

A Study on the Workplace Implications of Incivility upon Worker's Productivity

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Abstract : A growing body of research explores workplace incivility, defined as low-intensity deviant workplace behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm. In the 15 years since the theoretical introduction of the workplace incivility construct, research in this domain has taken off, albeit in a variety of directions. The present research aimed to figure out how incivility impacts the workplace behavior of the employees upon their mental health & their productivity. An exhaustive literature review was carried out to identify the broad dimensions demanding attention in this regard. Research was carried out in two segments , firstly , via a semi-structured questionnaire & then via a focused group interview which elicited certain information pertaining to the dispositions , behavioral antecedents , situational antecedents, affective outcomes , attitudinal outcomes & cognitive outcomes of incivility at workplace.

IndexTerms - **Low – intensity defiant workplace behavior , Organizational Citizenship Behavior , Attrition , Behavioral Antecedents , Situational Antecedents , Affective outcome , Attitudinal outcomes , Cognitive outcomes.**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, workplace negativity has emerged as a focal topic in the organization behavior literature. Thousands of studies have investigated how various types of negative workplace behaviors influence organization-level, group-level, and individual-level outcomes. Originally, the literature mainly focused on topics such as workplace aggression, deviance, bullying, and abusive supervision and predominately investigated the detrimental effects of negative workplace behaviors on targets' work attitudes, work behaviors, and well-being. This research has shown that targets of these negative workplace behaviors engage less in organizational citizenship behaviors (Dalal, 2005), have higher turnover intentions (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008), and experience more stress than their colleagues (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). A relatively new addition to the domain of negative workplace behavior is workplace incivility, defined as low-intensity deviant workplace behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457). Examples of uncivil behavior include talking down to others, making demeaning remarks, and not listening to somebody (Porath & Pearson, 2009).

Workplace incivility is ubiquitous. It has been estimated that 98 percent of workers experience incivility, with 50 percent experiencing such conduct at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2013). The monetary cost of experiencing incivility is estimated at \$14,000 per employee annually, due to project delays and cognitive distraction from work (Pearson & Porath, 2009). These statistics are alarming as they indicate that incivility affects many employees and has a large financial impact on the organizations they work for. Moreover, the human costs borne by employees who are subjected to workplace incivility are quite severe. They may, for instance worry, try to avoid the instigator, withdraw from work, and even take their frustrations out on customers (Porath & Pearson, 2013).

The alarming rate and costs of workplace incivility stimulated universities to develop and execute civility campaigns (e.g., Oregon State University, Central Florida University, State University of New York, and Loyola University), led to the startup of a grassroots movement that advocates civility in government, and motivated a variety of organizations to emphasize civility in their organizations (e.g., Character Counts in Iowa, the Community Foundation of Greater Des

Moines, and the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa). In fact, the public domain recognized the importance of civility as early as 1922 when the Fifth Avenue Bus Company in New York City requested (inspirational) essays about public civility for an award of up to \$150. However, even though the importance of civility has been acknowledged a long time ago, workplace incivility currently is a pervasive and costly behavior that only quite recently has become the topic of empirical research.

So far, research on the antecedents and broad consequences of workplace incivility as a whole has not been integrated in a narrative review. One study that integrated some of the work on workplace incivility is Hershcovis's (2011) paper that examines how various forms of workplace misbehavior relate to target outcomes. Our narrative review is quite different from Hershcovis's work. She analyzed studies on experienced workplace incivility that used the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001) and included job satisfaction, turnover intent, and/or well-being as dependent variables. While the integrative model that Hershcovis (2011) proposes is very helpful in synthesizing a broad extant body of work on the effects of various forms of experienced workplace misbehavior, our narrative review aims to review all empirical research on workplace incivility that has been conducted beginning in 1999 and including work through the year 2013. It includes all types of workplace incivility workers may encounter, incorporates studies utilizing a broad range of methodologies and measurement instruments, and employs a wide variety of antecedents, processes, and outcomes of workplace incivility.

Literature Review : The past 15 years shows the "take-off" trend of the new construct of workplace incivility. One can safely say that the literature has gained momentum. It comprises a diverse body of work that represents a substantive group of authors and reports effects of workplace incivility for samples from a wide diversity of countries, industries, and professions. The body of work has now arrived at a point where it can be reviewed as a whole, and various studies can be integrated to advance further research on this impactful organizational behavior. The integrated models synthesize the empirical gains of this wide body of literature and will help to provide new paths forward for scholars to help expand this important literature.

The published work on workplace incivility represents employees from a wide variety of jobs and professions, including federal court employees (Cortina et al., 2002; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004), property management company employees (Miner, Settles, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2012), bank tellers (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012), manufacturing employees (Wu, Zhang, Chiu & He, 2013), healthcare workers (Leiter et al., 2011; Leiter et al., 2010; Oore et al., 2010; Spence Laschinger et al., 2009; Spence Laschinger et al., 2012; Trudel & Reio, 2011), university employees (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Sakurai & Jex, 2012), call center employees (Scott, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013), grocery store chain employees (Walsh, Magley, Reeves, Davies-Schriels, Marmet & Gallus, 2012), retail employees (Kern & Grandey, 2009), members of the US Military, city government and law enforcement agency employees (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), attorneys (Cortina & Magley, 2009), engineering firm employees (Adams & Webster, 2013), financial services employees (Lim & Teo, 2009), customer service employees (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008), and pharmaceutical plant employees (Blau, 2007).

Thus, the extant incivility research also represents a wide array of participants from many different industries and professions. The generalizability, or external validity, of workplace incivility findings is important, as not only national culture but also industry and organization cultures are likely to affect perceptions of and reactions toward incivility. For example, being yelled at in a masculine organizational culture such as the special operations division in the US Army might be considered quite normative, whereas being yelled at in more feminine organization cultures such as organizations focused on providing early childhood education or pediatric health care would probably be considered highly uncivil. Yet, so far, researchers consistently found that even in cultures where individuals are supposed to be

inoculated against rudeness because of the frequency with which they experience such behaviors (i.e., customer service representatives), small incidents of incivility still affect them (Rafaeli et al., 2012).

Research in the broad incivility domain has inspired authors to develop domain-specific workplace incivility measures. For example, Walsh et al. (2012) developed the Norms for Civility scale to measure civility in workgroups, and Wilson and Holmvall (2013) developed the Incivility from Customers scale to specifically capture the effects of customer-instigated incivility. Some scholars have also used Burnfield, Clark, Devendorf, and Jex's (2004) still unpublished Customer Incivility Scale (e.g., Sliter et al, 2010). Lim and Teo (2009) developed the Cyber Incivility Scale to specifically study uncivil behavior in online communication, and Miner et al. (2012) adapted Harrell's (1994) Daily Racist Hassles scale into a Gendered Incivility scale.

The review of the incivility literature clearly shows that the uncivil experiences that have been studied vary greatly. Not only do incivility incidents differ with regard to their source (i.e., supervisor, coworker, or customer), they also differ with regard to the type of incivility (i.e., experienced, witnessed, or instigated). In addition, studies of incivility vary by method of inquiry (i.e., critical incidents, questionnaires, experimental research, diary studies, and qualitative inquiry) and by time frame (i.e., retrospective, cross-sectional, and longitudinal). This diversity of research makes incivility findings difficult to interpret. For researchers, the lack of consistent findings may conceal gaps in the literature and makes it difficult to identify avenues for future research. For practitioners, the lack of comprehensive findings may prevent taking of adequate measures to diminish uncivil conduct in their organizations.

Methodology : A sample of 50 individuals were surveyed using a semi-structured questionnaire attempting to reveal different dimensions of the impact of incivility.

The method of Sampling chosen was that of a Simple Random Nature & the inclusion criteria followed was anyone who has a full time work experience of more than 5 years in a managerial position in an organization.

Tool :

Segment A : A semi-structured questionnaire comprising of 10 dimensions.
Segment B : Focussed Group Interview
Dimensions Measured :
1. Incivility and effort exercised
2. Incivility and time spent on work
3. Incivility and quality of work
4. Incivility and perceived worry
5. Incivility and avoidance coping behaviour
6. Incivility and performance outcomes
7. Incivility and organizational commitment
8. Incivility and attrition
9. Incivility and frustration
10. Incivility and Customer Relationship Management

Data Analysis : Simple Percentage Analysis.

Data Table :

SEGMENT A : Findings from the semi-structured questionnaire
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Dimensions :	Percentage Analysis
1. Incivility and effort exercised	49% intentionally decreased their work effort.
2. Incivility and time spent on work	48.5% intentionally decreased their time spent on work as an outcome of incivility.
3. Incivility and quality of work	39.78 % reduced their quality of work both consciously and subliminally.
4. Incivility and perceived worry	85% of the respondents lost worktime worrying about the incident.
5. Incivility and avoidance coping behaviour	64.5% admitted avoiding the offender at work situations.
6. Incivility and performance outcomes	69% stated having reduced their performance outcomes
7. Incivility and organizational commitment	78% experienced reduced organizational commitment
8. Incivility and attrition	18% said that they left their job because of incivility.
9. Incivility and frustration	67% of the respondents admitted that incivility increased their level of experienced frustration.
10. Incivility and Customer Relationship Management	43.5% of the workers admitted taking out their frustration upon the diadic relationship with the customers.

SEGMENT B : Findings from the focus group interview and their subsequent discussion :

The dispositions
Behavioural Antecedents
Situational Antecedents
Affective outcomes
Attitudinal outcomes
Cognitive outcomes

Dispositional antecedents of experienced incivility : The focus group interview revealed that the experience of incivility had much to do with the dispositional characteristics of the respondents.

Some studies have examined diversity or *dispositional target attributes* to learn about antecedents of receiving rude treatment. These studies have shown that the individual difference variables that are associated with more frequent experiences of workplace incivility include being a racial minority (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013), younger in age (Lim & Lee, 2011), generation X versus belonging to the baby boomer generation (Leiter et al., 2010), adipose (Sliter et al., 2012a), disagreeable, and neurotic (Milam, Spitzmueller, & Penney, 2009). Interestingly, research that examines the association between gender and experiencing incivility shows contradictory findings. Lim and Lee (2011) found that men report they experience incivility in greater frequency than women, whereas Cortina et al. (2001) and Cortina et al. (2013) found that women report more uncivil encounters than men.

Behavioral antecedents of experienced incivility. Other scholars have sought to study which target behaviors make individuals more likely to become the target of others' incivility or which situational characteristics might reduce experienced incivility. The *target behaviors* that have been found to predict experienced incivility include the target's organizational and interpersonal counterproductive behavior (Meier & Spector, 2013) and having a high dominating or a low integrating conflict management style (Trudel & Reio, 2011).

Situational antecedents of experienced incivility. Situational variables that reduce experienced incivility include higher workgroup norms for civility (Walsh et al., 2012) and experiencing low role stressors (Taylor & Kluemper, 2012). Given the high prevalence and costs of workplace incivility, it is noteworthy that three studies found support for the effectiveness of a team-based intervention for reducing supervisor-perpetrated (but not coworker-perpetrated) incivility (Leiter et al., 2011, 2012; Spence Laschinger et al., 2012). This so-called Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce intervention has been initiated by the Veterans Health Administration in the United States and was aimed to increase civility in the workplace (Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, & Belton, 2009) through supporting workgroups in identifying their strengths and weaknesses regarding civil workplace behaviors, designing their own interventions, and implementing these interventions in their work setting.

Affective outcomes of experienced incivility. Some of the general *affective* outcomes for targets of incivility include heightened emotionality (Bunk & Magley, 2013), emotional labor (Adams & Webster, 2013; Sliter et al., 2010), emotional exhaustion (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Sliter et al., 2010), depression (Lim & Lee, 2011; Miner et al., 2010), negative emotions (Kim & Shapiro, 2008; Sakurai & Jex, 2012), negative affect and lower positive affect (Giumetti et al., 2013), and lower affective trust (Cameron & Webster, 2011). Targets of incivility also report lower levels of energy (Giumetti et al., 2013) and increased levels of stress (Adams & Webster, 2013; Cortina et al., 2001; Kern & Grandey, 2009; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Miner et al., 2010). Specific emotional reactions of targets of workplace incivility include increased anger, fear, and sadness (Porath & Pearson, 2012) and reduced optimism (Bunk & Magley, 2013). To boot, recent work has shown that workplace incivility not only affects employees at work but also affects targets' personal lives, as its experience is linked with decreased levels of well-being (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008) and marital satisfaction (Ferguson, 2012) and increased levels of work-family conflict (Ferguson, 2012; Lim & Lee, 2011).

Attitudinal outcomes of experienced incivility. Incivility also influences targets' *attitudes*, in both the work and life domains. For example, targets of uncivil conduct are less committed to their organization (Lim & Teo, 2009), are less motivated (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), and have lower satisfaction with their supervisors and coworkers (Bunk & Magley, 2013), their job (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013), and their life (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Miner et al., 2010) than employees who do not experience incivility at work.

Cognitive outcomes of experienced incivility. In addition to affective and attitudinal reactions, targets of incivility also have *cognitive* reactions to their uncivil experiences. Specifically, uncivil encounters lower targets' perceived fairness (Lim & Lee, 2011) and task-related memory recall (Porath & Erez, 2007).

Incivility : Antecedents & Outcomes

Study	Sample	Targets	Antecedents/outcomes	Key findings
Blau and Andersson (2005)	Working adults	Coworkers, supervisors	Distributive justice, job satisfaction, work exhaustion	Time 1 distributive justice and job satisfaction were negatively related to instigated incivility at Time 2, and Time 1 workplace exhaustion was positively related to instigated incivility at time 2.
Blau (2007)	Manufacturing plant employees	Coworkers, supervisors	Contract violation, distributive and procedural justice, depression, strain	Instigated incivility is related to higher contract violation, strain, and depression and negatively linked to distributive and procedural justice and plant closure legitimacy.
Cortina et al. (2001)	Federal court employees	Coworkers, supervisors	Power	Power is positively related to instigated incivility.
Kirk et al. (2011)	Working adults	Coworkers	Expressive writing intervention	A 2-week expressive writing emotional self-efficacy intervention reduced post-intervention incivility.
Meier and Semmer (2013)	Employees from various organizations	Coworkers, supervisors	Lack of reciprocity, trait, and state anger	Lack of reciprocity, trait, and state anger predict instigated incivility. The relationship between lack of reciprocity and instigated incivility is mediated by feelings of anger.
Scott et al. (2013)	Call center employees	Coworkers	Distrust, exchange partner quality, exclusion	Instigated incivility is related to being excluded; this relationship is mediated by being distrusted. This relationship is stronger when the instigator is perceived as a low-quality exchange partner.
Trudel and Reio (2011)	Manufacturing and healthcare employees	Coworkers, supervisors	Conflict management styles, experienced incivility	Instigated incivility is positively related to being an incivility target and having a dominating conflict management style and negatively related to having an integrating conflict management style.
Van Jaarsveld et al. (2010)	Call center employees	Customers	Job demands, emotional exhaustion, job demands, experienced incivility	Experienced customer incivility was associated with higher employee job demands and emotional exhaustion, which related to higher levels of instigated employee incivility toward customers.

Workplace Implications of incivility :

Because of the absence of a unified theoretical framework that could guide empirical research on workplace incivility, researchers used a variety of theoretical approaches from related research domains to theoretically ground their hypotheses. Unfortunately, this approach has led to a set of disconnected theories, which include, among others, power theories (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004), the group identity lens model (Kern & Grandey, 2009), social exchange theory (Cameron & Webster, 2011; Scott et al., 2013), appraisal theory (Porath & Pearson, 2012), the emotion-centered model of work behavior (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), the Dollard–Miller model of aggression (Taylor & Kluemper, 2012), and cognitive–motivational–relational theory (Bunk & Magley, 2013). The adoption of these various theoretical frameworks does show that incivility is a very versatile construct that is well-situated among many diverse theoretical frameworks and can meaningfully be incorporated into a wide range of theories from related streams of research. Yet, in the absence of a unified theoretical model, the incivility literature does not present a clear picture of what is missing, and therefore, it might be difficult to see where progress could be made.

Antecedents and mediators of workplace incivility

Given the high prevalence and high costs of workplace incivility, it is surprising that many more papers investigate the outcomes of workplace incivility rather than its antecedents. We believe it is important to extend the line of research on antecedents in order to accumulate knowledge and develop policies and interventions to diminish the prevalence of workplace incivility. Such research projects may focus on attempts to dissuade instigators' uncivil actions, focus on ways employees may prevent becoming potential targets, or investigate broader contextual influences such as organizational culture and climate variables that may reduce the prevalence of workplace incivility overall. Moreover, very little work explains *why* certain antecedent constructs would lead to incivility. Only work by Milam et al (2009) investigated the mediating mechanism for why certain dispositional personality characteristics would result in higher levels of experienced incivility; these authors found that disagreeable and neurotic coworkers made them more provocative targets. In addition, given the strong negative effects of incivility, future research may benefit from attempts to reveal the reasons for *why* it has such strong reactions on witnesses

Conclusion :

Incivility is a costly and pervasive workplace behavior that has important negative affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences for its targets, witnesses, and instigators. Moreover, it has been noted as a modern way in which racism and sexism may manifest itself in organizations (Cortina, 2008). It is therefore important to continue research efforts that attempt to further our understanding of workplace incivility and may help curtail this harmful behavior in its various forms.

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