

INTERPERSONAL JUSTICE AND EMPLOYEE INCIVILITY BEHAVIOR IN FAST FOOD COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between interpersonal justice and employee incivility behavior in fast food companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey/cross sectional co relational design. The major research instrument was the questionnaire. The population of this study was made up of 987 staff of 47 Fast Food Companies that are registered with the Rivers State ministry of commerce. The study sample size is simply made up of 285 staff of the fast food companies in port Harcourt, determined through the Taro Yamane Formula. four hypothesis was developed and tested using the Pearson product moment correlation with the aid of statistical package for social sciences. The result of the tested hypothesis indicated a very strong positive relationship between the variables of study. Deriving from the findings, the researcher concludes that there is a strong positive correlation between perceived justice in the organization and employees incivility behavior in the fast food companies in port Harcourt. Consequently, the researcher recommends That the managers of the fast food companies should observe with keen interest the rate of absenteeism or truancy of its workers and try to minimize its effect by looking into the various reasons behind such actions and make a remedial effort.

Keywords: Interpersonal Justice, Employee Incivility Behaviour, Fast Food Company

INTRODUCTION

In ongoing business operations, maintaining appropriate levels of production is an unremitting task of management. there is no doubt the phenomenon of employee turnover defined by Appleby (1981) as the measurement of the number of employees leaving a company, is a source of deep concern to management. A high turnover behavior (abseeteism, incivility, etc) is a good indication of the fact the organization is sick. Employees turnover is not only wasteful , it is costly as it involves additional costs of recruitment and selection , engagement, training and possibly more accidents and failure to meet orders in time.

Turnover impacts negatively on organizations because: resignations lead to the disruption of informal group relationships; the lead-up time to resignation results in 'inner-emigration'; there is a creeping reduction of productivity; and the employee gradually becomes emotionally detached from the organization . Employee turnover, therefore, has a detrimental effect on the employee's job performance and thus on organizational effectiveness.

Perceptions of injustice lead to loss of motivation, poor employee and organizational performance , minimizing or withholding of extra role behaviors (Greenberg, as cited in Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Moorman, 1991), and withdrawal from the organization . Managers and supervisors play such visible roles in an employee's work life that they have either a positive or negative impact on employees. The interactions that employees have with their supervisor shape the role and value that the individual employee holds to the organization. Therefore, the role of the supervisor in moderating the effects of organizational justice, and turnover behavior requires further exploration and review. A better understanding of the supervisor's role in the relationships between these variables could help to focus management training that leads to improved working relationships and increased employee and organizational performance.

In the light of the above it becomes necessary that the available human resources base of an organization both high , middle and low level manpower be harnessed in such a way as to reduce to the barest minimum the employee turnover behavior.

While a lot of studies have focused attention on demonstrating the relationship between the general level of economic activity, employment levels, job satisfaction variables etc and employee turnover as indicated, with implied and practical implications for management action, few have focused attention on the relationship between perceived justice and employee turnover behavior most especially in the fast food companies in port Harcourt. This is the gap which this study seeks to fill.

Attraction-Selection Attrition Theory

Similarly, the ASA model also serves as a foundation for organizational justice climate. The model posits that groups or organizations become homogeneous entities of individuals by integrating their personalities, attitudes, and beliefs through three sets of processes (Schneider, 1987). First, the ASA framework proposes that individuals are more likely to be attracted to organizations with which they share similar perceptions. Second, organizational authorities are prone to select applicants with similar characteristics. Finally, individuals who differ from other organizational members are expected to leave either voluntarily or involuntarily, as they do not harmonize with the other members. Hence, the members of the same organization exhibit a strong homogeneity in their values, attitudes, and personalities (Naumann & Bennett, 2000; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995).

Concept of Interpersonal Justice

Interactional/interpersonal Justice refers to employee's perception of the degree to which he/she is treated with dignity, concern and respect at the workplace. Bies and Moag (1986) first introduced this concept focusing on interpersonal treatment. Interpersonal treatment has since been categorized further into namely interpersonal justice and informational justice (Greenberg, 1990). Interpersonal justice describes the degree to which people are treated with politeness, degree and respect.

According to Bies (1986) there is another branch stemming from the tree of organizational justice labeled as interactional justice which focuses on employees' perceptions of the interpersonal behavior exercised during the representation of decisions and procedures. It involves various socially sensitive actions, such as when supervisors respond employees with dignity and respect (e.g., providing sufficient explanations for decisions, paying attention to an employee's concerns, and showing empathy for his predicament) (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Mikula, Petrik, and Tanzer (1990) reported that a significant amount of perceived injustices related to perceptions of interactional justice instead of distributional or procedural issues. Employees gave more importance to the way they were treated during their interpersonal encounters with their supervisors.

Interactional justice is further broken down into two constituents: interpersonal and informational justice. Perceptions of respect, politeness, dignity in one's treatment or when taking decisions are a part of Interpersonal justice while the sufficiency of the explanations given in terms of their specificity, timeliness, and truthfulness comes under informational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Incivility

Incivility refers to lower grade forms of bad behaviours at work which occurs regularly in many organizations. Its nature and effects on organizational outcomes is now an emerging area of study in academic circles. Incivility is defined as "Seemingly inconsequential, inconsiderate words or deeds that violate conventional norms of workplace conduct. Which may or may not be intended to harm". (Pearson and Porath,1999) Examples of incivility include a range of behaviours, including: Moodiness, 'personality' No Hello-Thank-You-please, Eye rolling, Belittling opinions, chastising,

Cliques, gossip, social exclusion ,Rude use of technology ,Interrupting a conversation and withholding information.

Workplace incivility as a form of organizational deviance characterized by low-intensity behaviors that violate respectful workplace norms, appearing vague as to intent to harm. The article asserts further that researchers had announced at the annual meeting of the [American Psychological Association](#) that "Workplace incivility is on the rise. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and [discourteous](#), displaying a lack of regard for others. Incivility is distinct from violence. Examples of workplace incivility include insulting comments, denigration of the target's work, spreading false rumors, and social isolation.

Workplace violence can be viewed as a continuum from low-level nonphysical workplace violence to physical violence.¹Physical violence in the workplace makes the headlines; however, the more insidious forms of workplace violence, such as workplace in-civility (WPI), can have long-lasting effects on an organization. Workplace incivility is defined as Blow-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 for others.²Until this decade, the topic of Workplace Place Incivility had rarely been mentioned; however, an interest has developed because of the evolving understanding of the importance of creating and sustaining a healthy work environment. Workplace incivility, usually occurring under the radar, is thought to be benign and frequently is not apparent to the leaders of the organization.

The impact of workplace incivility is damaging to both the organization and the individuals that is affected. Workplace incivility leads to burnout and disengagement in the workplace (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Caza & Cortina, 2007). Leiter and Maslach (2004) define burnout as a psychological syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy which is experienced in response to chronic job stressors. Emotional exhaustion is the core tenet of workplace burnout, which is linked to chronic job stressors or a form of workplace incivility (Laschinger *et al.*, 2009). Burnout is generally studied in health care settings where research has linked high levels of emotional exhaustion to lower levels of job satisfaction, while supportive environments and low burnout predicted greater job satisfaction and better outcomes (Cortina, 2008; Laschinger *et al.*, 2009).

Scholars argue the decline of civility comes from an ethic of self-expression, where we oppose civility because it denies our abilities of freedom and individuality (Morris, 1996; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Ritzer, 2008). Our time is an age of apathy, or perhaps of fear and relativism, where no one wants to make a judgment, impose a standard or call behavior unacceptable (Morris, 1996; Ritzer, 2008). Social theorists have argued employee diversity, re-structuring, downsizing, resource cuts, increased productivity demands and unstable job security as causes for increases in incivil behaviors in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Belcourt, Bohlander & Snell, 2011).

The workplace was once an environment that took pride in formal and polite behaviors; however, business organizations have started to reflect the informal, rude and disrespectful interactions of society. Traditionally research on workplace aggression, violence and bullying, or other forms of incivility, have focused primarily on physical, active and direct forms of aggression, where the intent is to harm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Little research, prior to Andersson and Pearson's (1999) ground-breaking article, has been completed on more covert forms of mistreatment, such as rudeness, thoughtless acts or general unkindness, where the intent is not overtly to harm. As Lim and Cortina (2005) framework, incivility is a lesser form of mistreatment in the workplace that does not require or in fact warrant legal ramifications.

Impact, Incidence and Consequence of Workplace Incivility

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Laschinger *et al.*, (2009) found relationships with peers and supervisors to play a role in burnout. In many studies, it has also been related to exhaustion (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007), higher intention to quit (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009; Lim *et al.*, 2008; Ghosh, Reio Jr., & Bang, 2013) and lower commitment (Smith, Andrusyszyn & Laschinger, 2010). Research has also shown that workplace incivility is not just a North American phenomenon; rather it is international in scope (Pearson & Porath, 2009; Porath & Erez, 2009).

Workplace incivility that is frequent and persistent risks the possibility that incivility may spiral into more extreme forms of aggression and violent behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This spiraling tendency emphasizes the need for further research to be done on workplace incivility. Moreover, increasing diversity in workplaces enhances the likelihood of more miscommunications and unintentional incivilities due to cultural and social differences, again calling on the need for further research on engagement and workplace incivility in this period of globalization (Muir, 2000).

Studies have shown that employees respond negatively to supervisor's mistreatment by engaging in behaviors that are harmful to the organization (Ambrose, Seabright, and Schminke, 2002; Thau, Bennett, Mitchell and Marrs, 2009). In the same manner employees will tend to engage less in behaviors that benefit the organization if they perceive mistreatment by their supervisors (Onyishi, 2012).

Reviews of the literature have found that abusive supervision from uncivil boss has been consistently linked to undesirable levels of subordinate commitment, job satisfaction and psychological distress. In their studies, Martinko, Harvey, Brees, and Mackey, (2013); Tepper, (2007) found that subordinates of abusive supervisors are more likely to respond with low degree of citizenship behaviors, deviant retaliatory acts, and less commitment towards their job (Martinko *et al.*, 2013; Tepper, 2007).

In one of the studies that examined the relationship between supervisor's incivility and positive job behavior, Duffy and Ferrier (2003) found supervisor's incivility is negatively related to organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler and Ensley, 2004). If supervisor's incivility negatively relates to organizational commitment and OCB, it means that bosses incivility will negatively affect absorption, dedication and vigour. On the other hand when employees perceives supportive behaviors from their supervisors, they felt obligated to care more about the organization's welfare (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch and Rhoades, 2001) and show appropriate commitment to the organization (Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, 2001).

This uncivil act comes from the top executive to their subordinate; it is vertical in nature and also referred to as top to down incivility Laschinger *et al.* (2009). Employee could evaluate these uncivil behaviors as a threat and experience tremendous distress, thus reducing employee engagement. Bosses, as an organizational agent, may affect the employee's attitude and behavior towards the organization in various ways.

The effect of bosses incivility on employee engagement is that it could hinder employee knowledge sharing. Employee knowledge sharing is an interactive process of interpersonal communication, and is actually the exchange of resources between the two sides of the transaction (Zhang, 2016). Research suggests that abused subordinates to some extent, are likely to hold their employer

responsible for their supervisor's behavior (Tepper, 2000). Abused subordinates could intentionally withhold information or actions that are of great value to the organization. Based on social exchange theory, the relationship between bosses and subordinates develops and forms a reciprocal feedback cycle (Kacmar, 2011). Konovsky and others believe that the subordinate's responds not only include more time and effort to work within the role or task, but also willing to do things beyond their own work requirements and role, such as knowledge sharing (Konovsky, 1994). When faced with boss incivility, such as neglect, criticism, unfair evaluation, insensitivity to subordinate's plight etc., employees may find it difficult to obtain resources and benefits from the boss, and are reluctant to respond positively to the organization. Thus boss's behavior will have a negative impact on employee knowledge sharing. We believe that boss incivility as a typical dark negative leadership; will affect employee emotions, working atmosphere and cause employee disengagement.

Corporate incivility refers to discourteous, unpleasant, rude behaviors meted out to employees by an organization. When an unhealthy organizational culture is put in place that is not favorable to the well being of its members, it will lead to emotional and psychological stress. There have not been any studies on corporate incivility but some researchers have studied organizational deviance which is similar to corporate incivility; they looked at the concept from a different perspective. Most of the definitions sees it as uncivil act from employee to the corporation such as theft, sabotage etc.

Organizational deviant behaviors are the behaviors like lying, slowdown strike, harassment, gambling, disobedience, violence (Demir, 2009), theft, embezzling, mobbing (O'Neill *et al.*, 2011) which lead to adversity for the organizations. Robinson and Bennet (2000) consider such behaviors as the voluntary acts of breaking the organizational norms. Avci (2008) opined that organizational deviance includes various behaviors ranging from the unimportant ones like gossiping or embarrassing the coworkers to the serious ones like theft and sabotage. Vaguan defines organizational deviance as an activity, situation or formation which deviates from formal goals, normative standards and expectations, and which results in lower outcomes than expected (Brady, 2010).

In most countries and organizations, there are usually anti-harassment legislation prohibiting sexual harassment as well as sanction to perpetrators. But sometimes these legislation are mere formality in most cases, especially in Nigeria. They have been incidents of sexual harassment reported to the organization either through the Managing Director or Human Resources Manager of such organizations that were scratched on the surface or never treated. The management failed to launch any investigation and/or prohibit the unlawful conduct which was well within their purview and authority.

Sometime in the bid to protect either the image of the organization or the image of the perpetrator who mostly belong to the senior executives of the organization, the victims will be threaten in order to silence them. A perfect example is the case between Lisa Marie Carter "Plaintiff" and The State of New York, The empire state development corporation, Governor Andrew Cuomo and William Ballard Hoyt "Defendants" which was filled on 18th November, 2017. If Employers can not establish that they took all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment or that they promptly addressed the conduct after it was reported or became evident; they may be held vicariously liable under antidiscrimination and employment laws (Walters 2008).

The significance of sexual harassment on employee engagement has been acknowledgment. Researchers have found that experiences of sexual harassment are negatively associated with job related outcomes, physical health and psychological health conditions (Chan *et al.* 2008). Sexual harassment affects women by undermining their job satisfaction and affective commitment (Shaffer *et al.* 2000; Shupe *et al.* 2002). Sexual harassment also undermine the well-being, increases the psychological distress, causing greater physical illness, as well as eating disorder (Cortina *et al.* 2001; Gutek 1985; Hashmi, *et al.* 2013; Huerta *et al.* 2006).

Furthermore, both female and male employees' well-being are diminished when they are working in an organizational context perceived as hostile toward women, even in the absence of personal hostility experiences (Miner-Rubino and Cortina 2004). Quick *et al.* (1992) found that sexual harassment negatively affects job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment (Shupe *et al.* 2002; Willness *et al.* 2007). Findings also show that sexual harassment is statistically related to general incivility and it tends to co-occur in organizations, leading to greater degenerated employee well-being with the addition of each type of workplace mistreatment (Lim and Cortina 2005).

Sexual harassment is a serious issue that is hurting both the employees and organization. According to Poulson (2008), sexual harassment cost employers in many ways including legal and monetary costs, increase worker absenteeism and worker sick days, staff turnover consequence, which tend to raise cost of hiring and training new staff, adverse public reaction, employees' productivity reduction and low morale. Sexual harassment should not be seen as an individual problem, rather it should be seen as a problem with causes and consequences at all levels; this will enable the organization to develop an effective organizational responses.

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METHODOLOGY

The survey cross-sectional/ correlational design is chosen for this study. The population of this study is made up of 987 staff of 47 fast food companies that are registered with the Rivers State ministry of commerce (Rivers State Yellow page directory,). The study sample size is simply made up of 285 staff of the fast- food companies in port Harcourt. These number is randomly distributed among the 47 fast food companies in port Harcourt. Therefore, to each of the fast- food company six staff of the companies are choosen to respond to the questionnaire items. Descriptive statistics such as percentages were used to summarize the data. Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to calculate and to establish the direction and strength of the relationship that exists between organizational justice and employee turnover behavior.

Results

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal justice and incivility of fast food companies in Port Harcourt.

Table 1 Interpersonal justice and Incivility

| | Inter. justice | Incivility |
|---------------------|----------------|------------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .975** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 241 | 241 |
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source; Researcher's Desk, 2019

The table above presents a Pearson product coefficient r of .975**. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Interpersonal justice and Incivility in fast food companies in port Harcourt. Preliminary analysis showed assumption of normality and linearity or homoscedecity . There is a significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a very strong positive relationship between Interpersonal justice and Incivility in fast food companies in Port Harcourt ($r=0.975^{**}$, $p<0.01$). This finding has provided solution to the research question number fourteen.

Relationship between Interpersonal Justice and Incivility

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CONCLUSION

Findings from present study indicate that interpersonal justice is highly significant in relation to employee civility behavior. The importance of employee civility behavior suggests that it should receive responsible cultivation from company leaders. The nature and value of employee civility behavior were addressed through its different measures given recognition to its impact on the performances of the workers and the fast-food firms in the long run.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Deriving from the findings of this study, the researcher recommends as follows;

1. That managers of the fast food company should guide against workers incivility, which include rude behavior to customers and fellow colleagues, violence within the work place, inability of the workers to appreciate the patronage of customers by simply saying thanks for coming. All these uncivil acts need to be observed and management needs to design a way of curbing such actions. This could be by sending workers for training and refresher courses on customers to clients relationship or workers to workers relationship. When these actions are taken, the turnover behavior is reduced and the tendency for the worker to voluntarily want to leave the organization is reduced.
2. Productivity loss through the action or the behavior of the workers should also be prevented as much as possible. Loss of man hour through unnecessary excuses from the workplace should be prevented. Loss of revenues due to violence acts, uncivil behavior and fraudulent acts that lead to loss of revenue should be prevented as much as possible. This action could be achieved by making rules and regulation guiding the work procedures of the workers in the workplace, where rewards and punishment are made for strict adherence to the rules and regulations.
3. The management should ensure that rewards are given for good performance and are distributed according to the efforts of those workers that are involved. By these actions workers will not have a sense of fair treatments in terms of distribution of rewards.

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