THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY TOWARDS INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES IN PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECTOR, KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
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ABSTRAK

Pengaruh ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja terhadap hasil individu dalam sektor swasta dan sektor kerajaan di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih luas mengenai pengaruh ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dalam sektor swasta dan kerajaan di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Kaedah penyelidikan kuantitatif telah diaplikasikan dalam kajian ini untuk mengumpul maklumat pekerja yang bekerja di kawasan Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Dalam kajian ini, ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja menjadi pembolehubah tidak bersandar dan hasil individu dari aspek kelakuan dan takanan psikologi sebagai pembolehubah bersandar. Skala ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja (Cortina et al., 2001) dipilih dan diadaptasikan untuk mengukur pembolehubah tidak bersandar. Manakala, skala meninggalkan pekerjaan (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991) dan Kunci Pemarkahan-Kesejahteraan Secara Umum (Veit & Ware, 1983) digunakan untuk mengukur pembolehubah bersandar. Dalam kajian ini, pengkaji mendapati ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan hasil individu. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini juga menunjukkan terdapatnya perbezaan yang signifikan antara ketidaksopanan yang dialami oleh pihak pengurusan dan pihak bukan pengurusan. Dapatan kajian ini juga membuktikan terdapatnya perbezaan yang signifikan dalam ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja yang dilakukan oleh pihak atasan dan rakan sekerja. Kebanyakkan responden mengakui bahawa pihak atasan mempunyai kemungkinan yang lebih tinggi untuk menjadi pelaku kepada ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja berbanding dengan rakan sekerja. Hasil kajian juga mendapati terdapatnya perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi mengenai ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja antara lelaki dan wanita. Wanita lebih menilai ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja berbanding lelaki. Pengkaji juga mendapati bahawa status perkahwinan juga menyerdahanakan hubungan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dengan hasil Individu.

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY TOWARDS INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES IN PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECTOR, KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

The purpose of this study is to have a greater understanding on the influence of workplace incivility on individual outcomes in private and government sectors in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The quantitative research methods been applied in this study to gather data from employees who work in Kota Kinabalu area. In this study, workplace incivility will be the independent variable and individual outcomes in term of behaviour and psychological distress as the dependent variable. The workplace incivility scale questionnaire (Cortina et al., 2001) is chosen and adapted to measure the independent variable. While Job Withdrawal Scale (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991) and Scoring Key – General Well-Being (Veit & Ware, 1983) is used to measure dependent variables. In this study, researcher found that workplace incivility has significant relationship with individual outcomes. Moreover, the present study also indicated there are significant differences in experiencing workplace incivility between management and non-management employees. The finding also indicates that there are significant difference in workplace incivility done by superior(s) and peer(s). Most of the respondent also agree that superior(s) more probability to be the instigator of workplace incivility compare to peer(s). Result also indicates that there is a significant difference in the perception of workplace incivility between men and women where female perceive workplace incivility greater than men. Researcher also found that marital status does moderate the relationship of workplace incivility and individual outcomes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AET	Affect Events Theory
ASA	Attraction-Selection-Attribution model
PMR	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
OCB's	Organizational Citizenship Behaviors
Ph.d	Doctor Of Philosophy
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
STPM	Sijil Tinggi Pengajiann Malaysia
WDB	Workplace Deviant Behaviour
WDBO	organizational Workplace Deviant Behaviour
WDBI	interpersonal Workplace Deviant Behaviour
WIS	Workplace Incivility Scale

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Discussion on chapter one is based on the overview of the research background, indicate the problem statement, objectives of the research, scope of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key items, that have been used in this research.

1.2   OVERVIEW

Workplace incivility is defined in the organizational literature as, "low-intensity deviant behaviors with an ambiguous intent to harm the target" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 456). Pearson and Porath (2005) estimate that incivility within organizations leads to the turnover of 1 out of 8 affected employees, and have the potential to cost companies an average of $50,000 per lost employee in terms of productivity, potential litigation, and the hiring of new employees.

Moreover, research in the domain of workplace incivility shows that it is correlated with a number of negative individual outcomes including decreases in job satisfaction, increases absenteeism, increase in job withdrawal, and increases in job burnout (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007). Related findings show that 78% of the targets of workplace incivility suffer a decrease in productivity due to the behavior, and 12% of the targets ultimately leave their jobs as a result (Johnson & Indvik, 2001).

In Malaysia, The workplace incivility issues have been given a great deal of discussion. This is evident from the frequency of reports in the newspapers and other public media concerning cases involving dishonesty, absenteeism, accident, & employee turnover, bribery, poor work attitude, and industrial accidents. Besides the exposure of the issues made by local media, the seriousness of incivility at the workplace has also attracted the attention of respective government agencies. Departments in the Ministry of Human Resources, such as the Social Security Organization (SOCSO), Labor Department, and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have highlighted the presence of workplace deviance in Malaysia (Shamsudin & Rahman, 2006).

Workplace incivility is theorized to contain three components including intensity, deviance, and ambiguous intent to harm others (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). First, the action is considered low-intensity, such that the behavior has a small magnitude and requires little effort. This is in contrast to high-intensity behaviors that have a large magnitude and require more energy such as physical aggression or violence. Secondly is the deviant nature of the action. In other words, for a behavior to be considered uncivil it must be in opposition to social norms, and would be typically considered as rude or discourteous. For example, yelling at a coworker during a meeting. The third aspect of incivility is the ambiguous intent of the instigator to harm others. This aspect regardless of whether the uncivil behavior is perceived by the perpetrator as offensive, it is the negative perception of the target that makes the action uncivil. Examples of workplace incivility include making jokes at someone's expense, giving someone hostile looks or stares, and sending rude emails.

Workplace incivility is a new area of research within organizational psychology and much of the research to date has focused on targets of incivility at work. Research has found that women are more likely to perceive the same deviant behavior as more uncivil and offensive compared to men (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994). This research also found that women are more likely to be victims of rude, discourteous behavior compared to men (Andersson & Pearson 1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000).

Previous research has shown a relationship between incivility and psychological distress and well-being (Cortina et al., 2001). The current study was designed to look at workplace incivility cause by peers and superiors in private and government sectors in Kota Kinabalu area and to see how it influence individual outcomes such as behaviors and psychological distress. This study also examine whether demography moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and individual outcomes. This is an important addition to the literature because it is an attempt to break away from the tendency to attribute differences between women and men in incivility experiences and perceptions to an inherent sex-based disparity. Although other researchers have looked at incivility in workers, researcher believes this study is the first to examine workplace incivility in private and government sectors in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

In the following sections, researcher reviews the literature regarding workplace incivility and the influence of workplace incivility towards individual outcomes, and individual differences in perceptions of incivility and discusses the limitations of this research.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The concept of workplace incivility in recent years has generated high interest among organizational researchers and practitioners because of its pervasiveness in organizations. Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect and may vary along a continuum of severity, from minor acts such as embarrassing co-workers and leaving early, to serious acts, such as sabotage and theft. Victims of workplace incivility include employers, other employees or both. An act can be a workplace deviant if it violates the major rules of organizational life (Pearson et al., 2000).

Study on workplace incivility shows that this issues leads to wide variety of negative consequences such as lower levels of affective well-being and higher levels of depression. (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Pearson, Andersson, and Wegner, 2001). Some

research even shown that workplace incivility not only leads to low job satisfaction, psychological stress, absenteeism, poor health, escalation of retaliatory violence, and higher employee turnover at an individual level, it also reveals that when tolerated or not constructively confronted, there is potential damage to organizations through higher recruitment and training costs, unhealthy and unproductive work climate, poor customer service, potential costs in litigation filed by victims or even instigators based on wrongful-termination claims (Sutton, 2007; Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Pearson et al., 2000).

In Malaysia, sabotage, ignoring and use of abusive language are among the cases of workplace incivility reported to the Malaysian Labor Department. Unfortunately, there is no formal statistics on the phenomenon of workplace incivility produced by the Labor Department (Shamsudin & Rahman, 2006).

Therefore, this study examines the relationship between workplace incivility in private and government sectors with individual outcomes. Here, individual outcomes are view from two sections name as behavior and psychological distress which is the employees working behavior and well-being. This study also will find out the differences in perceiving workplace incivility between male and female, and examines the moderator effect of individual demography on the relationship between workplace incivility and individual outcomes.

1.3.1 Problem Statement

i. Does workplace incivility affect individual outcomes in private and government sectors, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah?

ii. Does there any differences in perceive workplace incivility between male and female?

iii. What is the moderating effect of individual's demography between workplace incivility and individual outcomes?

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1.4   RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of this study is to understanding of the workplace incivility affect on individual outcomes include behavior, and psychological distress, by considering the perpetrator (peers, and superiors) of workplace incivility. The objectives of the study are as follow:

i.   To examine the relationship between workplace incivility and individual outcomes.

ii.   To identify the differences in perceive workplace incivility between male and female.

iii. To look at the moderating effect of individual demography on the relationship between workplace incivility and individual outcomes.

1.5   SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study populations are the working adults in private and government sectors in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The quantitative method (questionnaires) applied to determine the findings of the questionnaire which involves the analysis of numerical data and provides precise results.

Workers were randomly selected from private and government sectors, stratified by job classification. The aim was to have up to 150 workers from private and 150 workers from government sectors, from management level and non management levels. This was to ensure that there were enough workers from each job class to allow meaningful results to be obtained for each group. Such populations are intended to produce greater finding outputs as this can prevent bias of focusing only on certain organization.

1.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides a step towards better understanding and addressing workplace incivility in the working environment, and how distinct the measure of incivility is from measures of bullying and sexual harassment. These provided more studies with diverse methodologies, subject matters, different perspectives, and in different environments and cultures.

Information collected from multi-source perspective where different points of view provides more accurate data regarding the perpetrator of workplace incivility and individual outcomes as the consequence from workplace incivility. This approach provided novel insights into the behaviors and experiences of other significant parties in workplace incivility scenarios.

In addition, clearer data on employees' perception can be obtain for the HR manager to play a strategic role in the adoption of strategies which deal with a variety of demands and have potential for significant positive outcomes for the organization (Dowling & Fisher, 1997; Kossek et al., 1994).

Furthermore, this study also provides more information regarding workplace incivility and enable company to determine and know whether workplace incivility absent in their organization bring the negative impact on their employees outcomes and performance in order to achieve positive outcomes for the organizations.

1.7   DEFINITION OF THE KEY ITEMS IN THIS STUDY

The meaning and definition of the following key items will be clarified in the context of this study for ease of understanding.

1.7.1 Workplace incivility

According to Andersson and Pearson (1999) incivility in workplace can be defined as follows:

> "Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard of others. (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 456)."

Incivility takes the very small but very core position defined as low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intention to harm. The term 'low-intensity deviant behavior' implies that there are various forms of deviant behaviors that depend on the severity of the behaviors, such as workplace violence (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Jackson, Clare, & Mannix, 2002; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002), workplace aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998;Glomb, 2002), workplace bullying (Liefooghe & Davey, 2001), tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), and workplace harassment (Spry, 1998; Rospenda, 2002).

Previous research by Cortina et al. (2001) examined these ideas by looking at incivility among workers in the United States federal court system. According to Cortina et al., workplace incivility can be broadly defined as discourteous behavior or treatment, for example being ignored or excluded, condescension, and having someone talk about you behind your back. These concepts are distinct from bullying in that it is generally less obvious. As a result, it is potentially more common than bullying or harassment because it is not necessarily overt behavior.

1.7.2 Individual outcomes

Individual outcomes are the results, affective and cognitive reactions on workplace incivility, in turn, adversely affect victims' organizational, psychological, and somatic functioning. A model of harm, theorizing how person and situational factors determine negative job-behavior, psychological distress, and health related outcomes, and

harmful effects of workplace incivility on targeted individual. (Anderson, & Pearson, 1999)

a. Behavior

An attitude to result in a consistent behavior, that attitude must result in a specific intention to act (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977).

b. Psychological distress

Psychological stress can exert significant adverse physiological effects on the human body or in the other words, the reaction of the body (headache, migraine, abdominal pain, lethargic, backache, chest pain, fatigue, heart palpitation, sleep disturbance and muscle ache, as well as changes in eating, drinking, sleeping and smoking habits) to various stressful triggers at the workplace (Beehr et al., 2001; Critchley et al., 2004). On the other hand, psychological distress also often seen as an emotional reaction (anxiety and depression burnout, job alienation, hostility, depression, tension, anger, anxiety, nervousness, irritability and frustration) experienced by an individual as a result from the stimuli at the workplace (Antoniou et al., 2003; Millward, 2005; World Health Organization, 2005). If employees cannot control such stresses this may negatively affect their work attitudes and behavior (satisfaction, commitment, productivity, quality and health) at the workplace (Seaward, 2005; World Health Organization, 2005).

1.8   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the core elements of this study: overview, research problem, problem statement, research objectives, scope of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key items has been discussed for the ease of understanding. Aligned with the problem statement "Does workplace incivility affect individual outcomes in private and government sectors, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah?", "Does there any differences in perceive workplace incivility between male and female?", and "What is the moderating

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