INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY FACTORS ON THE TENDENCY TO ENGAGE IN WORKPLACE INCIVILITY

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ABSTRACT
The study examines the relationship between personality factors and workplace incivility among ministry workers. Using an ex-post facto cross-sectional survey design, and accidental sampling technique, two hundred and sixteen (216) employees were drawn as participants from civil servants in the ministries situated in Oyo State secretariat, Ibadan. Their ages ranged between 20 and 60 years of age. Out of the total sample of 216, 116 (53.7%) were male and 100 (46.3%) were female. Three hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results revealed that of the three personality factors examined, only emotional stability had significant positive relationship with workplace incivility (r = .407; P<.01); whereas conscientiousness (r = -.225; P<.01) and agreeableness (r = -.341; P<.01) had significant negative relationship with workplace incivility of employees. Recommendation were made that government agencies and other employers of labour should consider personality traits when carrying out selection process; and more specifically, that future studies should cover larger sample size and other populations aside civil servants so as to increase the generalizability of the findings.
Key words: *Personality factors, Workplace incivility, Civil servants.*

INTRODUCTION

Workplace incivility, also known as workplace violence, crosses the spectrum from low-level non-physical harassment to physical violence, which includes physical aggression and at the ultimate, death, in the workplace (McPhaul & Lipscomb, 2004). Physical violence in the workplace is a more insidious form of workplace violence that can have long-lasting effects on an organization. Workplace violence has many labels and overlapping concepts that adds to the confusion related to the subtleties between concepts (McPhaul & Lipscomb, 2004; Anderson and Bushman, 2002). Some of the better known terms for non-physical forms of workplace violence are bullying, mobbing, lateral or horizontal violence, disruptive workplace behaviours, deviance negative workplace behaviours, aggression, antisocial behaviour, verbal abuse, workplace conflict, and incivility. Anderson and Pearson (1999, p. 452) defined it as '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 of regard for others. Thus, the opposite of incivility is civility, which is characterized by an authentic respect for others when expressing disagreement, disparity or controversy. It involves time, presence, a willingness to engage in genuine discourse, and a sincere intention to seek common grounds (Clark & Carnosso, 2008). An interest in the subject has developed due to the evolving understanding of the importance of creating and sustaining a healthy work environment. It has become evident that subtle forms in workplace violence, like workplace incivility, usually occur under circumstances, thought to be benign, and frequently are not apparent to the leaders of the organization. Over time, the experience of workplace incivility may contribute to poor job attitudes and be the root of much of the malaise and job-related strain that many workers experience (Notelaers, Einarsen, De Witte, & Vermunt, 2006).

Workplace incivility has remained a growing and prevalent problem in spite of increased efforts aimed at improving corporate culture. It is wreaking havoc on employee relationships and workplace morale and very costly to organizations in subtle and pervasive ways. Employees who experience incivility decrease work effort, loose work time worrying, decrease organizational

commitment, productivity and performance and where incivility is not curtailed, job satisfaction and organizational loyalty diminish as well. Some employees even leave their jobs resulting in increased labour turnover, customers and clients as well reduce their patronage (Lim & Cortina, 2005).

Having one's opinion ignored, being excluded from a meeting, and having one's credibility undermined in front of others; experiences like these fall under the lens of workplace incivility. Such uncivil behaviour may be easily regarded as subtle and trivial, yet it is ubiquitous within the workforce. Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout (2001) reported that 71% of 1,180 public sector employees in the United States had experienced some form of workplace incivility in a 5 years period. Although such findings suggest that it is important to understand how incivility might affect organizations and employees, past research has largely focused on the incivility targets and their work or health outcomes (Lim, Cortina & Magley 2008). It has also been argued that workplace incivility may function as a means of asserting power (Lim & Cortina, 2005), but little empirical work has examined the relative power status of the instigator and target and its relationship with different incivility outcomes.

Pearson, Andersson, and Porah (2005) explored organizational outcomes of incivility, arguing that incivility causes its targets, witnesses, and stakeholders to act in ways that erode organizational values and deplete organizational resources. They theorized that, when incivility is not curtailed, it leads to diminished job satisfaction and low organizational loyalty, which affect turnover intentions. Supporting this argument, other studies have shown that uncivil workplace experiences were associated with negative work outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction and increased job withdrawal (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008). In additional to job-related outcomes, Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway (2001) have theorized that experiences of abusive behaviours at work lead to negative mood, cognitive distraction and fear. Consistent with this idea, evidence revealed that uncivil experiences at work were negatively associated with employee psychological and physical health outcome (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008).

Personality traits have been associated with viewing others negatively and acting negatively towards them (Wood and Joseph, 2010). Personality refers to the characteristic way of thinking, feeling and behaving and it embraces moods, attitudes and opinions which is clearly expressed in interactions with other people. High conscientiousness is a personality trait which represents a planned, organized, purposeful, achievement-oriented, hardworking, responsible and painstakingly careful conduct even in social interactions and workplace relationships (Barrick, Parks and Mount, 2001). Conscientiousness includes such elements as self-discipline, self-organization and deliberation (i.e. the tendency to think carefully before acting).

Agreeableness the trait of being cooperative, courteous and trusting reflects in the attitude an employee holds towards other people in the workplace. An agreeable employee is very pro-person, compassionate, forgiving and soft-hearted towards other employees. Such individual is altruistic, compliant, modest, straightforward and tender-minded. Workplace behaviour, either civil or uncivil can be linked to the extent to which an employee is agreeable.

Emotional stability refers to individual's steadiness of mood, ability to withstand minor stresses, setbacks, failures, difficulties and other pains that may ensue in social interactions and even workplace relationships. Emotionally stable persons tolerate minor stresses and strains of day-to-day living without becoming emotionally upset, anxious, nervous, tense or angry. They are able to maintain composure without frequent and often unpredictable mood shifts that may swing from pole to pole. (Ronald and Brothers, 1999).

The population covered by this study include the employees of the Oyo State Secretariat, working under the Oyo State Civil Service Commission which comprises various ministries such as Works,

Health, Finance, Commerce and Cooperatives, Industry, Agriculture, Justice, Education and Natural Resources. Each ministry is headed by a politically appointed Commissioner and a career civil servant as the Permanent Secretary amid other staff in their various departments and ministries, all guided by the civil service rule. Open office administration is practiced and this allows for frequent interactions and loose or diffuse relationships among the employees which are often prone to strained relationships. These employees follow bureaucratic rules in their service delivery. Often, a major threat to team work in the civil service is occasioned by thorny problem of strained relationship between professional specialists and generalist administrator (Adebayo, 1990).

Social information processing theory propounded by Dodge (1986) which focus on individuals' social cognitions to provide an understanding of their social adjustment and behaviour is applicable to this study. The theory holds that people engage in uncivil and aggressive act as a result of deficiencies in social information processing. Those who follow the information processing steps are considered socially competent, while those who have not followed the social information processing steps are more apt to engage in aggressive and deviant social behaviour (crick& dodge, 1994). Social information processing theory therefore suggest that aggressive individual process information differently from non-aggressive people do.

Anderson and Pearson (1999) described workplace incivility as subset of counter productive work behaviours (CPBs) an umbrella term that refers to behaviour that hinders the growth and expansion of organization and her members. To demonstrate how workplace civility can exert negative influence on all members of an organization from different cultures, Lim and Lee (2011) carried out a study in Singapore on workplace incivility. In the study, data were collected from a survey of 180, full-time employees from over 20 different organizations located in Singapore. Participants ranged from 18 to 60 years, with about half being male, and their average work experience was 9.90 years (S.D =10.03) and average organizational tenure was 5.12 years (SD =6.73). The remaining half of the participants were female. Consistent with the population profile, majority of the respondents were Chinese (89%) followed by Indians (3%) and (3%) Malaysians, and 5% of Caucasians and other minority races. The respondents worked in different industries including finance and banking (19%), education (18%), service (12%), construction and real estate (11%), government (9%), aviation (4%), health care (3%) and others (12%). Six percent of the respondents were in senior management, 18% in middle management, 53 % in lower management and 24% in non-management positions. The finding of this study showed that employees experienced more incivility from senior officers than co-workers or subordinates, and these experiences were related to different outcomes. Co-worker initiated incivility was associated with decreased co-worker satisfaction, increased perceptions of unfair treatment, and increased depression. The results also revealed that employees with high family support manifested stronger relationships between workplace incivility and negative outcomes, compared with employees with low family support. Taking into cognizance the fact that, the participants of the study were selected from different industries, reveals the fact that workplace incivility is a common phenomenon across all organizations managed by humans.

In a related study, workplace incivility was identified as a significant factor that can adversely affect the company's bottom line due to lost productivity and employee turnover. Atinkson (2001) reported that the American management association found that 52% of respondents in its research on workplace incivility reported experiencing at least one incident of threat of violence in the workplace in the previous three years. Also the society for human resources management (SHRM, 2000) in its survey found that 48% of the employees investigated experienced a violent incident in the workplace in the previous two years, including verbal threats, pushing and fighting.

Most reviews of personality-CPBs relationships have concluded that conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness are the strongest and most consistent predictors (Cullens & Sackett, 2003; Sackett & De Vore, 2001). For example, Salgado (2002) conducted a meta–analysis of the relationship between the big five personality dimensions and measures of CPBs, and found that conscientiousness best predicted a composite measure of deviant behaviour that consisted of theft, admission of theft, disciplinary problems, substance abuse, property damage, organizational rule breaking, and other responsible behaviours.

Salgado (2002) also reported that agreeableness also was a valid predictor of this composite of deviant variables. In another study, Dalal (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between conscientiousness and CPBs (defined as workplace behaviour that was harmful to the legitimate interest of the organization or its employees), and found a moderately strong correlation. Based on their review of literature, Cullen and Sackett (2003) states that one or more of the three traits of Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability or their facets have been shown to negatively predict CPBs such absenteeism, turnover, delinquency, workplace violence, substance abuse and property damage, and a wide variety of behaviours related to violent and non-violent criminal behaviours.

Very little research that have directly examined the relationship between personality traits and the two components of CPBs which include interpersonally based (CPB-I) and task based (CPB-O). However, meta-analytic studies of the relationship between personality and performance have shown that the two most consistent personality predictors of work performance are emotional stability and conscientiousness (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). The Barrick et al. (2001) study, which was a meta-analysis of previous analyses, found out that conscientiousness were the only personal predictors whose validities generalized in the prediction of the overall work performance. Thus, they concluded that emotional stability and conscientiousness are universal or generalized predictors of behaviours that are under volitional control. And by inference, this suggests that because both CPB-I and CPB-O are influenced by volition, conscientiousness and emotional stability should predict both types of deviance

Further, with respect to the interpersonal aspect of counterproductive behaviours, in their meta-analysis, Hurtz and (Donovan 2000) reported that conscientiousness and emotional stability predicted the criterion of interpersonal facilitation. With respect to organizational, task-based counterproductive behaviours, several meta-analyses have shown that both personality dimensions predict task-based criteria such as overall performance (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Hurtz & Donovan 2000), however conscientiousness has a stronger relationship with task-based criteria. Thus, when considering criteria under volitional control, both conscientiousness and emotional stability have been found to be generalizable predictors of both task-based and interpersonally based criteria, and for behaviours that promote the attainment of organizational goals as well as behaviours that hinders the attainment of organizational goals. Therefore, based on deductive reasoning, we expect that Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability will correlate negatively with both CPB-O and CPB-I.

The Barrick et al. (2001) meta-analysis also found that other FFM traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience) predicts performance but only for certain types of criteria and/or jobs. These personality traits are contingent predictors because they predict performance only when the personality traits are related to specific criteria. Important for this study, Agreeableness has been found to be a valid predictor of criteria that pertain to interpersonal performance such as forming cooperative relationships and social facilitation such as teamwork and customer service. The interpersonal relationships of disagreeable people are characterized by conflict and discord (Jensen-Campbell, Gleason, Adams, & Malcolm, 2003; Jensen-Cambell & Graziano, 2001).

Therefore, it is expected that Agreeableness should be negatively related to engaging in harmful or destructive interpersonal relationships. Meta-analytic studies have demonstrated that Agreeableness, along with conscientiousness and emotional stability, is related to counter-productive workplace behaviour directed toward the organization (Salgado, 2002). Taken together, it is expect that agreeableness will be negatively related to CPBs that are directed toward the organization (CPB-O).

The purpose of this study is to investigate personality factors as predictors of workplace incivility among employees working at the Oyo State ministries. It aims to investigate the existence of relationship between these personality factors and workplace uncivil behaviour.

HYPOTHESES

The understated hypotheses will be tested:
1. There will be a significant negative relationship between employee's level of conscientiousness and their tendency to engage in workplace incivility.
2. There will be a significant negative relationship between level of agreeableness of employees and their tendency to engage in workplace incivility.
3. There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and the tendency of the employees to engage in workplace incivility.

METHOD

Design

The study adopts a cross-sectional survey research design and expost-facto technique for data collection. This preference is because the variables were not subjected to any direct manipulation by the researcher. The personality factors which include conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability are the independent variables while workplace incivility is the dependent variables.

Setting

The research setting for the study is the Oyo State secretariat Ibadan, which comprise of civil servants from different State Ministries.

Participants and Sample size

The participants include one hundred and sixteen (116) male representing 53.7% and one hundred (100) female representing 46.3% of the participants that their questionnaires were useful for the study. Their age range is from 20 – 60 years. 118 (54.6%) practiced Christianity, 92 (42.6%) practiced Islam and 2 (0.9%) practiced traditional religion. 136 (63%) were married, 45 (20.8%) were single, 4 (1.8%) were divorced and 8 (3.7%) were widowed. 184 (85.25%) had tertiary education, 14 (6.5%) had secondary education; 3 (1.4%) had only primary education.

Accidental sampling technique was adopted to draw participants across the ministries. This is because only accessible people among those that were contacted were enrolled as participants in the study.

Instrument

A structured questionnaire broken into sections was used to obtain responses from the participants. The sections on the questionnaire are:

Section A

Section A measures the socio-demographic variables of the participants and contains information on age and sex of the participants.

Section B

Section B contains a 25–items scale measuring 3-dimensions of the modified version of five factor personality inventory developed by Pervin and John (1999). The three dimensions of the scale are conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability. Items 1–8 measure conscientiousness, items 9–17 measure agreeableness, while items 18–25 measure emotional stability; giving a total of 25 items at composite level. The scale has a 5 point Likert-type response format with response categories ranging from Disagree strongly to Agree strongly. Disagree strongly = 1, Disagree a little = 2, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Agree a little = 4, Agree strongly = 5.

The author of the scale reported a reliability coefficient of 0.82 for conscientiousness, 0.79 for agreeableness, and reliability coefficient of 0.84 for emotional stability.

Section C

Section C contains an 18-item scale which measures workplace incivility, developed by Martin and Hine (2005). The scale has a 5 point Likert-type response format with the response categories ranging from never to always. Never = 1, Almost never = 2, Neutral = 3, Almost always = 4, Always = 5. The authors reported a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.80 for the scale, indicating internal consistency among the items.

Procedure

The participants of the study were drawn from the employees working at the Oyo State Secretariat Ibadan. Prior visit was made by the researchers to the management of the Ministries at the Oyo State Secretariat Ibadan to obtain official permission to carry out the survey with their workers. After haven establishing rapport with the participants making them understand that their identity is protected, they were briefed on the purpose of the study and their free participation sorted. Consented individual participant were then giving the questionnaire to fill using self-administered method. Average of 5 minutes was used to complete each questionnaire.

Out of the three hundred (300) employees that were administered the questionnaires, only two hundred and sixteen (216) were found to be useful.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data. Specifically, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test hypotheses one, two and three.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between employee's level of conscientiousness and their tendency to engage in workplace incivility. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The result is presented in table 1 as shown below.

Table 1: Summary table of Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between conscientiousness and workplace incivility.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	P
Conscientiousness	216	26.19	4.19		
				-.225	<0.01
Workplace Incivility	216	51.37	13.06		

* Significant at P < 0.01

The results in table 1 above shows that there was significant negative relationship between conscientiousness and workplace incivility (r = -.225; P<.01). This indicates that as employees' conscientiousness increases, their workplace incivility decreases. That is, as an employee is more planful, organized, purposeful, achievement oriented, hardworking, responsible and careful in conduct which are the hallmarks of conscientiousness, the less likely his or her tendency to participate in workplace incivility. The stated hypothesis is hereby confirmed.

Hypothesis two stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between level of agreeableness of employees and their tendency to engage in workplace incivility. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis, and the result is shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Summary table of Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between agreeableness and workplace incivility.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	P
Agreeableness	216	28.43	4.45		
				-.341	<0.01
Workplace Incivility	216	51.35	13.06		

* Significant at P < 0.01

From the table 2 above, the result shows that there was significant negative relationship between agreeableness and workplace incivility (r = -.341; P<.01). This indicates that as employees' agreeableness increases, their workplace incivility decreases. That is, as an employee is more cooperative, courteous and trusting in the attitude towards other employees, the less likely he or she will participate in workplace incivility. The stated hypothesis is also confirmed.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and the tendency of the employees to engage in workplace incivility. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The result is presented in table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary table of Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between emotional stability and workplace incivility.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	P
Emotional stability	216	23.21	4.35		
				.407	<0.01
Workplace Incivility	216	51.35	13.06		

* Significant at P < 0.01

The results in table 3 above shows that there was significant positive relationship between emotional stability and workplace incivility (r = .407; P<.01). This indicates that as employees' emotional stability increases, their workplace incivility also increases. That is, as an employee increases in steadiness of mood, ability to withstand stresses, setbacks, failures, difficulties and other pains that may develop in social interactions which is exemplified in emotional stability, his or her workplace incivility also increases. This is however not expected. The stated hypothesis is disconfirmed.

DISCUSSION
The study was set to investigate the relationship between personality factors and workplace incivility. Three hypotheses were proposed and tested. Hypothesis one which stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between conscientiousness and workplace incivility was confirmed, as the result shows a significant negative relationship between conscientiousness and workplace incivility. This is consistent with the findings of Estes & Wang (2008) which identified low conscientiousness as being less discipline and careful, and positively correlated low conscientiousness with uncivil behaviour. It is also in consistent with the report of Cullen and Sackett (2003) which stated that one or more of the three traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability or their facets have been shown to negatively predict CPBs such absenteeism, turnover, delinquency, workplace violence, substance abuse and property damage, and a wide variety of behaviours related to violent and non-violent criminal behaviours. Equally, the result is in line with the findings of Ashton, Lee and Paunonen (2002) which found that individuals who are low on conscientiousness pay less attention to details, less organized and less likely to instigate positive social interactions. The result is however not in support of the findings of Porath, Overbeck and Pearson (2008) which reported that conscientious individuals are more likely to engage in workplace incivility. Neither is it consistent with the findings of Coyne, Seigne & Randall (2000) which related victimization, bullying and workplace incivility with high conscientiousness.

The hypothesis two, which stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between agreeableness and workplace incivility was also confirmed. This is consistent with the findings of Milam, Spitzmueller, and Penney (2009) in their study on the individual differences among instigators of workplace incivility which indicated that individuals low in agreeableness and those high in neuroticism experience more incivility than their counterparts.

Hypothesis three, which stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and workplace incivility was disconfirmed. The result shows a significant

positive relationship between emotional stability and workplace incivility; and it means that as emotional stability increases, the workplace incivility also increases. This result is not consistent with the findings of Cullen and Sackett (2003) which stated that one or more of the three traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability or their facets have been shown to negatively predict CPBs such absenteeism, turnover, delinquency, workplace violence, substance abuse and property damage, and a wide variety of behaviours related to violent and non-violent criminal behaviours. It is also not in line with Diefendorff & Richard (2003) that stated that individuals who are high in neuroticism are unaware of rules that demand displaying positive emotion, though they try to suppress negative emotions in the workplace. Therefore, neurotic individuals experiences a greater frequency of unpleasant event and thus react in a confrontational manner. The results obtained in this study on the correlation of emotional stability and workplace incivility may have been due to the population of study which is from the civil service. Perhaps, some level of workplace incivility is tolerated amongst Nigerian civil servants, especially if it can go unreported, and hence, the individual who is culpable is emotionally stable.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS
The implication of the study for the employers of labour in carrying out selection process is that employers of labour should always watch out for traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability in potential employees seeking entry into the organization. Employees who exhibit these three traits to a large extent in the workplace should be encouraged and rewarded so as to minimize workplace incivility.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES
Conclusively, there was significant negative relationship between conscientiousness and workplace incivility. This indicates that as employees' level of conscientiousness increase, their tendency to engage in workplace incivility decreases. There was significant negative relationship between agreeableness and workplace incivility. This indicates that as employees' level of agreeableness increases, their tendency to engage in workplace incivility decreases. There was significant positive relationship between emotional stability and workplace incivility. This indicates that as employees' emotional stability increases, their tendency to engage in workplace incivility also increases. This is not expected, but it has been suggested that perhaps the Nigerian civil service's environment tolerate some measure of workplace incivility, especially when it is not reported.
As with any research, this study has its own limitation. Firstly, because the questionnaire was self-administered, it is likely that some respondents would have responded subjectively, and hence, might biased the outcome of the study. Also, the correlation nature of the study makes it impossible to draw cause-effect relationship between variables of the study.
It would be recommended that further research should cover larger sample size and other populations so as to increase the generalizability of the findings.

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