

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE
INCIVILITY AND ORGANISATIONAL
CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN PRIVATE AND
PUBLIC SECTOR, KOTA KINABALU, SABAH**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR, KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour. Workplace incivility is the independent variable while organisational citizenship behaviour is the dependent variable. Job satisfaction is introduced as a mediator to throw a new perspective to the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour. Data were collected from 170 employees working in private and public sectors in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Multiple linear regression results indicated there is no significant direct relationship between workplace incivility (supervisor incivility and co-worker incivility) and organisational citizenship behaviour, even though the relationship is negative. However, the results indicated that workplace incivility affect organisational citizenship behaviour via job satisfaction. Only supervisor incivility has negative effect on job satisfaction while co-worker incivility has no influence; and job satisfaction has positive effect on organisational citizenship behaviour.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dengan pelakuan kerakyatan organisasi. Ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja adalah pembolehubah tetap manakala pelakuan kerakyatan organisasi adalah pembolehubah bersandar. Kepuasan bekerja dikenalpasti sebagai mediator untuk memperkenalkan perspektif baru kepada hubungan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dengan pelakuan kerakyatan organisasi. Data dikumpulkan daripada 170 pekerja yang bekerja di sektor swasta dan awam di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Keputusan Regresi Berbilang menunjukkan tiada hubungan terus yang signifikan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja (ketidaksopanan supervisor dan rakan sekerja) dengan pelakuan kerakyatan organisasi walau bagaimanapun hubungan tersebut adalah negatif. Akan tetapi, keputusan tersebut menunjukkan ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja mempengaruhi tingkah laku organisasi melalui kepuasan bekerja. Hanya ketidaksopanan supervisor mempunyai kesan negatif terhadap kepuasan bekerja manakala ketidaksopanan rakan sekerja didapati tiada pengaruh; dan kepuasan bekerja mempunyai kesan positif terhadap pelakuan kerakyatan organisasi.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one provides the overview of the research, indicates the problem statement, identifies the questions of the research, the objectives of the research, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and defines the key items in this research. These form the basis of this research.

1.2 Overview

Over the past decade, organisational researchers have paid more attention to anti-social behaviours. Violence, aggression, bullying, deviance, injustice, etc. may be regarded as anti-social behaviour. Workplace incivility can be referred to as "low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect." (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The theoretical statement of "snow-balling effect" of workplace incivility is cited by Andersson and Pearson that incivility is routine nuisances of everyday in the workplace. Pancheri (1979) indicated that such insidious and low-intensity hassles have a greater impact on individual outcomes.

Feelings of disrespect and distrust are often the consequence of acts of incivility in the workplace. To quote an example, Hasmi worked in the public sector as an office worker. Within a four-month period, his supervisor only distributed very trivial work to him and never expressed any dissatisfaction with his work or his attitude. Hasmi felt relax about this and enjoyed the free time. One day, he overheard his colleagues gossiping that his supervisor had complained about Hasmi's arrogance



and reluctance to take on work assignments. Hasmi was shocked and decided to explain to his supervisor. Hasmi told his supervisor that he heard the rumours about his arrogance and reluctance to work, and asked his supervisor to dedicate more work to him. However, his supervisor just ignored his proposition. The harder Hasmi tried, the more disappointed he became. Hasmi began to find it hard to get along with his peers and hate to go back to work. He became hot tempered and easily agitated. Eventually Hasmi decided to leave the job without knowing exactly what was happening.

1.3 The Problem Statement

Deviant behaviour is common in most organisations but is not explicitly discussed. Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). In a poll by US News and World Report, it was reported that nine out of ten Americans think incivility is a serious problem, and 78 percent of respondents say this problem has worsened in the past decade. Apart from that, Laschinger, Leiter, Day and Gilin (2009) found that among 612 staff nurses, 67.5% had experienced incivility from their supervisors and 77.6% had experienced incivility from their co-workers. Many people do not realise its existence. However, workplace incivility can cause many problems to the organisation. So, how does workplace incivility affect the organisational citizenship behaviour?

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is a discretionary action which is not necessary punished whether you perform or not in an organisation. Organisational citizenship behaviour can be extremely valuable to organisations and can contribute to performance and competitive advantage. Apart from that, it can benefit the working environment, working effectiveness, employees' motivation and so on. Towards disrespect attitude, subordinates of uncivil supervision are willing to withhold OCBs because they believe that they can take revenge on others. Can OCB

bring about positive changes to workplace incivility?

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. Does job satisfaction eradicate workplace incivility? Does job satisfaction contribute to organisational citizenship behaviour? **Can job satisfaction mediate the relationship between workplace incivility and OCB? And how does workplace incivility affect the organisational citizenship behaviour?**

1.4 Research Questions

This research is focussed on the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour. The research questions of interest are as follow:

- i. What is the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour?
- ii. What is the relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction?
- iii. What is the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour?
- iv. Does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour?

1.5 Research Objectives

There are 4 objectives in this study. The main objective of this research is to study the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour; to determine whether workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour correlate negatively to each other. The influence of job satisfaction on the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour is

also tested.

In summary, the 4 objectives of this research are as follow:

- i. To study the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour.
- ii. To examine the relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction.
- iii. To study the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour.
- iv. To examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour.

1.6 The Scope of Study

The study will focus on the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour. The respondents for this study will be employees (such as supervisors and co-workers) working in the private and public sectors in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

This study will use cross-sectional data and employees are randomly selected from private and public sectors, stratified by job classification. The aim was to have at least 85 employees from private sectors and 85 employees from public sectors, including the supervisors and co-workers. This is to ensure that there will be enough employees from different job classification to obtain meaningful and representative results from the survey. Such sample size is intended to produce greater finding outputs as this can prevent bias of focusing only on certain organisation.

1.7 Significance of The Study

This study provides a step towards better understanding the relationships among

workplace incivility, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour. Although previous researches have studied the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour, the correlation between these two variables is insufficient till date. This study will also provide a new perspective by the introduction of job satisfaction as a mediator.

In addition, detailed data collected from this study can be used by the HR managers to adopt strategies to build favourable working environments to bring about positive changes to the organisational citizenship behaviour. The common views of workplace incivility as harmful and OCB as helpful has become an important perception in human resource management (Sackett, 2002).

1.8 Definition of Key Items

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

1.8.1 Workplace Incivility

Incivility is a bad behaviour characterised by rudeness and disregard toward others, and implies a lack of consideration towards others. Andersson and Pearson (1999) define workplace incivility as below:

“Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack regard of others.”

Arthur (2008) defined civility as “freedom from barbarity”. They suggest that civil performance is based on an infrastructure of self-esteem entitlements as well as

reciprocal responsibilities. Self-esteem entitlements are the right that each people are willing to receive from others such as respect and fair. Reciprocal responsibilities might include protecting the organisation's technical and business secrets, taking measures to prevent the upcoming problems, and provide an effective and civility relationship with supervision and co-workers.

According to Zauderer, he defined that "incivility in organisations is evidenced by disrespectful behaviours that undermines the dignity and self-esteem of employees and creates unnecessary suffering. In general, behaviours of incivility indicate a lack of concern of others and how individuals do not expect to be treated." Violating relationships is a form of workplace incivility.

1.8.2 Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is a relatively new concept in performance analysis and researchers spent over 25 years to struggle for the definition. The concept was first introduced in the mid-1980s by Dennis Organ and related theories in this area have rapidly expanded in the following years.

Organ (1988) defined Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation". Organ regarded OCB as behaviours that are not formally rewarded or punished. Extra-role behaviour is a construct similar to OCB, which is defined as "behaviour that attempts to benefit the organisation and that goes beyond existing role expectations" (Organ, 2006). Conversely, "in-role" behaviours actually guarantee a formal reward or punish in terms to whether achieve the task.

Organ (1988) identified Organisational Citizenship Behaviour into five

categories as follow:

- i. Altruism – the helping of an individual co-worker on a task;
- ii. Courtesy – caution others in the organisation about changes that may affect their work;
- iii. Conscientiousness – carrying out one's duties beyond the minimum requirements;
- iv. Sportsmanship – restrain to complain about some trivial matters;
- v. Civic virtue – participating in the governance of the organisation.

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) has been conceptualized as intrinsically a socially desirable or favourable class of behaviour. Organ (1988) defined OCB as a "good soldier syndrome" which may need the prosperity and well-being functioning of organisation. That also means doing well in the job, making an effort above and beyond the minimal requirements, and integrating the job procedures. OCB can be perceived as performing exceptionally good behaviours in order to benefit the organisation or even its members. Although organisational citizenship behaviour is discretionary behaviour that is not a fundamental of employee's basis requirements in the workplace, it also provides the helpful functioning and effective influence of the organisation (Robbins, 1996). In successful organisations, employees have a specific trait, they voluntary do more than their usual job duties and perform better than expectations.

1.8.3 Job Satisfaction

According to previous literature review, there are various definitions of job satisfaction in the organisation behaviour. In the late 1990s, Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as an attitudinal variable, which presents 'the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs'. Zakaria & Abdul Aziz (1989)

suggest that job satisfaction is the end state of feeling after completing the task and the feeling could either be positive or negative.

It is important to mention that job satisfaction is related to negative reaction in an organisation such as absenteeism and the intention of quitting the job. In addition, literature indicates that personal factors can influence an employee's job satisfaction. The features of the organisation have the relationship with supervisors and co-workers, workload, ambiguity, and care setting, which can influence job satisfaction.

1.9 Summary

In this chapter, the core elements of this study are reviewed, including problem statements, research questions, research objectives, scope of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key items. These elements have been discussed for the ease of understanding the objective of study. Extending from the problem statement and the research questions, five research objectives were identified as the arm of this study. Questionnaire survey will be conducted on the employees' in both private and public sectors in Kota Kinabalu area.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a literature review of the empirical research on the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour. The underlying theories of various scholars and researchers will be discussed. Through the understanding of workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour, and the relationship between them, job satisfaction can be introduced as a mediator.

2.2 Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility is a recently-identified phenomenon in both the popular and academic literature. In fact, Andersson and Pearson (1999) had identified workplace incivility as a topic of interest for organisations in the seminal research article which was published in 1999. Prior to this, there were relatively few studies that focused on workplace incivility in an organisation.

Incivility is a bad behaviour characterized by rudeness and disregard toward others, and implies a lack of consideration towards others. Andersson and Pearson (1999) define workplace incivility as follow:

“Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack regard of others.”



There are many ways to describe workplace incivility behaviours. Antisocial organisational behaviour, deviance behaviour, organisational misbehaviour, employee withdrawal, dysfunctional behaviour, and counterproductive behaviour, these are different labels of workplace incivility. Workplace incivility may threaten the well-being of the organisation, co-workers, or both.

Workplace incivility has become more and more serious and common problem these years. Taylor (2010) interviewed 700 individuals from a cross-section of for-profit, non-profit, and governmental employees across the United States, the results showed that nearly 20% of the employees reported experiencing workplace incivility on a weekly basis. The high incidence of workplace incivility also affected the employee's physical health and psychological well-being (Magley, 2003).

As mention above, the definition of incivility have been described as "low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target" by Andersson and Pearson (1999). Few researches have examined the different between psychological mistreatment and incivility. When unambiguous intentions harm the target or organisation, incivility would overlap with psychological aggression. However, workplace incivility is not the same as psychological aggression when behaviours are ambiguous.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) differentiated between two categories of deviant behaviours: 1) those that directed towards an organisation and 2) those that directed towards the co-workers. Workplace incivility is a form of deviant behaviour, but it is not exactly the same as interpersonal deviance within the harmful intensity. Interpersonal deviance includes behaviours such as sexual harassment and stealing from others. Interpersonal deviance is higher intensity that workplace incivility and it reflects significant intent to harm a target. Interpersonal deviance is more closely

related to workplace aggression.

Through surveys, most people regarded workplace incivility as impolite behaviour or bad manners. This definition of incivility is not sufficient due to manipulative motives and self-serving behaviour might underlie polite behaviour as well. For example, as employee, experiencing polite behaviour when he was participating in scenarios assessing examine. His motive may simply be to enhance the score, but not to pleasant others and create a friendly and harmonious working environment. Conversely, "thank you", or "standing when subordinate enter your office" may be an expression of good manners. Respect or trust is very important for each employee, no matter supervisors or subordinates. In this case, politeness is a manifestation of civility. However, in other situation, it appears to be impolite from the surface while in fact it is very polite behaviour. For example, the boss may be too frank and provide very direct feedback to the employee's work, using hostile words, when the employees' performance is lower than normal levels. These hostile words can include "You had better improve yourself or your possession here will be very short." Although the phrase is understood in an impolite manner, the manager may be sincerely concerned for the well-being of the employee.

Summing up the example above, incivility is not always about being impolite and impolite words do not always mean incivility. In the workplace, anger may be an act of harsh behaviours and some impolite words also are spoken in the passion of the moment when employees are working in good faith to do the best thing for the organisation. The last but not least, the distinct role of supervision and subordinate also make the outcomes of incivility different.

2.2.1 Examples of Workplace Incivility

Peck (1997) noted that "Instances of gross incivility – torture, rape, murder, criminal child abuse, and so on. As horrifying as outrageous incivility is, our everyday incivility is responsible for a vaster amount of human misery. " Peck also suggested that workplace incivility is such needless phenomenon in organisation, but it actually exists everyday and cannot be eliminated in the workplace. In a poll by US News and World Report, it was reported that nine out of ten Americans think incivility is a serious problem, and 78 percent of respondents say this problem has worsened in the past decade. Apart from that, Laschinger, Leiter, Day and Gilin (2009) found that among 612 staff nurses, 67.5% had experienced incivility from their supervisors and 77.6% had experienced incivility from their co-workers.

Examples of uncivil behaviour include sending a nasty and undignified note, yelling in front of others, unnecessarily or rudely interrupting others. Some examples include: A woman's unemployment claim was rejected, she then knocked the glasses off her supervisor and choked him; a boss swearing and criticising someone in a meeting. Low-level uncivil behaviours will also include not turning off the mobile phones in a meeting; gossiping or spreading rumours; stealing stationery or even public funds; petty selfishness such as making coffee without offering one to colleagues; messing up the kitchen etc. All these could lead to more offences in the workplace.

2.2.2 Theoretical Background for Conceptualizing Workplace Incivility

Based on previous studies on workplace incivility, each researcher has different theoretical description toward the definition. Given the prevalence of workplace incivility, the goal of the present study is to examine the relationship between workplace incivility and organisational citizenship behaviour through the job

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