

Unseen Incivility in Workplace and Its Impact on Work Allied Outcomes

V. Gowtham Raaj, E.N. Anju

Abstract--- *Mistreatment in workplace has received growing attention among researchers. The anecdotal article prevailing in the business arena as well as in the social science research uniformly shows that negative behaviours in the work place have several harmful consequences both for individuals and concerning organisations. Even though enormous studies are there in line with international exposure on incivility, empirical research in India to prove the extent of workplace incivility and its consequences is minimal. This study examines the possible relation between incivility in workplace and its potential outcomes. The study found that perceptions of workplace incivility have significant effects on work related outcomes like emotional exhaustion and turnover intention.*

Keywords--- *Workplace Incivility, Emotional Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, & Nurses.*

Abbreviation--- *WI- Work Place Incivility.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Inappropriate treatments in the workplace have received growing attention and alarm among the executives professionals and academics over the last few years (Lieter, 2013; Zainab bibi, 2013). Workplace mistreatments can be in different ways and has have been studied in the academic arena under different labels like ‘mobbing’ (Leyman, 1996), ‘bullying’ (Schuster, 1996; besag, 1989; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009), ‘emotional abuse’ (Keashly, 1998), ‘workplace aggression’ (Hershcovis, 2011), ‘workplace deviance’ (Robinson & Bennett, 1995) and ‘workplace incivility’ (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The anecdotal article prevailing in the business arena as well as in the social science research uniformly shows that these negative behaviours in the workplace have several harmful consequences both for the individuals and concerning organisations (Hoel, Einarsen & Cooper, 2003; C. Rayner and H.Hoel, 1997). Among these concepts, recently there has been a growing interest among scholars to focus on a less intensive form of mistreatment – workplace incivility (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001).

Theoretical Background

Discourteous, rude or impatient behaviour, disrespect, inconsideration for others’ dignity are some of the actions

that describe incivility (Kane & Montgomery, 1998). Andersson & Pearson, (1999) defined workplace incivility as a “low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect”. Research shows that when there is a change in nature of work, there is an incremental increase in work place incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008; Roscigno, Hudson, & Lopez, 2009). The study by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) among Norwegian engineering employees recounted that at least once during the previous 6 months nearly 75 percent of them had endured generalized, nonspecific mistreatment. Also, the study conducted by Cortina, et al. (2001) reported in United States 71 percent of employees in public sector had experienced incivility in wokplace in the last 5 years in some forms. In a recent paper published in Harvard Business Review, Pearson and Porath (2013) stated in their survey spanning over 14 years, 98 percent of the people reported that they had experienced incivility at some point. A survey conducted by the JCAHO (2004), more than half of nurses stated that they had been subjected to verbal abuse and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. Related findings have found in Asia (Lim & Lee, 2011) that there is an increased prevalence of incivility seen (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008).

Even though incidents of incivility varied across the sample and tend to be irregular and mild the phenomenon can be hazardous and contagious like other related, more evident inappropriate behaviors such as emotional abuse, bullying and mobbing, harassment, and aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996). Harmful consequences of WI can be endured which may effect the targets and organizations too. On the distinct level, sufferers suffer from emotional anguish due to disrespectful activities and words (Estes & Wang, 2008) and most of them experience nervousness, despair, insomnia, poor self-esteem and stress. Consequently WI reduces (Estes & Wang, 2008; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000) employee performance, creativity, motivation, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. On the other hand, incivility not only impacts high turnover, but also, lack of productivity, absenteeism and economic losses (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Pearson & Porath, 2005) which incur cost to the organizations.

There have been surplus studies discussing the importance of workplace incivility, at in a different perspective both as outcome and predictor variables (Bruursema, 2004; Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). Several incidents of work place incivility are reported in US (Lim et al, 2008), and findings of related activities have been made in Asia (Lim & Lee, 2011) and in Europe (Ralph Fevre et al 2011).

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Moreover, to expand the existing knowledge on this phenomenon, exploring the concept in different cultures, new demographics, and work environment from different perspectives is essential (Kristoffer holm, 2011). Few research on this area has yet been conducted in India, thereby calling for an effort for a more in depth examination on a relatively uncharted demographics.

As with international exposure on incivility, empirical research in India to prove the extent of workplace incivility and its consequences is minimal (Neharika Vohra 2010).

Earlier research indicates that coworker incivility and bullying have become increasingly prevalent in healthcare sector (Jayne Skehan, 2015). Nurses constitute the largest workforce in the healthcare sector and play a significant role in the delivery of health care. In spite of the few empirical research existing on the subject, there have been numerous instances with anecdotal evidence of discourteous conduct in healthcare settings in recent times (Heather et al., 2009). Though nurses play a major role in healthcare industry around the world, there is shortage of nurses, especially in developing countries. Unfortunately, there is mounting substantiation that nurses have become progressively more dissatisfied with their work in several countries which may result in a low morale, increased employee turnover and negative image of the nursing profession. Therefore, there is possible evidence both in nursing and management literature to support links between WI and its significance and impact on individuals as well the organisation. Thus, the researcher aimed to study the possible relation between incivility, its potential mediators and outcomes.

Since the inception of the phenomena, researchers (Caza & Cortina, 2007, Willness et al., 2007) have studied the destructive effect of interpersonal abuse and maltreatment in the organization. In general, the term incivility is a form of psychological irritation and emotional violence that breaks the mutual respect in workplace etiquette. Most cited examples (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Hutton, 2006) of workplace include non-consideration of an employee's ideas or opinion, not including some employees for social activities, chattering, conspiracy, passive-aggressiveness (Maher M. El-Masri), ignoring someone, not listening and withholding information (Ismail, & Zakuan, 2012). In the workplace, incivility may be exhibited either in spoken words or through actions intending to harm the individual's mental and psychological wellbeing (Martin & Hine, 2005; Porath, 2010). As suggested in the Literature (Sakurai, 2011), in organizations the practices of low intense verbal abuse are more common. What differentiates incivility from other forms of negative behavior is that it is a milder form of mistreatment that disrupts mutual respect in the workplace (Lim et al, 2008).

Through various ways the researchers have conceptualized workplace incivility, its antecedents and outcomes for both individuals as well as organisations with an effort to detention, the complexity of the phenomenon. The adverse effect of WI has costs to a society or a culture, and it can be substantial either directly and indirectly. As in a society in general, in workplaces the incivility is a growing challenge because it occurs all too repeatedly. Numerous studies have revealed that as an end result of exposure to incivility people may experience personal destructive

outcomes. Studies of (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009; Penney & Spector, 2005) signposts that employees who experience incivility have increased health issues, hassle, exhaustion etc.

(Bartlett, J. E., 2008) Antecedents are those variables which expedite WI and can be characterized as motivators, triggers and enablers. As stated by (Salin 2003) 'factors that provide fertile soil for behavior' are called as enablers that are uncivil, whereas surroundings that make rewarding to harass others in the workplace are known as motivators (Salin, 2003). Any situation or processes leading to changes in the status quo can be considered as a potential trigger. Actions and roles of the instigator can be called as enablers. As per (Gardner & Johnson, 2001) the actions include response to fear, rage and anger. Whereas the roles include status, role requirements, workload, and pressures for productivity (Ferriss, 2002). The motivators are the individuals where they are built in with beliefs and personality. The belief can be called as dissatisfaction, perceived job insecurity, benefits expected, low perceived cost for inappropriate behaviors and attitudes about aggression (Salin, 2003). Meanwhile, the personality traits that motivate impolite behavior such as (Cortina et al., 2001; Glendinning, 2001; Hornstein, 2003; Salin, 2003) trait aggression, ego, power, personality types, hostility and internal competition. The actions like response to rage, fear and anger are to be viewed as triggers, and they even include lack of communications, ability, environment, and demographics (Berger, 2000).

WI will have a significant effect on individual, interpersonal relationships and productivity, which are further subcategorized as attitudes toward work, health, interpersonal outcomes and productivity. Attitudes that have been shown to relate to work and impact incivility are constructs like organizational commitment, career salience, motivation, poor attitude, morale, lower confidence, lower self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Among all these job satisfaction is the one of the widely cited constructs (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina et al., 2001; Alexander-Snow, 2004; Cortina et al, 2006). The employees' physical and psychological health have been shown to be impacted from incivility (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Martin & Hine, 2005; Salin, 2003). The consequences of incivility as stated by Gardner and Johnson, (2001) include nervousness, interrupted sleep, poor concentration, excessive worry, stress, and depression. All these affect the wellbeing of an individual.

A number of studies have been conducted to identify the nature, pervasiveness, consequences and ways of controlling this phenomenon. The reviews of literature reveal the potential relation between incivility and the widely used variables mentioned above. Based on the importance of the constructs cited, the researcher identified emotional exhaustion and turnover intention as the dependent variables for this study.

Emotional Exhaustion

In the arena of organizational psychologists emotional exhaustion is one of the most popular constructs in research. Emotional exhaustion is one of the signs of a burnout. The positive or negative effects of emotional exhaustion have been studied for years either as dependent variables, or as mediators/moderators between working conditions, personality and job performance.

The empirical research on emotional exhaustion and its relation to incivility was not much studied, whereas in few studies (won moo hur, 2015) the emotional exhaustion has been negatively related to incivility in the work place, which may effect psychologically and physically. Still the gap needs bridging, and there is a plenty of evidence on the consequences of WI from nursing perspective in the current literature.

Hypothesis1: workplace incivility has an impact on emotional exhaustion.

Intention to Turnover

Turnover intentions refer to an individual’s desire to quit from the organization. The reasons for quitting from the organization are extreme, and previous studies have predicted uncivil behaviour as on of the drives to quit the job. Sliter et al. (2012). This is a severe concept which unenviably affects the efficiency of employees and creates destructive effects for organizations as well. Cortina et al. (2013) in their study conducted at Unites States federal court found that there was a strong significant positive relation between incivility and turnover intention. Employee turnover is push to the organizations, with incivility being as a direct cause to increase the intentions to quit resulting in exhaustion of personnel, disengagement and subsequent burnout (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Sliter et al., 2010). Harris (2007) reported that compared to other professions turnover rates for nursing were considerably higher. One major cause of turnover among nurses was because of unsatisfying workplace (Spence Laschinger, Leiter, Day & Gilin, 2009). Poor employee retention leads to increases in cost, declining quality of patient care, and increased malpractice claims to the organisation (Waldman, Kelly, Arora, & Smith, 2010).

Hypothesis 2: Workplace incivility has an impact on turnover intention.

Although this study is not apprehensive about the concrete regularities of WI, rather the probable relationships and instigated incivility, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention could be stimulants to comprehend how predominant incivility is in order to understand the proportion of the phenomenon.

To address the knowledge gap, the following research question were framed:

1. Does work place incivility have significant relationship with work related outcomes?

II. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY

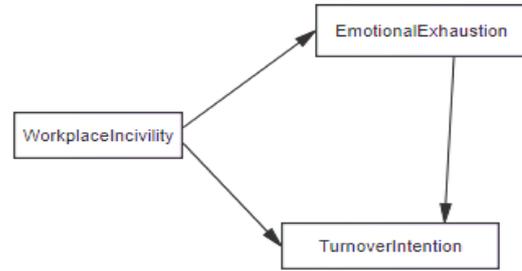


Figure 1

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are four variables which are used in this study; work place incivility, job satisfaction, wellbeing and intent to quit. Reliability tests indicate that all variables are reliable. PPN listed hospital nurses in the Coimbatore city have been selected as the study populations for this study. There are 39 listed hospitals with 1483 registered nurses in these hospitals. Sample size is fixed based on Krejcie & Morgan table, (1970). Convenience sampling method was used to select the appropriate sample for the study. Of 350 questionnaires distributed to obtain a required sample of 302, 318 questionnaires were got back. 304 questionnaires were subject to further analysis after data cleaning.

The WI scale, emotional exhaustion and intention to turnover scale were adopted from previous studies. WI scale was adopted from Cortina et al. (2001). The respondents were asked to specify the rate of recurrence of their experience of workplace incivility on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from never 1 to 5. To measure respondent’s emotional exhaustion The Maslach et al. 1996 Scale is used. The scale consists of 5 positively worded items, with five response categories, for assessing a population’s emotional exhaustion. Turnover intention items were developed for a longitudinal study investigating work and family conflict (Kelloway, Gottlieb, & Barham, 1999). Participants rated their intention to leave the organization using five items, each measured on a five-point scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

Results

respondents were mostly female (72 percent female; 28 percent males), with an average age of 34.5 years. Most of them were married (80.6 percent and have average work experience of 5 years. Moreover a majority of the respondents are in the junior level 81.2 percent. A majority of the respondents opined that they felt incivility from their seniors than equals (82.3 percent).

Table 1: Reliability, descriptive statistics and correlation for Study Variables

Variables	Reliability	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Workplace Incivility (7)	0.774	3.79	0.84				



2. Emotional Exhaustion(5)	0.781	3.22	0.95	.121	-	
3. Intention to Turnover(5)	0.773	4.25	0.85	-.061	.251	-

Descriptive statistics: The descriptive and reliability statistics of the study variables are presented in table1. On an average, respondent’s self-reported exposure to uncivil behaviour m= 3.79, which is above mediocre. The mean value of emotional exhaustion shows 3.22, with falsehoods in the neutral category of the questionnaire. The mean value of turnover intention shows 4.25, which shows that they have intention to quit the job.

The correlation matrix shows that there is a significant relationship among variables like workplace incivility, turnover intention and emotional exhaustion with negative correlation value of -0.061, and positive correlation of 0.55 respectively. The result shows that the more the respondents experience incivility the more emotionally exhausted they become with reduced job satisfaction. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between workplace incivility and turnover intention.

IV. RESULTS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

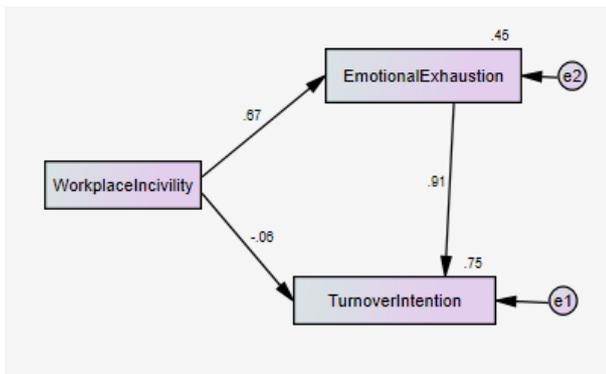


Figure 2

Table 2: Results of Goodness of Fit for Structural Equation Model

Indices	CMIN/df	P	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR
Model Value	1.214	.302	.908	.907	.905	.909	.906	.019	.006
Threshold	<3.0	>0.05	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	<0.05	<0.05

Table 2 explains the findings from structural equation modeling on the relationship between WI and work related outcomes. The model values show that the model is a good fit (Hair et al., 1995; Kline, 2005). The results reveal that workplace incivility is found to have a negative effect of turnover intention ($\beta = -.06$, p-value <.01). Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted revealing that workplace incivility has a negative effect on turnover intention i.e., when incivility in workplace increases, it impacts the turnover intention

among the nurses. The R² value of .75 shows that among 75 percent of nurses the turnover intention is due to workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion. The value on workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .67$, p-value <.01) shows that workplace incivility has a positive relation on emotional exhaustion, that is, when work place incivility increases the nurses experience emotional exhaustion. Thus, hypothesis 1 is also accepted. The R² value of .45 shows that 45 percent of variation in emotional exhaustion is due to workplace incivility and left over variation may be in line with other independent factors. Hence, it is identified that the WI has a strong effect among the workplace outcomes in the nursing profession (Ghosh et al, 2013).

V. DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to take a handier look at the relationship between WI and nurses’ perception on work related outcomes. The model showed a best fit and most dominant regression path in the estimated model between WI and turnover intention (Laschinger et al 2009) and it had a resilient positive effect on intention to quit. Lim et al. (2008) have stated in their study that workplace incivility has significant relationship with turnover intention and mental health. From the results it is also found that there is a strong positive correlation between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Numerous studies (Badafshani et al., 2012, Cortina et al., 2001) endorse the results of this study. Moreover, it is reported that they experience incivility from seniors rather than equals or juniors. The results also revealed that younger nurses reported extreme incivility experience than older nurses. These results support the findings of Lim & Lee et al., (2011). The results of this study make it clear that WI plays a significant role in the working environment.

VI. IMPLICATION

This study suggest some practical implications for the nursing community and the management. Strategies to promote positive work environment and policies to avoid negative work place behaviors have to be identified. To understand much better the phenomenon and its prevalence, managers and top executives should try to make clear procedure and policies, offer incivility awareness training and create communication and response system to lessen the consequences of WI among employees. Managers of hospitals should reconsider the existing policies and alter them according to the current situation. They should also incorporate personality and psychological tests as well as reference check at the time of selection and recruitment. Proper orientation training about the existing rules and regulations as well the necessity of civility behavior has to be given.

VII. CONCLUSION

As previously described workplace incivility is highly bad for organisations. The cost of incivility is so huge that it will not only result in emotional exhaustion but also lead to turnover. The results of this study will be an eye opener in



the Indian context, and add to the budding literatures documenting the key role for reducing unethical behaviour in workplace and enhancing working environment that promotes retention and job satisfaction for nurses thereby reducing shortage of the nurses.

VIII. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some limitations intrinsic in this research that point to further direction for future research. Firstly, the present study was completely on cross sectional data; future research might repeat the current findings with longitudinal research. The instruments used are basically self-reported, and its result may be influenced by bias. And finally other demographic factors like level of education, industry and experience are not considered in this study.

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