Momentary effects of customer incivility and effectiveness of emotion-focused coping strategies

Momentary Effects of Customer Incivility and Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Coping

Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Customer incivility is a common occurrence for frontline service employees that is associated with employees' impaired short term as well as long term well-being and performance. Given its severe impact, research has been trying to explore effective ways to mitigate the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment. However, the search has been predominately directed at external environmental factors and role of employees' proactive initiation of coping behaviors only got minimal attention. This ignores employees' own agency and proactivity in dealing with stressors. In this research, we examined effectiveness of two emotion-focused coping strategies. In more detail, we collected momentary data from parking officers and examined their engagement of job avoidance and venting after encountering customer incivility. While job avoidance buffers the negative impact of customer incivility, venting ironically aggravate the negative effect. Furthermore, our study also showed the boundary effect of employees' prosocial motivation.

Key Words: Customer incivility; Job avoidance; Venting; Prosocial motivation

Interactions with customers constitute a major part of many service jobs. Such interactions are often benign, but occasionally they can turn negative and pose challenges for frontline employees (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). A significant proportion of negative interactions originate from customer incivility, which is defined as customer's display of low-intensity deviant behavior in violation of social norms for mutual respect (Kern & Grandey, 2009). Encountering customer incivility can be demanding for service employees. According to resource-based theories, customer incivility is a potent job demand (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Hobfoll, 1989). Employees lose their valued resources when they experience customer incivility, including their self-image (Shao & Skarlicki, 2014), willpower (Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011) and feeling of goal accomplishment (Wang et al., 2013).

Given such potentially severe impact, researchers have been exploring factors in the work environment that either mitigate or exacerbate employees' loss of resources as a result of customer incivility (see review, Koopmann, Wang, Liu, & Song, 2015). For example, a range of factors in the work environment can further consume resources and aggravate the damage of customer incivility, such as the presence of emotional display rules which dictate the emotions employees ought to display when interacting with customers (Becker & Cropanzano, 2011; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). In terms of mitigating factors, studies have examined a range of strategies, such as redesigning the customer service roles, training service employees in handling customer-related conflict and preventing further conflict escalation (Koopmann et al., 2015), as well as the provision of social support by supervisors (Wang et al., 2011), coworkers (Sliter et al., 2012) and organizations (Wang et al., 2013). Although studies identifying work-related factors capable of mitigating or exacerbating the damaging effects of customer incivility have offered many important managerial insights, the extant literature's almost exclusive focus on external work

factors neglects the self-initiated coping behaviors of service employees in managing their own resources in the face of customer incivility. Rather than being passive recipients of customer incivility, employees are active agents who are motivated to implement their own coping strategies following negative workplace events (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Latack & Havlovic, 1992; Nguyen, Johnson & Groth, 2016). Yet we know little about how individuals go about managing their own resource cycles in response to customer incivility.

In this study, we build on existing resource perspectives by investigating the coping behaviors of employees who experience customer incivility. Specifically, according to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals are motived by the inherent desire to conserve their resources and prevent further losses. Because of the limited nature of resources, employees do not just "bear the brunt" of their resources being depleted (Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016), such as when they experience customer incivility. Rather, they are often highly active in shaping their own resource dynamics on a momentary basis. Central to COR theory is the prediction that when an individual's resources are threatened with loss, or have already been lost, as result of encountering a job demand (such as an angry customer), the recovery of lost resources becomes a central motivating force such that individuals will immediately strive to actively protect themselves from further resource loss by engaging in a range of coping strategies. In the context of customer incivility, studies have found that the two most common coping strategies that employees use are to engage in job avoidance by avoiding interacting with subsequent customers (Sliter et al., 2012), or, particularly if this is not an option, they may (knowingly or unknowingly) take it out on subsequent customers (eg., by venting their negative emotion towards these customers, Ho & Gupta, 2012; Wang et al., 2011; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). Both strategies are examples of emotion-focused coping in that they are directed towards modifying the person's emotional experience surrounding a stressful experience (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Job avoidance and the venting of negative emotions

are, however, distinct in their approach versus avoidant orientation (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003). As noted by Skinner and colleagues: "At the core of this distinction is the contrast between ways of coping that bring the individual into closer contact with the stressful situation as opposed to ways of coping that allow the individual to withdraw" (p. 228). Although the strategies of job avoidance and the venting of negative emotions have been identified as common coping strategies for coping with customer incivility, how they dynamically impact on employees' resources when they choose to adopt either strategy following customer incivility remains unknown. That is, we are yet to understand and compare the moment-to-moment effectiveness of these strategies, which are not mutually exclusive (ie., an employee can choose to use both strategies, varying their selection moment to moment) in helping employees to replenish loss resources following an episode of customer incivility.

Therefore, in this study, we adopt a dynamic experience sample research design to empirically test the momentarily replenishing effectiveness of job avoidance versus venting negative emotions towards customers following customer incivility by examining how they impact on employees' levels of emotional exhaustion. We focus on emotional exhaustion, defined as 'a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are used up', Cordes & Dougherty, 1993), because it is one of the most frequently studied consequences of service work and has been linked to service performance and employee well-being (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Based on COR's assumptions about loss resource cycles, we expect job avoidance to circumvent the loss cycle and serve a replenishing function because it allows service employees to temporarily detach from work, therefore recharge their lost energy during the mistreating episode. On the other hand, we expect behavior of venting negative emotions to have the unintended effect of further aggravating the loss cycle and to result in a

negative spiral of further resources due to the negative impact of customer incivility, largely because the venting of negative emotions causes further customer dissatisfaction.

While we expect the momentarily effectiveness of job avoidance and venting to be differential, we don't expect these effects to be apply unanimously to all. Previous research assessing employees' replenishing strategies normally assume homogeneity of their effectiveness across different individuals among different contexts (see review, Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). However, such an assumption may not hold. As COR suggests, what constitutes as resource gain or loss is highly susceptible to individuals' subjective appraisals (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, 2011). In the workplace context, different people may prioritize different goals and attach different values to what they might gain from work. Therefore, replenishing effectiveness of a certain behavior should be bounded by individual's idiosyncratic assessment. Modeling such idiosyncrasy is important as it explore the boundary conditions under which certain resource replenishing strategies work effectively for service workers dealing with incidents of customer incivility. Hence, as a further contribution, we investigate the moderating role of employees' difference in prosocial motivation, which captures the desire to expend effort to benefit other people at work (Grant, 2007, p.49). We investigate prosocial motivation as a factor bounding avoidance and venting's replenishing effectiveness and predict that it will mitigate the resource replenishing effects of avoidance and amplify the resource depleting effects of venting by shifting employees' attention towards their customers' welfare, rather than their own resource gains and losses (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010).

In sum, our study makes a number of contributions to the literature. First, we examine employees' intra-individual resource fluctuations following incidence of customer incivility which has been theorized but yet to dynamically tested. Second, we investigate the dynamic process by which service employees self-initiate coping behaviors to influence their own

resource cycle following customer incivility. Based on the coping literature (Skinner et al., 2003) and previous research showing that service employees tend to use two contrasting emotion-focused strategies to change their experience of stressful situations, that is, to avoid job tasks or to vent negative emotions following customer incivility (e.g. Sliter et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2011), we offer the first empirical investigation into how effective these two strategies are in influencing (mitigate or exacerbate) the resource loss cycle following customer incivility. Furthermore, following COR theory, we extend the literature by showing that employees' resource fluctuation following customer incivility is bounded by their difference in prosocial motivation.

The Resource Depleting Effects of Customer Incivility: A Within-Person Perspective

The relationship between customer incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion can be understood through the lens of Hobfoll's COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). According to this theory, employees come to work expecting to gain various kinds of resources, including "objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, and energies" (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). When employees' resources are depleted by external demands, they are likely to exhibit strain-related symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, stress, and reduced well-being. However, to date, most studies measure employees' possession of resources statically rather than dynamically and thus have largely ignored intrapersonal dynamic relationships. The dominant approach to date has been to aggregate multiple incivility events spanned across a period of time to compose an overall score of the experience of customer incivility in general, which is then linked to outcomes such as employees' self-evaluation, job attitudes, and workplace behaviors (e.g. Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004; Sliter et al., 2012). Although there is explicit acknowledgement that resources ebb and flow following each episode, these dynamic

fluctuations have largely been ignored. The static approach of investigating the effects of customer incivility is inconsistent with the core predictions of resource theories, the key element of which involves intrapersonal fluctuations in resource level following momentary incidences of events (Halbesleben et al., 2014). As previous studies suggest, employees continuously keep track of their resource level and are sensitive to resource changes over very brief time frames (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005). For example, an employee experiencing high level of social resources on a given day would likely to feel a temporary drop in emotional exhaustion.

In this study, we follow previous research and argue that events of customer incivility is related to employees' perception of resource loss because 1) such even represents a signal of service failure (Baranik, Wang, Gong, & Shi, 2017; Wang et al., 2013) and 2) dealing with mistreating customer causes employees to feel fatigued (Rafaeli et al., 2012). First, as resource theories suggest, whether employees perceive an event to be resource generating or depleting is heavily dependent on their appraisal towards the event vis-à-vis their own work goals (Beal et al., 2005; Hobfoll, 1989). In particular, when investment of resources, including time and effort, do not lead to anticipated goal completion, employees are likely to feel that they are trapped in a resource loss spiral and, as a result, will experience emotional exhaustion. For example, in Koopman, Lanaj, and Scott's (2016) study, employees' assessment of goal progress is negatively related to their emotional exhaustion and positively related to affective commitment. For most service employees, their main job involves carrying out service interaction in a satisfactory manner (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Therefore, customers' conduct of incivility is normally perceived by employees as a signal of dissatisfaction and therefore represents service goal failure (Koopmann et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2013). This claim is evidenced by Wang et al.'s (2013) who found daily customer incivility to be interpreted by service employees as goal failure, therefore heightening their

latter negative rumination. Second, customer incivility also forces service employees to put in extra cognitive and regulatory effort therefore heightens their propensity to feel tired and fatigued (Rafaeli et al., 2012; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Handling difficult customers requires service employees to engage interpersonal affect regulation and coping strategies in order to manage customers' as well as their own emotional states. Many of these strategies, such as assessing the unique situation and suppressing one's own emotion, are related to overinvestment of cognitive and regulatory effort and heightens the level of fatigue experienced by employees (Rafaeli et al., 2012). When accompanied by service goal failure, the severity of such overinvestment may even loom larger, as service employees do not derive benefit and accomplishment from their effort. Hence we predict:

> *Hypothesis 1: Incidences of customer incivility are positively related to employees' momentary levels of emotional exhaustion.*

Replenishing Effects of Avoidant versus Approach Emotion-Focused Coping Behaviors

Similar to most other stressors, incidences of customer incivility do not only impact employees psychologically but also motivate them to initiate coping behaviors. The coping literature is vast in taxonomies and topologies about coping strategies (for a review see Skinner et al., 2003). The current dominant distinction is the difference between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Both strategies represent effort to manage demands that are taxing to one's limited resources. Problem-focused coping (i.e. strategies that seek to directly change/modify the stressor itself), however, is normally difficult to initiate to cope with customer incivility as service employees have little control over their customers' behaviors (e.g., to change the attitudes and behavior of an abusive customer which is often not possible). On the other hand, emotion-focused coping, which involves seeking to reduce or change the emotional consequences associated with the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988), has been shown to take many forms. In this study, we investigate two types of emotion-focused coping that are distinct in their

approach versus avoidant orientation (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Skinner et al., 2003). The first is job avoidance which is an avoidant-based strategy (also known as 'escape-avoidance', Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) and refers to disengaged coping, in which the goal is to ignore, avoid, or withdraw from the stressful transaction or its emotional consequences. This is consistent with Hobfoll's COR (Hobfoll, 1989) withdrawal premise, which suggests that employees are motivated to remove themselves from current environment when their resource is under threat. The second strategy is an approach-based strategy, that is, the venting of emotions falls, which refers to engaged coping and brings the individual into closer contact with the stressful situation. From a COR perspective, such strategies represent individuals' attempt to regain lost resources by reappraising, expressing or sharing their negative feelings (Carver et al., 1989). Neither avoidant or approach-oriented copings is universally effective, and their functionality differs significantly across contexts (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987). For example, approach oriented emotion-focused coping can either be constructive in nature in that it involves active attempts to influence emotional experiences and to constructively express emotions or it can be dysfunctional and reflect the discharge of negative emotions (Augustine & Hemenover, 2013). Thus, it is important to examine effectiveness of coping strategies in the specific context of customer incivility. Furthermore, as Roth and Cohen (1986) argued, initiation of approach or avoidant coping depends on various factors varying from episode to episode, including the nature of the incivility and employees' momentary appraisal towards the event. Indeed as argued by Skinner et al., (2003) in their review of coping strategies "approach and avoidance are complementary coping processes and that, over the course of dealing with taxing situations, people can and usually do cycle repeatedly between them" (p. 228). This means that one single employee's coping may differ from time to time, allowing us to capture the effectiveness of different coping strategies in a within-person fashion.

First, in terms of the avoidant-oriented coping behaviors, service employees have been shown to exhibit a withdrawal tendency after they experience customer incivility. Withdrawal is defined as any purposeful behavior by which an employee endeavors to avoid work or a reduction in an employee's sociopsychological attraction to, or interest in, the work or the organization (Bluedorn, 1982). In this study, we investigate employees' withdrawal strategy in the form of their temporarily avoidance of work tasks. Although service employees are required to continuously handle every incoming problem, they normally have certain autonomy to decide to pause and avoid tasks after customer incivility. For example, in Wang et al.'s (2011) study, call center employees were shown to "purposefully disconnect a call" or "intentionally put a customer on hold for a long period of time" after mistreatment. Similarly, in Bailey and McCollough's (2000) interview, service employees indicated that they would "go on break or even escape to the restroom" after encounters of customer incivility. From a resource perspective, we predict that such avoidance behaviors should be adaptive and serve a replenishing function. There have been discussions in the general coping literature about the usefulness of avoidance strategies and challenges to the widespread assumption that only approach-based response to stress (e.g., problem solving) is adaptive. Discussions point out that avoidance coping may alleviate experienced distress and provide safety or conservation of resources in taxing circumstances (Skinner et al., 2003; Roth & Cohen, 1986). For example, as Roth and Cohen (1986) argued, avoidance coping is more functional when employees lack control over the stressful situation.

It is noteworthy that in this study we are focusing on employees' occasional avoidance following specific incidences of customer incivility, rather than long-term avoidance strategies such as absenteeism and turnover (e.g. Sliter et al., 2012). Previous research has hinted at some negative consequences of chronic avoidance (Nguyen et al., 2016). For example, individuals who regularly avoid working might drift into worse jobs or positions

with fewer responsibilities, get less interesting tasks, or are treated with less respect by their supervisors and co-workers (Zapf, Dormann, & Frese, 1996). However, these consequences only emerge after employees' avoidance accumulates reaches a critical level. Occasional job avoidance, on the other hand, is unlikely to bear employees with such burdens. In fact, supervisors and co-workers are more likely to view avoidance as legitimate after one has dealt with an especially difficult customer. Importantly, being temporarily away from work allows employees to recharge their energy and also to calm down so that their feeling of fatigue is neutralized (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015; Trougakos, Beal, Green, & Weiss, 2008; Trougakos & Hideg, 2009). When taking breaks, employees have various ways to help themselves to recover from fatigue. Activities such as taking a drink (Gailliot et al., 2007) or talking to co-workers (McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones, & Chiu, 2010) can help alleviate employees' symptoms resulting from customer incivility. On the other hand, employees who persist on working do not get a chance to recover, and thus may get trapped in the state of continuous exhaustion and fatigue. As previously argued, customer incivility requires service employees to put in extra effort which is resource consuming. Studies suggest that continuing to work after incidents of customer incivility is likely to further deteriorate employees' well-being as more similar events may follow (Côté, 2005; Groth & Grandey, 2012; Zhan, Wang, & Shi, 2016). Depleted employees' service is also likely to be compromised due to their incapacity to focus and unwillingness to provide extra-role help (Chan & Wan, 2012; Dewall, Baumeister, Gailliot, & Maner, 2008). That can result in a negative spiraling effect in that lower service quality may in turn elicit subsequent customers' dissatisfaction and therefore increasing employees' likelihood of encountering further incivility. For example, in Zhan et al.'s (2016) study, service employees' depletion of regulatory resources increases their likelihood of receiving customers' negative treatments. Hence we predict:

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between incidences of customer incivility and employee emotional exhaustion is moderated by employees' engagement of job avoidance. More

specifically, for employees who engage in job avoidance following customer incivility, the relationship is weaker.

In contrast to avoidant-oriented strategies, service employees have also been shown to use some forms of approach-oriented coping strategy, such as to vent their negative emotions towards other customers after they have been mistreated. Interacting with difficult customers heightens service employees' feelings related to retaliation, such as their sense of unfairness, anger and frustration (Rupp, Silke, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Such feelings may prompt service employees to behave aggressively towards people who resemble the initial perpetrator (Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, & Carlson, 2000; Sjöström & Gollwitzer, 2015). In a service setting, employees' revenge can take the form venting negative emotions towards other customers not involved in the incivility incident. For example, Wang et al. (2013) showed that customer incivility is positively related to service employees' tendency to sabotage other customers' service.

We believe venting behaviors will be dysfunctional from a resource perspective (i.e., resource depleting), and aggravate depletion-related symptoms caused by customer incivility. According to COR, employees' use of dysfunctional coping strategies may trap them into resource loss cycles, which means initial resource losses lead to further resource losses (Demerouti & Bakker, 2004; Hobfoll, 1989). More specifically, negative workplace events such as customer incivility do not only create immediate resource depletion, but also put employees in a worse position of investing resources (Hobfoll, 2011). In these situations, people are more likely to initiate coping strategies that backfire and heighten likelihood of additional depleting events. Service employees' venting towards other customers may induce such resource loss cycles through eliciting additional customer dissatisfaction. During service interactions, customers normally feel entitled to be treated in a friendly manner and would therefore view employees' expressions of negative emotions as unsolicited and role-inappropriate. Thus, employees who vent their negative emotions towards other customers,

who are not involved in the incivility episode, would elicit more dissatisfaction, therefore aggravate their own sense of resource loss and emotional exhaustion. In extreme cases, venting negative emotions towards other customers may even provoke physical aggression and mistreatment from these customers (Groth & Grandey, 2012; Sliter & Jones, 2016). This is similar to what Andersson and Pearson (1999) described as spiral of incivility, where incivility perpetrated by one person can "spiral" into incivility by the initial victim. As we previously argued, customer dissatisfaction is likely to perceived by service employees as goal failure and cause their emotional exhaustion. Venting, however, not only fails to solve the problem but bring new dissatisfaction. Thus, when service employees choose to vent their negative emotions against other innocent customers, they are likely to elicit further dissatisfaction and incivility, which further drains their resources.

It is worthwhile to mention that although there is evidence suggesting the resource replenishing function of authentic expression of emotion (e.g. Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012), yet we did not expect such an effect in our context. One can plausibly argue that venting can be treated as a form of authentic expression, which may alleviate emotional exhaustion because it provides people with a sense of autonomy and powerfulness (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). However, since we are focusing on venting towards a third innocent party rather than the original perpetrator, it is unlikely for service employees to feel justified and rewarding for their anger expression (Geen & Quanty, 1977). Authentic expression makes people feel autonomous and true to themselves when such expression is legitimate and interpersonally sensitive (Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998). When venting is directed at an innocent customer, employees are more likely to feel guilty due to customer's undeserved suffering rather than being able to feel authentic. Such feeling may be reinforced if the customer decide to raise his dissatisfaction and remind employees of the inappropriateness of their venting. In fact, Ashforth and Tomuik (2000) asserted that service providers tend to feel

less authentic when their displayed emotion is unreasonable and hinders customer satisfaction.

> *Hypothesis 3: The relationship between incidences of customer incivility and employee emotional exhaustion is moderated by employees' venting towards other customers. More specifically, for employees who engage in venting following customer incivility, the relationship will be stronger.*

Prosocial Motivation as a Resource Replenishing Boundary Condition

In addition to the core tenet in COR theory that individuals are highly motivated to conserve resources, COR theory also relates to the idiosyncratic nature of resource value (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). As (Halbesleben et al., 2014) maintained, value of a particular resource hinges on its potential to help individuals achieve their primary goals. With individuals carrying different purposes and goals coming to work (Harpaz, 1990), they should also exhibit differences in terms of which resource they value. The implication for resource monitoring is that the more a resource is valued (value being defined as the extent to which the particular resource can fulfil personal goals; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), the more individuals would pay attention and closely monitor the fluctuations of these resources (Harris, Daniels, & Briner, 2003). This idea is consistent with Kanfer, Ackerman, Murtha, Dugdale and Nelson (1994)'s theory in resource allocation, which holds that people tend to allocate their attention to progression towards their most important goals. Similarly, studies have also shown that workplace behaviors that are congruent with individuals' core self-concept tend to be resource replenishing (Bolino, Harvey, & Bachrach, 2012; Lin, Ilies, Pluut, & Pan, 2017). Consequently, with prioritization assigned to different resources, people's feeling of emotional exhaustion should be closely linked to the gains and losses of prioritized resources.

In this study, we focus on employees' difference in prosocial motivation as a determinant of their difference in attention towards resource fluctuation. People's attention which guides their resource assessment can be directed either inward to themselves, or outward to others

(Crocker & Canevello, 2008; De Dreu & Nauta, 2009; Grant & Sonnentag, 2010; Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). When attention is directed inwards, people are more concerned with their own needs and desires. On the contrary, when attention is directed outwards, people care more about others' welfare, and are less sensitive to their own resource gains and losses (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). Prosocial motivation, which is defined as the extent to which employees place higher priority on benefiting others during their work (Grant & Parker, 2009; Grant, 2007), captures the direction of their attention. As Grant (2008) theorized, for employees who are prosocially motivated, their self-regulation is governed by the goal of benefiting others and avoiding guilt. Thus, their evaluation of resource gain and loss is more likely to reflect how much contribution they have made, rather than how much self-interest they can derive from work (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). Employees who are less prosocially motivated, on the contrary, tend to focus more on their own interests and are more indifferent to other's welfare. In support of this idea, research has found the moderation role of prosocial motivation on the relationship between different job features and employees' well-being. More specifically, job characteristics related to egoistic gains and losses, such as intrinsic funniness (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010), emotional loads (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), and job enrichment (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004), tend to have minimized impact on employees' well-being when they are prosocially motivated. On the other hand, the impact of features related to others' welfare, such as task significance (Grant, 2008b) and opportunity to provide help (Lin et al., 2017), has been shown to be more potent when employees' prosocial motivation is high.

It is important to distinguish between other-directed versus self-directed attention, as the two coping strategies examined in our study, avoidance and venting behavior, may induce different resource dynamics. We propose that for employees high in prosocial motivation (i.e., their attention is be directed outwardly towards customers), the resource replenishing

effects of job avoidance is reduced. Although task avoidance allows an employee to recharge their energy, avoiding the job also suggests that they have failed to complete their duty and that they are not providing adequate service to customers. For example, when a restaurant waiter goes outside for a quick cigarette break during work, other customers may need to wait for longer as a result. Since employees who are high in prosocial motivation are more likely to frame their jobs as being socially impactful and worthy (Grant, 2007), avoiding work tasks would be a less effective resource replenishing strategy for prosocially motivated employees because it contradicts their core value of serving and benefiting customers. For example, in Grant and Wrzesniewski's (2010) study, employees who are prosocially motivated were more likely to feel guilty as a result of their job failure, as they framed such failure as jeopardizing the well-being of customers and clients who are depending on their effort. In a similar vein, we believe service employees who prioritize their customers' welfare also tend to view their job avoidance less favorably. In fact, these employees are less likely to relax during their avoidance period, but may instead ruminate and worry about possible harm brought about by their escape from duty. Such rumination may lessen the recovery process and may even create additional resource burden on itself (Trougakos et al., 2008). Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 4: The replenishing effect of job avoidance is contingent on employees' prosocial motivation. Specifically, for prosocially motivated employees, the mitigating effect of job avoidance on the relationship between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion is weaker.

In terms of the strategy of venting negative emotions towards customers, we argue that the resource depleting effects of venting will be further aggravated for employees who embody high prosocial motivation. When employees' attention is directed outwards towards customers, prosocially motivated employees will be more likely to empathize with others' feelings and feel displeased as a result of venting behaviors which creates additional customer dissatisfaction. Considering such venting is illegitimate, they are more likely to feel guilty and ruminate over customers' negative experience on which they have casted. On the

contrary, employees who are low in prosocial motivation are more concerned with their own welfare rather than that of their customers. For these employees, the resource depleting effects of venting will be reduced. Venting behaviors may even be beneficial (i.e., resource replenishing) for employees who are more egotistically motivated (i.e., low on prosocial motivation). Being able to show negative emotions towards others allows one to gain a sense of power and may temporarily boost their self-esteem (Tiedens, 2001). For example, Harris and Ogbonna (2006) found that being able to express frustration towards customers can help enhance service employees' self-evaluation. Furthermore, for employees low on prosocial motivation, rather than feeling guilt, venting negative emotions towards customers (which is a type of retaliation) is likely to be more satisfying and perceived as justified in the face of incivility as the strategy is more congruent with the orientation towards the self. Overall, we predict:

> *Hypothesis 5: The aggravating effect of venting towards other customers is contingent on employees' prosocial motivation. Specifically, for more prosocially motivated employees, the aggravating effect of venting towards other customers on the relationship between customer incivility and employee emotional exhaustion is stronger.*

METHODS

Study Context

In this study, we investigate a unique and rarely studied occupational group — parking officers[1]. Parking officers represents a good context to examine incidental customer incivility as they perform a difficult job in providing public safety by enforcing traffic regulations and ticketing offending motorists, yet they are often viewed as a public annoyance and are confronted with regular customer abuse and incivility. A significant proportion of parking officers' task, such as writing fines and giving warnings, can be

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[1] There are numerous variants of this occupational title, depending on the country or region, including parking enforcement officer, parking inspector, and traffic warden. In this study, we will use the term parking officer, which is consistent with the official job title at both research sites.

categorized as "necessary evil" tasks (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). Customers who are upset to receive fines often exhibit behaviors that can be categorized as customer incivility, such as complaining, cursing, and even aggression.

Procedure

All parking officers working at two councils of a large metropolitan Australian city were invited to participate in the study. The study was comprised of two stages. In phase one of the research, all participants were asked to complete the baseline paper-and-pencil survey. The survey contained demographic measures as well as a measure prosocial motivation. Approximately four weeks later, in phase two of the study, experience sampling data were obtained via an electronic survey which, with permission from the councils, was programmed into the personal digital assistants (PDAs) used by parking officers to issue parking tickets. All parking officers are provided their own council-issued PDA devices, which they carry with them at all times and on which they record all parking infringements. Using participants' own devices to complete our surveys had the benefit of participants being very familiar with their own PDA devices as well as allowing the researchers to send instant requests for survey completion, given that all parking officers are required to carry the devices with them at all times and to use them throughout the day.

The experience sampling period lasted 14 consecutive days, during which participants were asked to complete a survey four times per day. Consistent with recommendations by Christensen et al. (2003), we chose this experience sampling timeframe based on considerations of the naturalistic setting; that is, parking officers in our sample are usually scheduled to work eight consecutive days and then have six consecutive days off, so the sampling of eight consecutive days enabled us to investigate a working shift in its entirety. The PDAs were programmed to prompt participants, by way of an auditory and visual signal, to complete the survey throughout the working day. We programmed the first signal of the

day to occur approximately one hour into the shift. The last signal occurred approximately one hour before the end of the shift, and the two remaining signals occurred throughout the interim at intervals of approximately two to three hours. The intervals were modified to accommodate each participant's working hours, and so a pseudorandom technique (randomizing with restrictions) was used to program the signals roughly within these time periods. Because participants must stop what they are doing to complete the PDA survey, they were allowed to "snooze" (i.e., delay) the alarm signal for five, ten or fifteen minutes, as necessitated by working conditions. All survey entries were time-stamped in order to enable verification that participants had completed the surveys within the allowable timeframe. On each survey occasion, participants completed ratings for the time period since the last survey (or, in the case of the first survey, since the beginning of the workday). This method of event sampling is known as interval-contingent experience sampling and has the advantage that it samples all relevant events (Alliger & Williams, 1993; Wheeler & Reis, 1991). The ratings took approximately two to three minutes to complete.

Participants

A total of 48 parking officers volunteered for the study (96% response rate) and completed the initial, one-off survey. Seven participants were not included in the final sample because they did not participate in the experience-sampling phase and/or had missing data due to a variety of reasons (illness, irregular work patterns for personal reasons, etc.). The final sample consisted of 41 parking officers with matching baseline survey data and experience sampling data. The majority of participants were male (83%) and the average age was 45.09 years ($SD = 11.99$ years). The average job tenure was 5.34 years ($SD = 3.19$ years) and average weekly working hours (including overtime) was 46.36 hours ($SD = 17.50$ hours).

Participants were offered gift vouchers for local retail stores as an incentive for completing the research study. To further encourage participation and reduce response

fatigue, on the fourth day of the experience sampling period, participants received a text message from the researchers encouraging completion of the incidental surveys. In total, all 41 participants provided 1229 incidental surveys, with each participant completed 29.98 surveys on average. In order to estimate lagged effect within a workday, we paired customer incivility data from each incidence with job avoidance, venting and emotional exhaustion data from its subsequent incidence. This means the maximum number of paired cases each participants on each day is 3. This process results in a total of 921 paired cases.

Measures

Due to extreme time constraint imposed by experience sampling design, we measured most of our constructs using short forms of measurements, which contain one or two items. Such practice reduced mental fatigue for participants to complete the survey, thus is widely used and accepted in the field (Beal, 2015). Furthermore, the validity and reliability of single-item measurement has also been confirmed for multiple constructs (Wanous & Hudy, 2001). Specifically, *customer incivility* was measured using the same measurement used by Grandey, Kern, and Frone (2007) to measure workplace abuse. Employees were asked "Since the last reminder, how many customers acted abusively towards you (e.g., shouted at, threatened, insulted, sworn at etc.,)?". *Emotional exhaustion* was measured with two items by asking participants "At this moment, to what extent do you feel emotionally drained/emotionally numb." These are the same items used by Totterdell and Holman (2003). Employees' *job avoidance* was measured using one item from Miner, Glomb, and Hulin's (2005) measurement of work withdrawal. Employees were asked "since the last remainder, how often did you do something to avoid your work tasks?" Employees' *venting* of negative emotions was measured by two items adapted from Glomb and Tews (2004). Employees were asked "Since the last reminder, to what extent did you show feelings of irritation/anger towards customers when you really felt that way?" Finally, *prosocial motivation* was

measured using Grant's (2008a) scale. Employees were asked "Why are you motivated to do your work in general?" based on the following three descriptions: "Because I care about benefiting others through my work"; "Because I want to help others through my work"; and "Because I want to have positive impact on others". Participants answered all the questions based on a 5 point scale.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for the within- and between-individuals study variables are presented in Table 1. The reliability estimates for all the multi-item scales are satisfactory, with α scores ranging from 0.84 to 0.96.

Test of Within-Person Model

In order to test Hypothesis 1, we first regressed time t+1 emotion exhaustion on time t customer incivility. As shown in Table 1, customer incivility has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion ($b = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$) after all the control variables are taken into consideration. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

In order to test Hypotheses 2 and 3, we formed the interaction terms between time t customer incivility and time t+1 customer directed behaviors (i.e., job avoidance and venting). More specifically, we followed Preacher, Zhang, and Zyphur (2016) to use group mean centered variables to form the interaction terms. As shown in Table 1, the interaction between customer incivility and job avoidance has a significantly negative effect on emotion exhaustion ($b = -0.08$, $p < 0.05$), and the interaction between customer incivility and venting has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion ($b = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). In order to better visualize these interaction effects, we plotted them based on Bauer and Curran's (2005) procedure (shown in Figures 2 and 3). A simple slope test reveals that the effect of customer incivility on emotion exhaustion is significantly positive when job avoidance is low (simple

slope = 0.13, p < 0.01), yet is not significant when job avoidance is high (simple slope = 0.03, n.s.). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Furthermore, consistent with predictions of Hypothesis 3, the effect of customer incivility on emotion exhaustion is not significant when venting is low (simple slope = 0.01, n.s.) but significantly positive when venting is high (simple slope = 0.14, p < 0.01). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is also supported.

Test of Cross-Level Model

Finally, in order to test Hypotheses 4 and 5, we formed three-way interaction terms between customer incivility, employees' coping behaviors (i.e., job avoidance and venting), and prosocial motivation. Specifically, we entered prosocial motivation as a between-person level predictor on all the within-person interaction terms in the slopes-as-outcomes model. Furthermore, in order to control for all the two-way cross-level interactions, we also entered prosocial motivation as a between-person level prediction on all the main effects. We controlled for all two-way cross-level interactions as they may conflate the three-way interaction (Preacher et al., 2016). As shown in Table 3, the three-way interaction of customer incivility, job avoidance, and prosocial motivation has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion (b = 0.13, p < 0.05). To better illustrate this three-way interaction, we followed Bauer, Preacher, and Gil's (2006) recommendation to plot two-way interaction effect between customer incivility and job avoidance under both high (+SD) and low (-SD) conditions of prosocial motivation. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, when employees' prosocial motivation is low, employees' job avoidance can help buffer the effect of customer incivility, as customer incivility has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion when job avoidance is low (simple slope = 0.23, p < 0.01) but has a no significant effects when job avoidance is high (simple slope = -0.01, n.s.). However, when employees' prosocial motivation is high, job avoidance does not help buffer the effect of customer incivility but rather aggravates it, as customer incivility has a significantly positive effect on emotion

exhaustion when job avoidance is high (simple slope = 0.17, $p < 0.01$) but an insignificant effect when job avoidance is low (simple slope = -0.02, n.s.).

Second, the three-way interaction of customer incivility, venting, and prosocial motivation had a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion ($b = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). As shown in Figures 6 and 7, for employees with higher prosocial motivation, venting exacerbates the effect of customer incivility on emotion exhaustion, as customer incivility does not have a negative effect on emotion exhaustion when venting is low (simple slope = -0.06, n.s.), yet has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion when venting is high (simple slope = 0.25, $p < 0.01$). However, when employees have lower prosocial motivation, venting does not demonstrate such an aggravating effect. Interestingly, it helps to buffer the effect of customer incivility on emotional exhaustion, as customer incivility has a significantly positive effect on emotion exhaustion when venting is low (simple slope = 0.13, $p < 0.05$) yet has an insignificantly effect when venting is high (simple slope = 0.04, n.s.).

DISCUSSION

In this study, we examined service employees' resource dynamic following incidental customer incivility. We first are able to extend previous research's conclusion (e.g. Goldberg & Grandey, 2007) and confirmed a lagged effect of customer incivility on parking officers' emotional exhaustion. Importantly, we also found support for the moderating effects of job avoidance and venting on the aforementioned relationship. More specifically, while job avoidance serves a resource replenishing function and mitigate the influence of customer incivility, venting plays an aggravating role and accentuate the relationship. Lastly, we explore boundary conditions that constrain the moderating strength of job avoidance and venting. Parking officers' prosocial motivation has been shown to moderate the replenishing function of job avoidance, in that such behavior's benefit is mitigated for prosocially motivated employees. On the other hand, the aggravating effect of venting only manifests

when officers' prosocial motivation is high. For those who are less prosocially motivated, venting ironically serves a replenishing function and mitigates the harm of customer incivility. In the following section, we clarified the current study's contribution, and point out how these contributions extend current literature in customer incivility, prosocial motivation as well as resource theories.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

To begin with, this study contributes to customer incivility literature by delineating resource dynamic around each incidence of incivility. Previous research has established the resource draining nature of customer incivility (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010) as well as the moderating role of external environmental features (Wang et al., 2011). However, the role of employees' own initiative, such as their coping behaviors, has been ignored. Furthermore, the widely use of aggregated measure towards customer incivility also fails to capture intrapersonal resource fluctuation, as well as employees' immediate coping following each episode. Koopmann et al (2015)'s conceptual model suggested that customer incivility may represent different phenomenon when being conceptualized at different temporal levels (i.e. chronic vs. incidental). Thus, findings derived from aggregated measurements can not be automatically applied to the incident level (e.g. Yue, Wang, & Groth, 2017). Our research thus supplements previous studies in providing a more holistic picture on service employees' resource trajectory following negative workplace incidences such as customer incivility. From a stressor perspective, we echoes Lazarus' (1999) claim of treating individuals' coping as an integral part of stress process, and provide a more complete evaluation of the impact of incidental customer incivility.

Furthermore, by integrating COR, we contribute to coping literature and evaluate the effectiveness of two emotion-focused coping strategies towards customer incivility. Previous

research has been using a variety of standard to evaluate effectiveness of different coping strategies, including strain, health (Parkes, 1990) and performance (Brown, Westbrook, & Challagalla, 2005). However, relatively little effort has been approaching coping effectiveness from a resource perspective (see exception, Krischer, Penney, & Hunter, 2010). This is surprising given COR's tight connection with coping literature (Hobfoll, 1989). A variety of coping strategies can also be framed under COR framework, representing employees' effort to conserve or acquire resources. Thus, our study also supplements previous coping literature by assessing coping effectiveness from a resource perspective. More specifically, we evaluate whether each coping strategy help replenish or deteriorate employees' momentary loss of resources following customer incivility. We believe such an approach represents a solid way to assess coping effectiveness in the immediate context. Standards used previously, such as health and performance, may not be so sensitive towards one single episode of negative events. There are evidence showing that the effect of daily hassles, such as customer incivility, on health and performance may only manifest in the long term. Thus, it is important to use indicators that are more sensitive and exhibit significant short-term ebbs and flows. COR represents a good lens to understand short term effectiveness of coping strategies due to its inherent fluctuating nature. Furthermore, adopting a resource perspective can also help researchers make the link between short term (in)effectiveness and long term (dys)functionality, as COR also emphasizes the development of resource gain(loss) spirals overtime (Hobfoll, 2011).

Lastly, we also supported contextualized nature of resource value. In COR, value of resource is deemed universal and is shared within culture (Hobfoll, 2011). Further empirical research has supported this notion by showing that resource in Hobfoll' (1989) initial list is considered valuable in most cultures. However, there is also calling for the examination of more contextualized nature of resource value (Halbesleben et al., 2014). For example, in

Morelli and Cunningham's (2012) study, people with higher self-transcendence value viewed material and psychosocial resources as less important than their peers who scored lower on self-transcendence value. In recovery literature, studies have also showed some support for the contextualized nature of different resource replenishing activities (e.g. Uy et al., 2016). What is missing, however, is exploration of systematic patterns among such idiosyncrasy. In our study, we add to such contextualized view of resource value by adopting a goal perspective. With different goals prioritized at work (prosocial vs. non-prosocial), individuals assign various value to different resources. Such prioritization should be highly relevant in our context, which focuses on short time span and employees are less likely to shift their primary work goal. Future research should expand such a perspective by incorporating a larger variety of work goals to explain the contextualized nature of resource value and coping effectiveness.

Limitations and Future Directions

First, we test our hypotheses using a unique sample (i.e. parking officers), whose work may embody some characteristics not shared by other service employees. Such distinctive job feature may induce variations in how approach and avoidance following customer incivility can be actually implemented. For example, for some service employees, such as supermarket cashiers, physically avoiding customers may not be an option therefore they need to find other ways to be "psychologically" absent from their work. Future research therefore should assess a wider range of coping activities which share similar purposes. As (Skinner et al., 2003) puts, different coping strategies belonging to the same family (e.g. serve similar functions) should be examined simultaneously so that their interconnection can be taken into consideration. With job avoidance and venting only represent two discrete strategies affiliating to broader coping families, further attention should be focused on generalizing our result to a higher level.

Second, due to space constraint in ESM design we only used one item to capture employees' perception of general customer incivility, without considering its potentially multidimensional nature. Some studies have suggested there are different kinds of customer incivility, and their impact on employees may differ in strength. For example. Walker, Jaarsveld and Skarlicki (2017) differentiated between targeted customer incivility (i.e. incivility targeted at a specific employee) and non-customer incivility (i.e. incivility involves incivility that lacks a specific target). On the other hand, Zhan (2011) proposed that customer incivility can be categorized into either an aggressive form (e.g. a customer yelled at service employees) or a demanding form (e.g. a customer made demands that service employees could not deliver). Different forms of customer incivility may impact service employees' emotional exhaustion differently, and may also differ in how their impact can be moderated by different coping strategies. Therefore, future research should use measurements that differentiate between different forms of customer incivility, and assess whether our result can generalize when customer incivility is conceptualized differently.

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Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Mean	Within SD	Between SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	45.13	-	11.54	-	.40**	.10	.29*	.03	.23	-.20	-.17	-.12	-.05	-.02	.17
2. Tenure	4.96	-	3.13		-	.08	.40**	.12	.03	-.16	-.16	.03	-.08	-.06	.11
3. Working Hour	47.84	-	18.64			-	-.17	-.33*	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.00	.07	-.11	.02
4. Prosocial Motivation	3.12	-	1.12				(.91)	.22	.01	-.15	-.14	-.31*	-.34*	-.24	-.15
5. Measurement Day	5.24	2.92	1.62***					-	-.29	-.24	-.22	-.20	-.18	.07	.01
6. Measurement Time (time t)	2.48	1.35	0.20**					-.07*	-	.13	.12	.05	-.06	.19	.02
7. Customer Number (time t)	2.62	2.36	2.69***					.04	.02	-	.99**	.64**	.38*	.21	.02
8. Customer number (time t+1)	2.64	2.23	2.84***					.06	-.02	.11**	-	.61**	.39**	.21	.03
9. Customer Incivility (time t)	0.51	0.88	0.82***					-.04	-.03	.09**	.00	-	.40**	.38*	.30*
10. Emotion exhaustion (time t+1)	2.22	0.58	1.18***					-.09*	.12**	.05	.05	.05	(.96)	.32*	.49**
11. Job Avoidance (time t+1)	1.53	0.61	0.76***					-.02	.02**	.01	-.03	-.01	.11**	-	.75**
12. Venting (time t+1)	1.39	0.40	0.68***					-.01	.01	-.02	.04	.02	.21**	.18**	(.89)

Table 2: HLM results for the within-person level model

	Emotion exhaustion(time t+1)	Emotion exhaustion(time t+1)	Emotion exhaustion(time t+1)
Within-Person Level			
Customer Number (time t+1)	0.03*(0.01)	0.03**(0.01)	0.03*(0.01)
Customer Number (time t)	-0.01(0.01)	-0.02(0.01)	-0.01(0.01)
Measurement Time (time t)	0.08**(0.03)	0.08**(0.03)	0.08**(0.03)
Measurement Day	-0.01(0.02)	-0.00(0.01)	-0.01(0.02)
Customer Incivility (time t)	0.08*(0.03)	0.08*(0.03)	0.07*(0.03)
Job Avoidance (time t+1)		0.18**(0.07)	
Venting (time t+1)			0.05(0.07)
Customer Incivility * Job Avoidance		-0.08*(0.04)	
Customer Incivility * Venting			0.17**(0.06)
Between-Person Level			
Age	-0.00(0.01)	-0.00(0.01)	0.00(0.02)
Tenure	-0.03(0.06)	-0.02(0.06)	-0.06(0.06)
Hour	0.00(0.01)	0.01(0.01)	0.01(0.01)

Table 3: HLM results for the cross-level model (Prosocial Motivation)

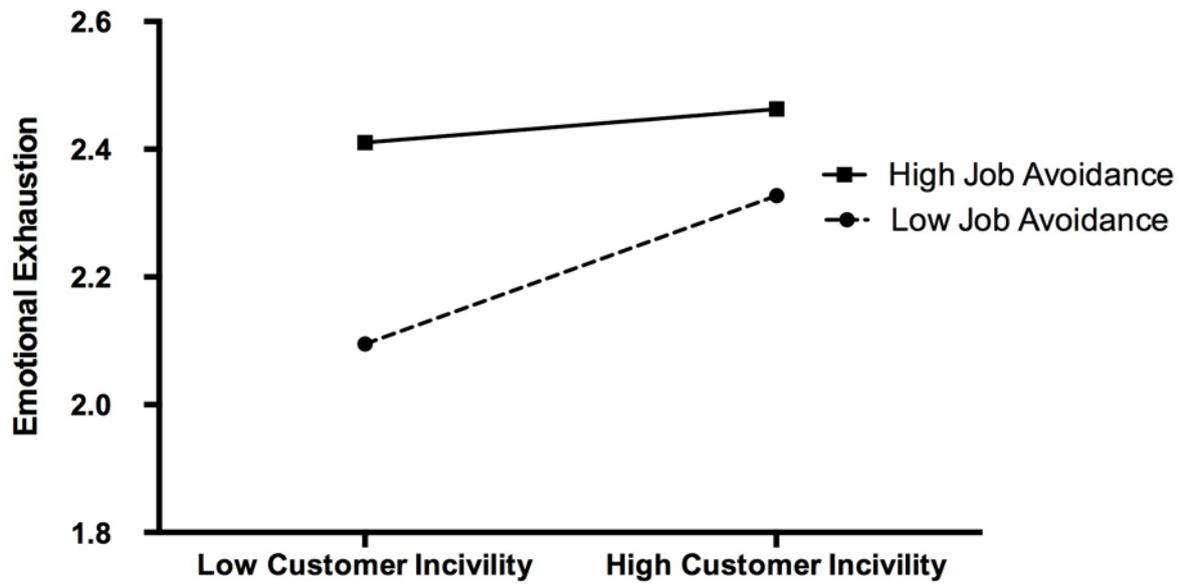|	Emotion exhaustion	Emotion exhaustion
Within-Person Level		
Customer Number (time t+1)	0.03**(0.01)	0.03*(0.01)
Customer Number (time t)	-0.02(0.01)	-0.01(0.01)
Measurement Time (time t)	0.08*(0.03)	0.08**(0.03)
Measurement Day	-0.00(0.01)	-0.01(0.02)
Customer Incivility (time t)	0.08(0.05)	0.08*(0.04)
Job Avoidance (time t+1)	0.21**(0.07)	
Venting (time t+1)		0.05(0.07)
Customer Incivility * Job Avoidance	-0.04(0.05)	
Customer Incivility * Venting		0.17**(0.06)
Between-Person Level		
Age	0.01(0.01)	0.00(0.01)
Tenure	0.02(0.06)	0.05(0.06)
Hour	0.01(0.01)	0.02(0.01)
Prosocial Motivation	-0.38(0.20)	-0.37(0.19)
Cross Level		
Prosocial Motivation * Customer Incivility	-0.02(0.04)	0.01(0.03)
Prosocial Motivation * Job Avoidance	0.05(0.03)	
Prosocial Motivation * Venting		0.03(0.04)
Prosocial Motivation * Customer Incivility * Job Avoidance	0.13*(0.05)	
Prosocial Motivation * Customer Incivility * Venting		0.20**(0.06)

Figure 2: The interaction effect between customer incivility and job avoidance on emotional exhaustion
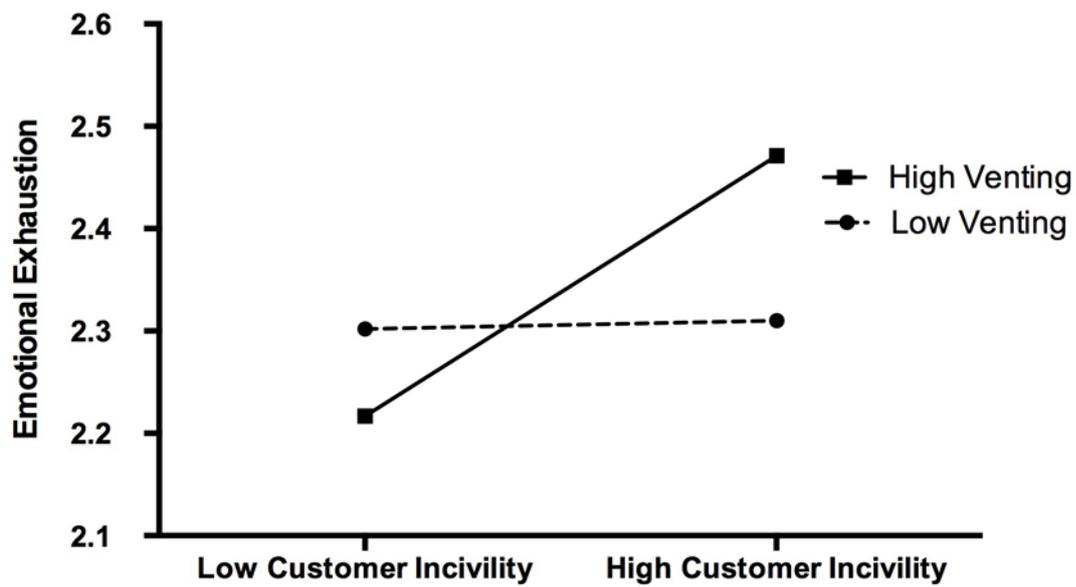

Figure 3: The interactive effect between customer incivility and venting on emotion exhaustion

Figure 3: The interactive effect between customer incivility and job avoidance on emotion exhaustion when prosocial motivation is high
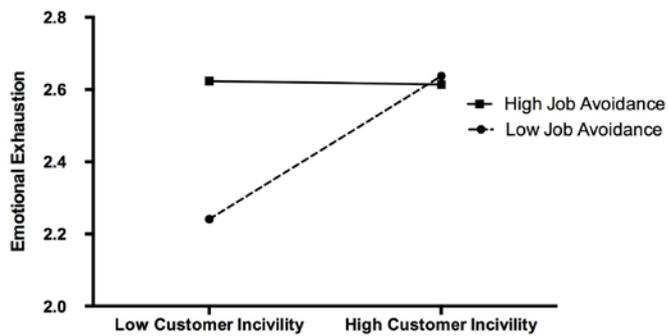

Figure 4: The interactive effect between customer incivility and job avoidance on emotion exhaustion when prosocial motivation is low
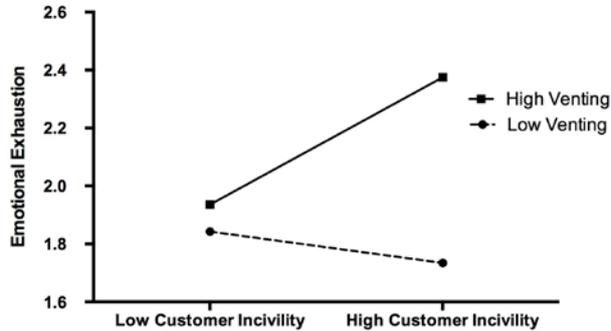

Figure 5: The interactive effect between customer incivility and venting on emotion exhaustion when prosocial motivation is high
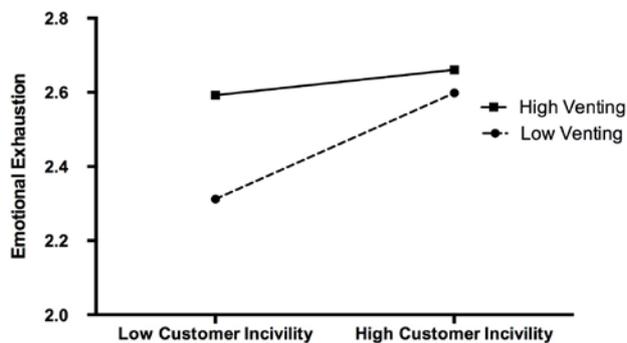

Figure 6: The interactive effect between customer incivility and venting on emotion exhaustion when prosocial motivation is low

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Momentary Effects of Customer Incivility and Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Coping Strategies (14646)

Submitter Name: Yumeng Yue	**Decision:** Division Paper Accepted

Comment from Reviewer 1 (OB)	My Feedback to the Reviewer

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. I hope you find the comments below helpful. I wish you well as this research moves forward.

1.   Introduction. This paper was focused on exploring the effectiveness of emotion-focused coping strategies by employees who encounter incivility from customers. This is an important topic given that workplace mistreatment is known to have widespread negative effects for targets of the behaviors. At the same time, there may be a need to re-think the novelty of the topic, given that as noted in the manuscript, job venting and venting of negative emotions are well-known strategies for coping with customer incivility (a stressor) and Hypothesis 1 itself may be regarded as 'old news' aside from the temporal component. One route worth considering is to reframe the paper as being more so about the benefits versus costs (or 'dark side') of employee prosocial motivation in employees managing their own resource cycles following mistreatment. This would add to the prosocial motivation literature itself, plus respond to recent calls for a more balanced perspective regarding benefits and costs of negative workplace interactions (Labianca & Brass, 2006; Lebel, 2016; Pierce & Aguinis, 2013).

2.   Theory. The use of COR seemed a fitting theory for the paper's focus on coping and managing resource loss. I would recommend drawing attention to the Kanter et al. theory of resource allocation much sooner in the paper. Integrating these theories together can effectively set the frame for the prosocial motivation storyline as well.

3.   Method. The parking officers sample seemed like a good fit for the research question/context. The data collection also seemed interesting. The incivility measure raised some question about how incivility is defined and distinguished from other workplace aggression constructs. According to Andersson and Pearson (1999), the low intensity level of incivility (such as rude and discourteous verbal and non-verbal behaviors) distinguishes it from other interpersonal mistreatment behaviors, as does its ambiguous intent to harm on the part of offenders (cf. Hershcovis, 2011). If incivility is characterized as "workplace abuse," then how does it not overlap with abusive supervision (aside from using the customer, rather than supervisor, referent?)

4.   Contributions. The paper's three contributions are (1) delineating resource dynamics around incidences of incivility; (2) evaluating the effectiveness of job avoidance and venting as the coping strategies (i.e., a resource perspective); and (3) adding a contextualized view of resource value by adopting a goal perspective through prosocial versus non-prosocial motivation. I would not use the language as is in contribution #3 because prosocial motivation is an individual difference (and thus, perhaps a person x situation framework could offer conceptual utility to organizing the paper moving forward). The major takeways, however, seem to be that employees who are high on prosocial motivation can't catch a break – that is, both job avoidance and venting aggravates the customer incivility-employee emotional exhaustion relationship for them. This isn't particularly surprising (and the findings are believable) in that the strategies and the employee individual difference being examined are conceptually 'opposite.' By contrast, for employees who are low on prosocial motivation, neither of these strategies help at high levels. Building on point #1 above, it seems the richer storyline regards how employees high in prosocial motivation suffer the most in the context of customer incivility using the "two most common" coping strategies from prior work.

How useful is this review comment in helping you improve upon this submission?
- ○ Not useful at all
- ○ Somewhat useful
- ○ Fairly useful
- ○ Useful
- ○ Extremely useful

How constructive was the tone of this review?
- ○ Not constructive at all
- ○ Somewhat constructive
- ○ Fairly constructive
- ○ Constructive
- ○ Extremely constructive

Post Feedback

Comment from Reviewer 2 (OB)	My Feedback to the Reviewer

You have submitted a very interesting paper that advances our understanding of an important phenomenon - instantaneous coping strategies in negative customer encounters - through a sophisticated study of a highly relevant sample - parking officers. I want to mainly applaud you for accessing this sample and for achieving a fantastic response rate! In the spirit of constructive feedback, I also have a thought for you that may help you further refine your analyses and expand your contribution: You essentially find that avoidance is helpful and venting is hurtful, but I wonder whether these effects change if you expand the time span between the moment that incivility and coping occur and the moment that you measure outcomes. Could it be that after a few days, avoiders are worse off than venters? I would encourage you to use your data to examine both instantaneous as well as lagged effects of various lengths. Overall, your work is immensely relevant for the advancement of emotion research and shows a great level of academic rigor. As such, I would greatly enjoy to hear more about your research during the AOM meeting and I wish you all the best for your next steps with this important paper.

How useful is this review comment in helping you improve upon this submission?
- ○ Not useful at all
- ○ Somewhat useful
- ○ Fairly useful
- ○ Useful
- ○ Extremely useful

How constructive was the tone of this review?
- ○ Not constructive at all
- ○ Somewhat constructive
- ○ Fairly constructive
- ○ Constructive
- ○ Extremely constructive

Post Feedback

Comment from Reviewer 3 (OB)	My Feedback to the Reviewer

All in all, this is a well written manuscript on an interesting and relevant research question. The study itself is well-conducted, using a rigorous design.

I have some comments you might want to consider when further improving this manuscript:

Neither in the title nor in the abstract, the outcome under study is mentioned.

I am not convinced that job avoidance is an emotion-focused coping strategy. In my understanding, job avoidance is situation- or problem-related (albeit I do agree that job avoidance does not relate to the original stressor, but is rather related to avoiding a following stressor). Somewhat this issue also has implications for the differentiation between approach and avoidance orientation: You state that these orientations relate to „contact with THE stressful situation"– however, job avoidance is related to a potential coming stressful situation.

You state that „employees' intra-individual resource fluctuations following incidence of customer incivility (...) has been theorized but yet to dynamically tested", raising the impression that your's is the first within-person study on customer incivility and resource/well-being/strain/... outcomes. This is not the case. See for instance: Dudenhöffer & Dormann, 2013; Tremmel & Sonnentag, 2017; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009

On venting: I was surprised that you seem to equal venting with behaving aggressively towards another customer (i.e., „revenge"). I implicitly assumed that by venting you mean that the employee tells a co-worker about the incivility event (I realise you did not state this, but nevertheless that is what I was expecting using the term „venting").

I really like the sample and I do not doubt your hypotheses per se. However, the whole framing of the study in a service context seems questionable to me. Are parking officers really service employees? How do parking officers benefit their „customers" (e.g., is prosocial motivation relevant for parking officers - even you yourself use another example, namely a restaurant waiter, here)?
Similarly, you base your main effect hypothesis on the assumption of goal failure. Is good customer service a typical goal of parking officers? You also somethimes refer to customer dissatisfaction as an explaining mechanism; in my personal opition, however, „customers" of parking officers are mostly dissatisfied (e.g., with being fined). All in all, I believe your manuscript would benefit from being more closely connected to the specific sample you have (e.g., use examples that explain your assumptions in relation to parking officers).

The sample at the person level is rather small, what lowers my confidence in the results including prosocial motivation.

Measure of venting: Your measure does not align with your definition of venting. You defined venting as „venting negative emotions towards other customers not involved in the incivility incident", but you measured venting as „show feelings of irritation/anger towards customers when you really felt that way" – how do you know that venting relates to emotions triggered by a previous customer interaction instead of the interaction with the customer towards whom negative emotions were vented?

Results: When describing your results, you tend to imply causality (e.g., „effect") which you cannot test with your data.

Discussion: Here, but also at other places in the text, you relate to „each incidence of incivility" – this does not reflect your measure of incivility.

The section on limitations and future directions is way to short and superficial, respectively. For instance: what about using self-report measures, only? What about the small person-level sample size? What about the short measures for all of your constructs? What about your sole focus on exhaustion?

Practical implacations are missing.

Figures: „low" and „high" customer incivility is not reflecting your measure (number of incivil customers)

There seem to be quite a lot of slips in your writing (such as missing words).

Please note that I was not able to refer to specific pages as the document has none.

How useful is this review comment in helping you improve upon this submission?

○ Not useful at all
○ Somewhat useful
○ Fairly useful
○ Useful
○ Extremely useful

How constructive was the tone of this review?

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○ Constructive
○ Extremely constructive

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