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Psychological Effects of Workplace Incivility on University Teachers of Pakistan: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This article presents a psychological the effects of workplace rudeness on workers' psychological and occupational wellbeing. It was discovered that mental health and job satisfaction somewhat moderated the effects of personal factors. This study looked at the positive and negative behavioural outcomes that university teachers in Pakistan experienced due to the psychological effects of workplace incivility. Data were collected from 10 teachers in a qualitative method by phenomenological approach in Pakistan's public and private higher education institutions. The findings revealed that participants experienced the psychological consequences of workplace incivility. Most teachers facing incivility demonstrated positive behavioural outcomes due to being collectivist and placing a high value on collaboration and the importance of social relationships. Marginalized teachers used resource investment strategies to improve in-role and extra-curricular performance that reflects their re-inclusion expectations and a lower chronic prevalence of incivility at work, reducing the likelihood of workplace incivility. Participants, however, indicated that they would withdraw, perform worse, and resign if they continued to experience exclusion in the future. The university administration can use the study's findings to create policies and welcoming and nondiscriminatory culture to reduce instances of workplace incivility.

Keywords: Psychological, Consequences, Workplace Incivility, Phenomenological, Social Relationships

Introduction

Over the last decade, workplace mistreatment has dominated management research in general, particularly in Pakistan (Bibi et al., 2013; Razzaghian & Ghani, 2014). Visible mistreatments like harassment, bullying, injustice, abuse, and incivility have been shown to have a wide range of psychological and work-related effects on employee performance (Fogg et al., 2010; Perrewe et al., 2015). Despite the research focus on vivid mistreatments, it is only recently that more subtle yet harmful interpersonal mistreatments have gained the attention of researchers globally (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Jones et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2017; Zhao

et al., 2013) as well as in Pakistan (Bashir & Nadeem, 2019). Workplace incivility is one example of such distinct mistreatment that has emerged in the recent management literature (Robinson et al., 2013). Workplace incivility is the indulgence in relatively subtle behaviours that cause isolation or disconnection of people through the omission of socially expected actions. As a result, it creates the impression that one is being ignored by colleagues in an organization (Williams, 2009). Workplace incivility has been shown to have better psychological and work-related outcomes than visible abuse like harassment (O'Reilly et al., 2014). Such actions significantly impact collectivist societies where social ties and bonding are highly valued. According to Powell et al (2009), close and cohesive relationships with social groups are valued in collectivist cultures. In this situation, exclusion from cultural factors comes into play; the social group can hinder employee performance to a greater extent in dealing with the problems and occurrences of business organizations and the resolution of workplace issues (Shamim & Abbasi, 2012). Hostility in the workplace has been linked to interpersonal deviance and counterproductive behaviour (Fatima, 2017; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018), emotional exhaustion (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2017), turnover intention (Mahfooz et al., 2017), fear of negative evaluation (Fatima, 2017), silence (Jahanzeb et al., 2019).

Literature Review

Incivility is not only a problem for individuals; it also impacts business models in workplaces, diminishing productivity (Huang & Lin, 2019). Spirit et al. and colleagues (2017) establish a relationship between rough workplace conditions and decreasing workplace productivity. These incidents hurt employees' morale and reduced their capacity to provide proper attention to their job (Alshehry et al., 2019; Spiri et al., 2017).

There haven't been many empirical studies that focus on occupational exclusion in academic contexts. According to Zimmerman et al. (2016), women faculty members in academia face higher workplace exclusion, and social exclusion is more common than knowledge exclusion. Through threatened needs at public sector universities, employment exclusion in Pakistan was associated with silence (Fatima et al., 2017). In Lahore's public and private universities, psychological capital and stress played mediating and moderating roles in the relationship between workplace incivility and unproductive actions (Nasir et al., 2017). Therefore, the goal of this study was to add to the body of knowledge about mild interpersonal abuse. In a collectivist cultural setting where the value of interpersonal contact is crucial, our study offers insight into the actual experiences of workplace exclusion encountered by teaching staff. We used a comprehensive qualitative method to reveal the distinct temporal and sequential nature of workplace incivility's effects in the higher education sector. Recently, the idea of incivility has been investigated in academia, with Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, and Xu (2016) discovering that female teachers are more incivility in university settings regarding social incivility. Two studies in Pakistan focused on workplace incivility at HEIs, which was found to lead to unproductive actions and silence (Fatima et al., 2017; Nasir et al., 2017). Empirical studies eclipse the majority of research on workplace incivility. Furthermore, there is a lack of research to investigate the temporal and contextual aspects that define varied employee behaviours to incivility, i.e., in which circumstances do employees behave prosocially, antisocially, or withdraw?

Miller et al (2019) reported an increase in workplace harassment (i.e., bullying and violence) affecting academics' careers and lives. They highlight using qualitative insights to go deeper into the topic of abuse in HEIs. Extending on this notion, the purpose of this study was to

explore the case of workplace incivility at Pakistani HEIs using qualitative insights, precisely the repercussions of workplace incivility in light of contextual circumstances.

This research is so much helpful for the academicians and researchers in the study of workplace incivility's impacts on the psychological health of teachers and the consequences on their professional as well as personal life

Method

Research Approach and Design

According to Madill et al (2000), studies that depend on context and are based on participants' subjective experiences are best served by the inductive approach and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The ontological stance of interpretivism emphasizes that reality is different for each person, whereas the epistemological perspective of interpretivism emphasizes the subjectivity of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell, Hanson, Plano, and Morales, a qualitative research technique permits the comprehension of common beliefs of participants' lived experiences and provides more significant knowledge of the investigated topic (2007).

The phenomenological design, in particular, is appropriate for comprehending participants' lived experiences (Zikmund et al., 2013). This study investigates the consequences of workplace incivility in Pakistani higher education institutions based on the experiences of incivility faculty members. Workplace incivility is a context-dependent phenomenon that affects individuals' subjective experiences and specific national and corporate cultural norms (Madill et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2013).

As a result, we took a qualitative phenomenological method founded on interpretivism and inductive reasoning. Furthermore, we employed thematic analysis to identify themes in interview transcripts on the consequences of workplace incivility at Pakistani HEIs.

Population and Sampling

Participants

Employees, institutions, and patients are all negatively impacted by workplace rudeness, although it is frequently neglected. Teachers working in Pakistani HEIs (higher education institutions) made up the study's participants. To guarantee sample variability, participants were drawn from public and private sector institutions, representing a range of levels, age groups, and genders. According to Yang's (2008) guidelines, 10-20 interviews were selected as the sample size for this qualitative investigation. The following were the sample criteria: To be able to reflect on experiences of workplace incivility, a participant must (a) have encountered it; (b) teach at one of Pakistan's public or private HEIs, and (c) have held their position for at least one year. The exploratory aspect of the study's goal was to learn more about the particular effects of employment exclusion on Pakistani HEIs' teaching faculty members.

Sampling

Instead of choosing samples at random, the nature of this investigation supports a more purposeful sampling method. Second, it is a common practice to elicit involvement from respondents using respondent-driven procedures when dealing with stigmatized and hidden populations that also lack access to records (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Due to the study's exploratory nature and participant characteristics, snowball sampling was utilized (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Based on Ferris et al. definition workplace exclusion, we developed qualifying

standards (2008). Questions like "Do you ever feel excluded or disregarded in formal and informal social interactions?" and "Is your view point welcomed in official and informal matters?" were among them. Furthermore, "Do you perceive yourself as a member of the dominant in-group in your department?"

Based on personal connections, this material was sent to faculty groups at two public institutions and two private universities in Lahore, Pakistan's educational centre, along with a brief explanation of the investigation's goal. In the beginning, eight people answered and approved of participating in the study. These nominees were asked to nominate any other faculty member with a comparable experience directly or to use their social networks to the extent of these requirements. Last but not least, the study sample included 10 instructors who said they felt incivility and who worked at Pakistani HEIs. According to the participant's demographic information, six female and four male faculty members ranged in age from 26 to 57 years, with 1 to 21 years of experience. Additionally, 55% of the interviewees were lecturers, 25% were assistant professors, 15% were associate professors, and 5% were professors. 20% had a master's degree, 25% had a doctorate, and 55% had a master's degree in philosophy.

These statistics show that incivility was widespread across all levels, all age groups, and instructors with all education degrees.

Data Collection

To thoroughly understand the effects of workplace incivility on the instructors of public and private sector Pakistani HEIs, qualitative semi-structured interviews were employed in our study. Interviews with each participant were conducted once, and McCracken's suggestions served as their guide (1988). Using a comprehensive interview framework allowed participants' interview talks to be categorized and served as the foundation for subsequent theme analysis.

A thorough assessment of the literature that included questions regarding the psychological effects of workplace exclusion served as the basis for the interview methodology (Ferris et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2013; Williams, 2009). Three academics and two researchers skilled in qualitative research evaluated the interview guide to confirm its legitimacy. The interview guide was subsequently put through pilot testing, and the questions were changed in response to panel recommendations and the outcomes of the pilot tests. The interviews were initially done with three faculty members for the pilot test, and once a satisfactory answer was received, the remaining participants were questioned. The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes, similar to past qualitative studies on workplace exclusion (Waldeck et al., 2015). This approach effectively allowed the participants to openly express their opinions and discuss issues that had personal significance to them (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Data Analysis

The recorded Urdu interviews were first translated into English and organized onto several sheets before the data were analyzed using phenomenological and thematic methods. A technique for data analysis called thematic analysis involves finding, analyzing, and reporting themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The phases of phenomenological analysis suggested by Creswell and Poth (2016) were used to examine qualitative data. Beginning with the bracketing process, a phenomenological inquiry method, one must intentionally lay aside any preexisting knowledge or ideas about the subject before beginning and during the

phenomenological investigation (Carpenter, 2007). The treatment of each statement was equal. In the phenomenological analysis process, the researcher will "horizontalize" or give equal weight to all participants' claims. The researcher eliminates those remarks that are repeated and those that are irrelevant to the research topics (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The transcripts were read aloud several times using an open-ended style to open the reader's mind to the material and its consequences. To ensure the uniqueness of the replies, each instance was studied using sorting, coding, and the generation of themes. The researcher used the phases of theme analysis by Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, and Palmér's transcendental phenomenology, 2019). The transcripts were read and reread twice, allowing for the manual separation of essential ideas.

Trustworthiness

A member-checking approach, which involves evaluating the findings and interpretations with the participants, was used to ensure the study's trustworthiness. Furthermore, thorough record-keeping and continuing analysis of the results were prioritized to ensure the integrity of the study's conclusions. The researcher addressed their subjectivities to foster reflexivity and set aside prior knowledge of the phenomenon. The member check in this study avoids researcher bias by allowing participants to respond to any errors in the transcripts and assess data.

Last but not least, generalizability in the qualitative analysis may be attained from the standpoint of transferability by considering the likelihood that information and experience gained from an extensive investigation of a specific scenario or occurrence might be applied to another context (Merriam, 2002).

Ethical Consideration

The importance of ethics in a qualitative investigation makes a discussion of ethical issues imperative. Ethics must be taken into account at every stage of the research process, including when negotiating access to the study site, recruiting participants, collecting people's personal information and expecting them to spend a lot of time on a project (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, participants were treated following the moral standards of the American Psychological Association.

Findings

The conclusions are based on semi-structured interviews with female respondents who talked about their numerous encounters with rudeness in the classroom. They discussed their reactions to such acts and the detrimental psychological repercussions they had on them. The sections covered below reflect the data's themes and sub-themes.

Three main topics emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data:

- acts of incivility at Pakistani HEIs
- the psychological effects of workplace incivility
- the contextual elements that influence the effects of workplace incivility.

Numerous research has examined how incivility affects teachers' physical and psychological health. Such behaviour interferes with learning (Altmiller, 2012; Clark, 2008a, 2008b; Clark & Springer, 2010). From the information gathered, the following themes may be found.

The responders describe the recent rude conduct they have encountered at university. The respondents were asked to provide detailed information on the occurrence, their reactions

to it, and how such actions affected them. The findings show that all of the teachers experienced rudeness. Table 1 presents the topics that emerged from the data.

Communication Failure

A perceived breakdown in communication or an inability to communicate constructively was a central theme in the participant's accounts. Many participants expressed their frustration at being unable to "converse" with their offenders. Many participants did, in fact, experience "frustration" and "anxiety" when the offender could not comprehend what they were saying. When the victim and the perpetrator could not agree, it was more evidence that the perpetrator did not value or understand the participant's work function or that the perpetrator was unable to engage in a productive conversation with the participant to attempt to resolve the problem at hand.

"My coworkers often connect with me via office boy, while others receive the same information in person... The same is true with calls and texts. If I write them an email about any issue; they disregard it unless I remind them several times "

When we are in a casual setting, nobody talks to me until I start the discussion. I only receive brief, polite answers, yet I observe others engaging in amicable gossip

"I don't get credit for my accomplishments, but if a colleague achieves the same, he gets the credit"

Table 1

| Experienced incivility | faculty | Communication failure | Codes |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delayed reaction and purposeful knowledge concealment • refusal to attend formal and informal gatherings • unfair treatment |
| | | Response | Frightened/Remain quiet |
| | | Consequence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despair • Disturbed sleeping pattern • Feeling uncomfortable • Whimpered |

Response

The participants talked about their experiences and how they handled rude behaviour. Most of them were either silent or shocked due to such behaviour. According to the participants, "I was astonished."

Another participant discussed

"That I could not talk at all was unexpected coming from my colleague. Nobody is there for me to lean on or hang out with when I'm feeling down. Therefore, when my coworkers exclude

me, it negatively affects my emotions, my behaviour at work, and my sense of fulfilment in life because I can't even talk about it with anybody."

Consequences

The participants were questioned about the effects of encountering unruly conduct, which included despair, disrupted sleep patterns, weeping, and discomfort at university. Most of the participants felt depressed or shocked at being treated rudely.

Participants described how the colleague's demeanour had influenced their mental health:

"...As I already mentioned, this experience left me psychologically irritated."

Participants also spoke about how other faculty members' rude behaviour bothered them.

"Because of this mindset, I became melancholy and had trouble sleeping.

However, I understood that no one, not even someone who is her elder or even a colleague, has the right to speak rudely".

Witnessed Incivility

The participants were asked to recount any incident they saw happen at the workplace and how it affected them. One of them claimed she had never seen an act of rudeness

Table 2 presents the topics that emerged from the data gathered. Incivility, which includes character assassination, harassment, and humiliation, was classified as having been experienced by participants who saw incivility. The majority of those who responded described seeing the colleagues degrade other colleagues.

..." The colleague who had treated me unethically was the one who was on duty at the time, but I had already witnessed him treat another person unethically. He yelled at the coworker as she sobbed, telling her that she was not allowed to attend the meeting because she was not sending email in the right words."

Participants who had seen rude behaviour said they felt sorry for the victim, were scared, kept quiet, and encouraged the target to report the rude behaviour.

The participant stated how they felt about people being assaulted by the teacher and went personal. The students encouraged the target to report the incident, as recounted below: "I chatted to that girl and advised her to go and report this occurrence."

Table 2

| Witnessed incivility | faculty | Pressure | Codes |
|----------------------|---------|-------------|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddened. Maintain silence. Frightened |
| | | Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt disappointment Remain silent Motivated the target to report Frightened |
| | | Consequence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Troubled Waried |

Instigated Incivility

Participants were asked to recollect any instances in which they had engaged in the act of incivility. Only three people accepted that they were involved in instigating incivility.

Aggression. Participants that act aggressively against coworkers fall into this group. A faculty member said that she was not permitted to go to a conference and that she had misbehaved. The reply explains

... "I applied for the conference's discussion and travel grant. Still, he didn't permit it, resulting in a tense scene in which he ordered me to leave the office after asking my Head of department why to refuse my application, and I fled in rage."

Table 3

| Instigated incivility | faculty Aggression | Codes |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|
| | Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misbehaviour • Impolite Misconduct |
| | Consequence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troubled • Wanted to resign |

Response. All participants stated that the Head of the department was unpleasant and that they misbehaved in reaction. "...When they wouldn't allow me to participate in the meetings, I misbehaved," the participant explained. "I know it's wrong, but if I act like this, I can't expect others to act differently."

Consequences

According to the replies, they were upset after the encounter and wanted to discontinue their job. The respondent says,

"...I hated that one is constantly at a disadvantage in performance appraisal as a faculty member. I received the lowest grade. I wanted to leave since I was depressed the entire semester."

Discussion

The interview's findings revealed various new perspectives on how faculty members perceive and respond to rudeness from their colleagues and solutions to certain previously unresearched aspects of disrespect in the workplace. This study reveals an in-depth knowledge of three characteristics of incivility, concentrating on faculty member's perspectives, reactions, and implications, in contrast to the larger body of research that focuses on an empirical investigation of diverse parts of incivility in different circumstances. This study advances our knowledge of the particular experiences of rudeness, which helps create a civilized learning atmosphere in educational institutions.

Faculty in Pakistan were interviewed for this study on their experiences with their colleagues' incivility. Although the participants' uncivil interactions with their coworkers varied, most felt emotionally wounded, ashamed, and belittled. These discoveries are consistent with previous research on faculty psychological distress (Altmiller, 2012; El Hachi, 2020; Holt, 2018)

These findings align with faculty's reporting subjective judgement and hiding information from their professors. Although previous research has documented biased assessment or faculty misusing their position to manipulate their colleagues (Rad et al., 2017), the current

study's unjust evaluation sub-category was a novel concept that directly questioned faculty dealing with their coworkers.

Faculty members who saw occurrences of incivility explained a wide variety of incivility conduct. Faculty members were discovered to be humiliating, harassing, and character assassinating. The faculty reported seeing incivility. As a result, female faculty members are more likely to face incivility in educational institutions. Finally, participants were asked to explain an instance of incivility they had caused.

According to the literature on incivility, the perpetrator's power plays a significant role in inciting disrespect (Cortina et al., 2001). Andersson and Pearson explored how incivility is instigative in nature, encouraging reciprocity and an intensified spiral of negative behaviours, leading to the conclusion that incivility breeds disrespect. According to the research, experienced incivility is rising in higher education.

Conclusion

Incivility at work that is repeatedly displayed might turn violent. Managers must thus evaluate the incidence of rudeness at work. If these behaviours are expected, managers should implement empowerment programmes to help staff members deal with and regulate these behaviours quickly before they get out of hand.

Most of the staff in the organization might have a common understanding of this idea when considering the shared characteristics of workplace incivility. As opposed to that,

It is considered that this idea conflicts with the social standards that are already in place. Therefore, reliable context-based research on individuals in various organizations is required to provide an operational definition of workplace incivility. These studies include qualitative research and remarkably grounded theory investigations.

This research covers faculty members' opinions about rudeness from academic colleagues in Lahore, Pakistan. Interviews with female business administration faculty were undertaken to learn more about how the victims, spectators, and perpetrators of faculty rudeness perceived the situation. The researchers also noted the effects of engaging in, watching, and inciting rudeness. These interviews contribute to the corpus of information on incivility by illuminating what faculty members see and face daily and how these interactions affect them. It has been shown that most female faculty members who encountered rudeness suffered psychological discomfort. The fact that faculty members act incivility against female students in a high-intensity manner raises severe concerns for educational institutions. As predicted, faculty rudeness puts safety at risk and makes it difficult for them to do the job efficiently. The study's findings and the linked literature support the idea that disrespectful behaviour, in a nutshell, there are several plausible reasons for the rise in workplace disrespect.

When combined with classroom management strategies and being well-prepared for their class, tactics for decreasing disruptive conduct and fostering an environment of civility and mutual respect can be implemented. Management should keep an eye out for rude behaviour on their campuses and look for innovative and successful solutions.

Implications

The results of this study would help shed light on the interactions between professors and students. This study can assist instructors in comprehending the issues faced by female pupils and put into practice measures to combat rudeness in institutions of higher learning.

Institutions must offer the following to help enhance the interaction between cowerers: faculty members' professional development seminars. To accomplish this, undertake lectures

or workshops on bullying, rudeness, and harassment that must contain knowledge of institutional rules governing these actions. Universities should have procedures that let students complain without worrying about getting in trouble with their teachers (Stalter et al., 2019). On the other hand, faculty members must be allowed to act as mentors and role models for students (Clark & Springer, 2010).

Advanced social skill training or coaching programmes might help faculty members feel more empowered. Both students and teachers can create and debate behavioural standards. The university's overall civic culture and compliance with these requirements should be evaluated.

The behaviour of disrespectful or biased faculty members must be condemned. Universities should have procedures that let faculty complain without worrying about getting in trouble with their colleagues (Stalter et al., 2019). On the other hand, faculty members must be allowed to act as mentors and role models for others in their circle (Clark & Springer, 2010). Advanced social skill training or coaching programmes might help faculty members feel more empowered. Teachers can create and debate behavioural standards. The university's overall civic culture and compliance with these requirements should be evaluated. The faculty can concentrate on helping students develop their moral character, which is absent in educational institutions. Finally, a great deal of earlier research has demonstrated that staff modelling appropriate behaviour is one method for promoting civility in education. The battle against disrespect should start both within and outside the university premises.

Limitations

The current study has specific problems as well. Because we used a small sample and specific demography, the generalizability of our findings in this qualitative study is limited.

Furthermore, participants may have voiced biased judgments or hidden information that skewed the results despite their best efforts. Future academics may concentrate on the origins and repercussions of classroom incivility. Furthermore, future studies should explore incivility from both sides to better comprehend the phenomena of classroom incivility (i.e., students and teachers). Future academics should think about using a mixed-method approach to analyze workplace incivility.

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