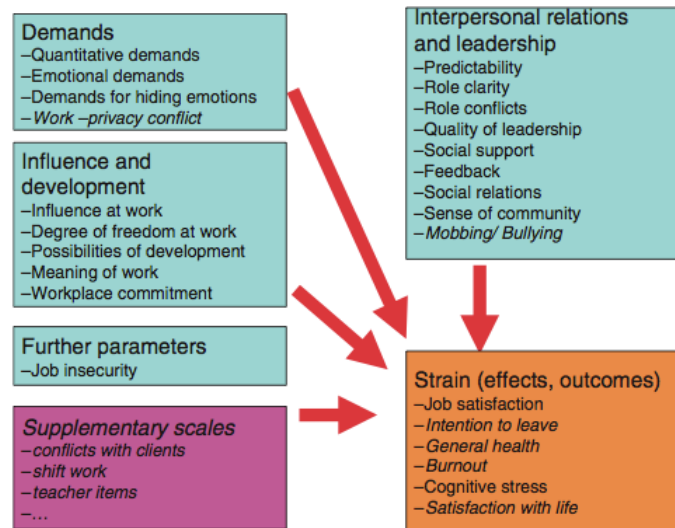
“The instrument includes 19 aspects (18 scales and 1 single item) for assessing the psychosocial work environment grouped into the sections: demands (4 scales), influence and development (5 scales), interpersonal support and relationship (8 scales and 1 single item), and job insecurity (1 scale) and six constructs (4 scales and 2 single items) assessing the employee’s reaction to the workplace situation as outcome factors: job satisfaction, intention to leave, general health, burnout (scale: personal burnout), cognitive stress and satisfaction with life. In total 87 Likert-scaled items with mostly 5 answer categories are include”.

Due to the multidimensional concept of COPSQ questionnaire, this comprehensive instrument considers most of the leading concepts, for example:

- The Job Characteristic Model (Hackman & Oldham 1975; 1976):
The initial situation of this theoretical approach was to assess the individual perception of objective job related demands in a quantitative approach. Especially the influence of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on daily work is a main focus, forming so-called “core job dimensions” (Hackmann 1974, p. 161; Weinert 1998, p.99): “variety of skills”, “identity and significance of tasks”, “autonomy” and “feedback”.
- The Demand-Control-(Support) Model (Karasek 1979; Karasek & Theorell 1990):
The main assumption of this model is the interaction of job demands, for example intensity and quantity of work and decision latitude at workplace. Psychosocial stress and strain arises of the situation facing high job demands with simultaneously combined limited opportunities to make own decisions. Adding the aspect of “support” implies that social relationship and emotional support at work leads to cushioning effects.
- The Effort-Reward-Imbalance Model (Siegrist et al. 1996a; 1996b)
The focus of this theoretical approach is the reciprocal relationship of employee’s performed work and the received rewards, including payment and social acceptance. Imbalances between high demands and low rewards generate harmful and negative feelings and leads to rising risks for diseases (Rau et al. 2010).
- The Theory of Resource Conservation (Hobfoll 1989; Hobfoll et al. 2004)
This theory considers the individual’s resources as major predictor for suffering or coping stress and strain. Resources can be objects, conditions, energy or characteristics. Individuals strive to maintain or to accumulate resources, whereas stress and strain arises out of the threat losing them.

The structure and content of the used instrument is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Content of the German standard COPSOQ, differences from the Danish/English original questionnaire in italics (Nübling et al. 2011; p.121)



PERFORMING THE STUDY ON WORK COUNCILS

The design of investigating psychosocial workload on works councils was selected as a cross-sectional, national-wide survey and conducted between October and November 2011. More than 50 administrative centres of trade union IG Metal sent in an anonymous survey a covering letter of IG Metal, a covering letter of the authors and the questionnaire via email and in a paper and pencil format. Shortly before the end of that period a reminder was sent out. Participation was voluntary; there was no collection of personal data like the company or the address. Due to the setting of the research no approval by an ethics committee was needed. Attending works councils used email and anonymous envelopes to send the completed questionnaires to the author. The dataset was analysed in cooperation with the FFAS (Freiburg Research Centre for Occupational and Social Medicine). For analysing the results, the software SPSS 19.0 was used to perform descriptive statistics. To compare the mean values of COPSOQ-aspects, t-tests and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed. Given the large number of aspects the authors established the significance level at $p < 0.05$ enabling the comparison of full-time and volunteer work councils versus reference groups.

Comparing the means, due to Nübling et al. (2010) the difference of five points and more indicate significance. COPSOQ scales do have a standard deviation of about 15-25 points, "thus a difference of 5 points corresponds to an effect size of at least 0.2 which is considered as being the threshold of a small effect; for scales with smaller SDs the effect size is than 0.3-0.35 for a 5 point difference" (Nübling et al. 2010, p.4).

RESULTS

309 work councils took part in this national-wide survey. They are employed by a great range of company's size, most of them are working in companies employing 100-500 or more than 2.000 people. Due to the fact that more than 50 administrative centres of trade union IG Metal distributed the survey to work councils the authors were not able the

response rate. Considering this limitation, the small sample size of 309 participants, the restriction to a specific branch and the general study setting there is no claim for being representative.

The subjects were grouped according to their occupation: 113 participants were full-time work councils, 196 participants were volunteer work councils (including 23 stewards belonging to the same profession). As table 1 shows, the vast majority of the participants are male. This is true for the profession of work councils. The groups aged 45 years and more are well represented. Most of the participants work full-time (92,90%), some part-time (6,5%) and only few less than 15 hours per week. The working-structure states mainly mentally working (69,60%), some are about equal (35,90%) and only a rare number of work councils are working mostly physical (4,5%). In contrast to the high number of mostly mentally working participants, most of the work councils do have a physical professional education (76,70%) and only few (8,70%) have a collage degree. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics and working schedule of Study Participants

		Total; N= 309	
Gender	Male	225	72,80%
	Female	84	27,20%
	No answer	0	
Age	18-24 and 25 - 34	32	10,40%
	35-44	81	26,20%
	45-54	143	46,30%
	55+	47	15,20%
	No answer	6	1,90%
Work hours per week	35+ h/week	287	92,90%
	15-34 h/week	20	6,50%
	< 15 h/week	2	0,60%
	no answer	0	0,00%
Company size	0 - 100	33	10,70%
	100 - 500	90	29,10%
	500 - 1000	60	19,40%
	1000 - 1500	16	5,20%
	1500 - 2000	12	3,90%
	> 2000	31,7	31,70%
Kind of work	Mostly mentally working	215	69,60%
	Mostly physically working	14	4,50%
	About equally	80	35,90%
	No answer	0	0,00%
Education	Completed school education	4	1,30%
	Completed professional education	237	76,70%
	College degree	21	8,70%
	No answer	41	13,30%
Kind of employee 's representative	Full time work council	113	36,60%
	Volunteer work council	196	63,40%
	No answer	0	0,00%
Branch	Metal	235	76,50%
	Service	36	11,70%

	IT	7	2,30%
	Chemistry	18	5,90%
	Textile	8	2,60%
	Others	3	1,00%
KdB92 Classification	Storage	11	3,60%
	Chemistry	4	1,30%
	Metal producing and working	29	9,40%
	Metal, machine and similar	80	25,90%
	Electro and similar	25	8,10%
	Machinist and engine driver	8	2,60%
	Engineer	20	6,50%
	Technic profession (engineer, chemist)	33	10,70%
	Service	21	6,80%
	Organisation and management (leading position)	20	6,50%
	Business employees	47	15,20%
	Health sector	4	1,30%
	Social and educational profession	4	1,30%
	No answer	3	1,00%

Sum may differ from 100% due to rounding

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AT WORK

The authors performed internal comparison for all COPSOQ-scales. 19 aspects assessed the working situation, whereas six factors on outcomes were measured between full-time, volunteer work councils and the general mean of all professions of COPSOQ database (N>35.000).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORK COUNCILS AND EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE SAME SECTOR

Table 2 presents the results of the comparison between the scales of full-time and volunteer work councils and the general mean of COPSOQ database. According to Nübling et al. (2010) and the statistical conditions deviations in means of at minimum five points or more indicate significance at the level of $p < 0.05$. Characterizing this briefly, the description by "+"-sign exceeding or "-"-sign be less than the reference values was chosen. In order to avoid misleading interpretations of the used characterization, they do not imply an advantageous or disadvantageous meaning. To decide this, the context of the scale has to be taken in consideration. In comparing the scale means between full-time (indicated as "wc"), volunteer (indicated as "vwc") work councils and the overall COPSOQ database Table 2 shows that the general profession of work councils do have significant differences in values.

Table 2: Study results for full time work councils (COPwvc), volunteer work councils (COPvvc) and COPSQQ database reference value total (all occupations, COPall). Scale means and standard deviation

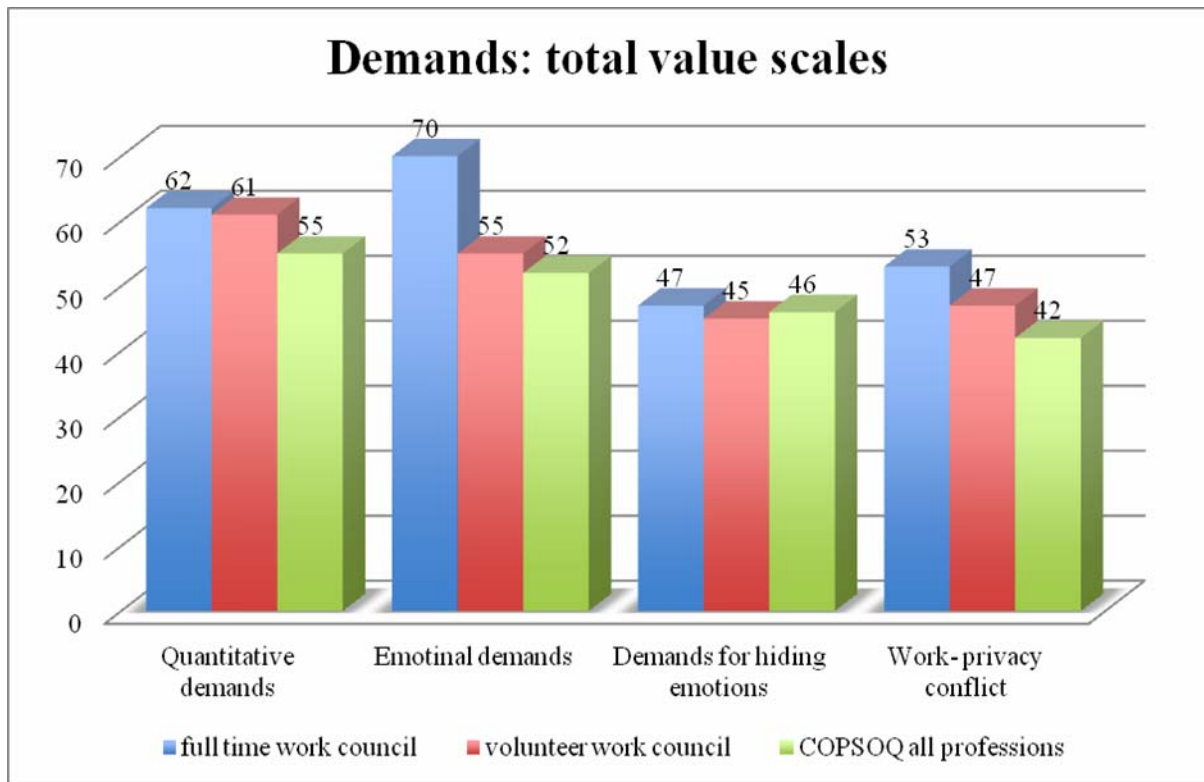
Scales and single items	Study WC; N = 309		COPSQQ full time work council N = 113		COPSQQ volunteer work council N = 196		COPSQQ all N > 35.000		COPwvc vs. COPvvc	COPwvc vs. COPall	COPvvc vs. COPSall
	mean (SD)		mean (SD)		mean (SD)		mean (SD)				
Demands											
Quantitative demands	61	(15)	62	(15)	61	(16)	55	(15)		+	+
Emotional demands	61	(20)	70	(16)	55	(19)	52	(20)	+	+	
Demands for hiding emotions	46	(21)	47	(18)	45	(23)	46	(21)			
Work- privacy conflict	49	(24)	53	(23)	47	(24)	42	(24)	+	+	+
Influence and development											
Influence at work	49	(20)	57	(18)	45	(20)	42	(20)	+	+	
Degree of freedom at work	64	(20)	71	(18)	60	(20)	53	(20)	+	+	+
Possibilities for development	72	(19)	80	(13)	67	(20)	67	(19)	+	+	
Meaning of work	74	(20)	85	(14)	67	(21)	74	(20)	+	+	-
Workplace commitment	58	(18)	64	(14)	54	(19)	57	(18)	+	+	
Interpersonal relations and leadership											
Predictability	53	(21)	62	(16)	48	(21)	54	(21)	+	+	-
Role clarity	71	(15)	74	(13)	69	(16)	73	(15)	+		
Role conflicts	54	(18)	58	(18)	52	(19)	44	(18)	+	+	+
Quality of leadership	35	(23)	22	(27)	43	(17)	50	(23)	-	-	-
Social support	52	(19)	43	(20)	57	(16)	64	(19)	-	-	-
Feedback	41	(17)	34	(17)	45	(16)	41	(17)	-	-	
Social relations (quantity)	58	(19)	56	(19)	59	(19)	52	(19)			+
Sense of community	70	(20)	69	(23)	71	(18)	75	(20)		-	
Mobbing (single item)	36	(24)	29	(21)	40	(24)	21	(24)	-	+	+
Additional scales											
Job insecurity	40	(17)	35	(17)	43	(16)	32	(17)	-		+
Intention to leave (single item)	21	(26)	18	(21)	23	(28)	16	(26)	-		+
Job satisfaction	60	(16)	66	(13)	56	(17)	63	(16)	+		-
General health (single item)	65	(20)	67	(20)	65	(21)	71	(20)			-

Personal burnout	46	(19)	43	(17)	48	(20)	42	(19)	-		+
Cognitive stress symptoms	38	(20)	35	(19)	40	(21)	29	(20)	-	+	+
Satisfaction with life scale	66	(16)	68	(15)	65	(16)	65	(16)			

Deviations in scale means exceeding five points or more are expressed by using "+"-sign: profession-specific value is higher than the compared mean value. Deviation in scale means is less than five points or more are expressed by a "-"-sign: profession-specific value is lower than the compared mean value ($p < 0.05$).

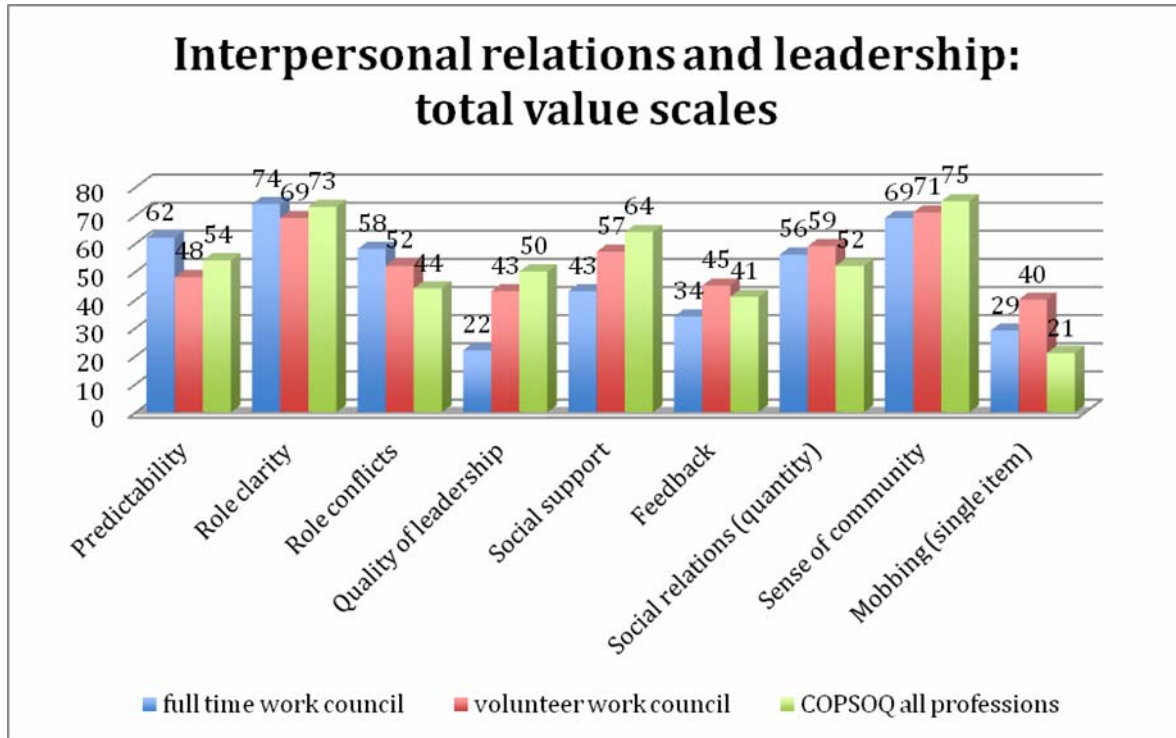
Illustrating the different aspects of COPSOQ clearly, the results are grouped in the following tables. Table 3 shows four scales assessing the aspect "demands".

Table 3: Comparison of mean values of COPSOQ-aspects on „demands“



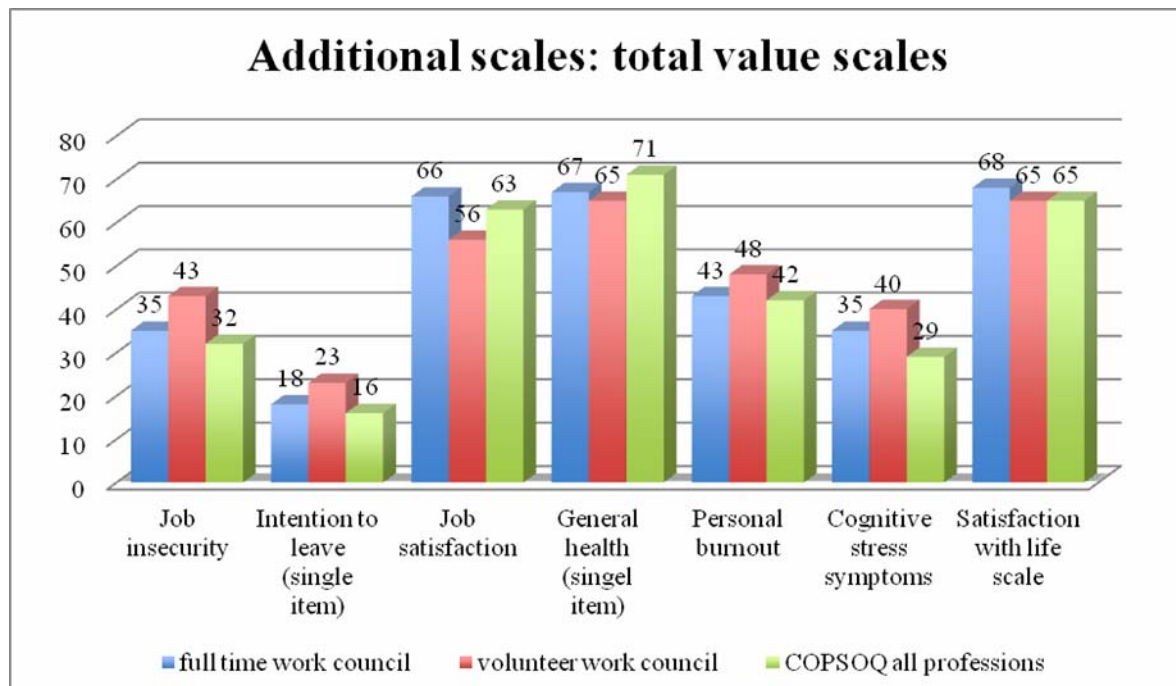
In table four the means of nine scales are presented to demonstrate similarities and differences on interpersonal relations and leadership.

Table 4: Comparison of mean values on COPSOQ-aspects „Interpersonal relations and leadership“



In table five there are seven aspects drawing the picture of the additional scales means of COPSOQ.

Table 5: Comparison of mean values for selected professions on COPSOQ-aspects „additional scales“



Comparison of the scale means between full-time and volunteer work councils showing higher values in the scales indicate a positive meaning:

- Social relations
Volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ, full-time work councils indicate higher values.
- Influence at work
Full-time work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ, volunteer work councils indicate higher scores.
- Degrees of freedom at work
Full-time and volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ.
- Satisfaction with life scales
Full-time work councils indicate higher values.

Comparison of the scale means between full-time and volunteer work councils showing higher values in the scales indicate a partly positive meaning:

- Possibility of development
Full-time work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ, volunteer work councils indicate the average of all-over data set.

Comparison of the scale means between full-time and volunteer work councils showing higher values in the scales indicate a negative meaning:

- Quantitative demands
Quantitative demands show significant higher values for both, full and volunteer work councils in comparison to the average of all professions.
This indicates that both kinds of work councils have significantly higher efforts in quantitative demands of working.
- Emotional demands
Full-time work councils have significant higher values than volunteer work councils and the all-over data base COPSOQ. Volunteer work councils indicate a higher value.
This result indicates that full time work councils have to deal with significant higher emotional demands than volunteer work councils, who just indicate a higher score than the average of all professions.
- Work-Privacy Conflict
Both full time and volunteer work councils show significant higher values the all-over database COPSOQ
- Role conflicts
Full-time and volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Mobbing
Both, full-time and volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Burn out
Volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ.

- Cognitive stress symptoms
Both, full-time and volunteer work councils show significant higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Job-insecurity
Volunteer work councils indicate significant higher values, full-time work councils higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Intention to leave job
Volunteer work councils indicate significant higher values, full-time work councils higher values than the all-over database COPSOQ

Comparison of the scale means between full-time and volunteer work councils showing lower values in the scales indicate a negative meaning:

- Quality of leadership
Full-time and volunteer work councils show significant lower values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Social support
Full-time and volunteer work councils show significant lower values than the all-over database COPSOQ
- Sense of community
Full-time work councils show significant lower values than the all-over database COPSOQ, volunteer work councils show lower values.
- General health
Volunteer work councils show significant lower values, full-time work councils show lower values than the all-over database COPSOQ

Differences between full-time and volunteer work councils

Comparison of the results of full-time, volunteer work councils and the overall mean of COPSOQ database showed great differences in scale values among the profession of the participants:

- Job satisfaction
Full-time work councils show higher values having which indicates positive a higher job satisfaction than the all-over database COPSOQ. In contrast to volunteer work councils showing significant lower values indicating lower job-satisfaction.
- Meaning of work
Full-time work councils indicate a significant higher, this means positive value, volunteer work councils indicate significant lower values due to a negative meaning.
- Predictability
Full-time work councils show significant higher values than the average of all-over-data set COPSOQ. Volunteer work councils show lower values indicating a disadvantage.
- Feedback
Full-time work councils show significant lower values than the all-over database COPSOQ, Volunteer work councils indicate higher, meaning positive values.
- Commitment to the workplace
Full-time work councils show significant higher values than the average of all-over-data set COPSOQ. Volunteer work councils show lower values indicating a disadvantage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Investigating the self-perceived psychosocial factors at work on work councils belonging to the sector of trade union IG Metal the theory-based German version of COPSQ was used. Psychosocial workload on work councils was compared to the general mean of all professions of COPSQ database. Furthermore the meaning of the profession, being full-time or volunteer work councils, on psychosocial workload was analysed. The identification of differences in perception of mental stress and strain between full-time and volunteer work councils was a main focus of this research.

This investigation confirmed expected results of potential job-related stress and strain factors. For example, taking the managerial and mediating role of works councils into account, the significant and high outcome of the aspect "role conflict". Comparing the results to recent national (Minssen et al. 2005; Korunkaa et al. 2009) and international (Haipeter 2011) researches on this profession, they are congruent. The assumption behind that is the complex triadic structure (in industrial relations demands a balancing of different, often opposing interests for work councils who have to deal with employees' interests under awareness of the economic situation of the company. Additionally, the study confirmed high psychosocial stress, namely the exceptional high values indicating increasing demands for "mobbing", "Quality of leadership" "Job insecurity" and "social support". Theoretically, however, high emotional demands, mobbing and less social support are implications the occupational group of employees' representative which do not surprise.

In general, there are also some unexpected results of this research. Differences in the perception of the values for the scales "Job satisfaction" "Meaning of work" "predictability" and "Commitment to the work place" reveal a contrary point of view stating a disadvantage position for volunteer work councils.

Several interpretations are possible:

1. Due to their profession as employee representatives work councils have to deal with different and widespread tasks. In this "triadic relationship" (Tietel 2006, p. 25) it is their job to represent and to mediate interests of the work force against the employer's and trade union's demands. Changes in economical, managerial and psychosocial demands of the daily work lead to increasing demands on the skills of work councils.
2. Decentralisation (Haipeter 2011, p. 680) leads to increasing demands for work councils due to the fact that bargaining responsibility is delegated from trade unions 'collective bargaining to lower levels of plant bargaining for employees 'representatives. Full-time work councils use to deal with this problem as daily work, meanwhile volunteer work councils have to combine the normal workers day and the responsibility for employee's interests at are set to deal with "different worlds".
3. The profession of works councils differs, due to terms of being voluntarily or full-time representing, in their daily tasks and kind of work. So analysing the job demands and conditions could be evaluated in different ways. So, as an example, a systematic misrepresentation could be the degree of participating being work council.
4. Volunteer work councils are set to deal with the daily work of production or service with colleagues and additional have to be their's representatives. It is frequently argued that demands, wishes and needs of humans are individual, they cannot satisfy all preferences of their colleagues. This leads to higher confrontations at work and increasing psychosocial stress and strain.

5. Both, full-time and volunteer work councils are afraid of losing their job. Work councils are elected for a period of 4 years, in this period they are strongly protected by WCA. But if they are not elected a second time, their tasks changes from being employees' representative back to "normal work". This may perceived as disadvantage. Also they could be afraid of repressions for decisions in the time being work councils by the management.

The key contribution of this study to science is the evaluation of differences on self-perceived psychosocial workload between full-time and volunteer work councils. The results lead to implications for further decisions of working conditions and training courses for this profession. Possible economic impacts could be an adaption of training courses for work councils with focus on psychosocial stress and strain.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Using self-reported data on risk factors and only one data source is a general imitation and could lead to a "common method bias". It would be an advantage to link different data sources for measurement in a "multi-source" assessment (Nübling et al., 2010), this means the use of different approaches. So assessing psychosocial workload by a questionnaire and perform additional "objective" examination by physicians. Furthermore, using questionnaires measuring psychosocial workload could do not claim on completeness and taking every aspect into consideration, results are tend to correspondent to individual reactions than describing aspects of the job-related mental situation. Also the COPSOQ database contains more than 35.000, the overall mean is not claimed to be representatively for all employees. Additional the database of 309 work councils may not be representative.

The major advantage of this study is the investigation of psychosocial workload in industrial relations by the use of a comprehensive and evaluated questionnaire that is based upon different theoretical approaches and enables comparison of different professions. Additional this approach identifies differences in self-perceived psychosocial work factors and affected aspects.

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