



UNDERSTANDING GROUP DYNAMICS, OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE AND INCIVILITY IN WORK ORGANISATIONS.

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigated group dynamic, openness to experience and workplace incivility in the workplace. Two hundred and sixty eight telecommunication employees, (97 male and 171 female), with an age range of 18 to 55 years participated in the study. Data were collected using three validated scales. Results indicated that group dynamics has no significant relationship with workplace incivility ($r(268) = .02; P > .05$); Openness to experience has significant inverse relationship with workplace incivility ($r(268) = -.16^{**}; P < .01$). Group dynamics and openness to experience had no joint influence on workplace incivility ($F(2, 264) = 1.46; > .05$) while openness to experience had significant main influence on workplace incivility ($F(1, 264) = 8.54; < .05$), group dynamics does not had significant main influence on workplace incivility ($F(1, 264) = .00; > .05$). Also there was no significant difference between male and female employees on workplace incivility ($t(266) = 0.39, P > .05$). It was concluded that employees with higher level of openness to experience employees will be more cohesive, and avoid the manifestation of workplace incivility and this will results in higher productivity and achievement of organizational set goals and objectives. Thus, it is imperative for organisations to device checklist to promote effective group dynamics and openness to experience in order to inculcate acceptable work etiquette among employees to prevent incidence of workplace incivility and its consequences.*

Key words: group dynamics, openness to experience and workplace incivility

INTRODUCTION

Incivility refers to verbal or nonverbal deviant behaviour among co-workers, workers-clients, workers-management in the workplace with unclear motive to harm but capable of causing psychological harm on the target. Anderson and Pearson, (2009) defined workplace incivility as low intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. The list of workplace incivility comprises taking credit for other's effort, passing blame for own mistake, checking e-mail or sending SMS, talking down others, not listening, belittling others, deliberating withholding information, pay little attention, or showing little interest in other's opinion, making demeaning or derogatory remarks to someone, and avoiding one another (Porath & Pearson; 2010).

The prevalence of workplace incivility is becoming an issue in work organizations (Porath et al 2010; & Cortina, Maglay., William., & Langout; 2001). Research has it that manifestation of incivility is in the increase in most workplaces and is common in almost all work organizations across the globe (Porath et al,) despite the fact that emphasis is on system thinking in today's work organizations, which implies that organizational members functions as aggregate parts, complimentary one and other by collective sharing of responsibilities for the attainment of the corporate goals of the organization. Rude and discourteous treatment may result in unhappy employees, strained relationship, and unpleasant work environment. Uncivil behaviour in the workplace can mar the supposed smooth cooperation needed among employees to discharge their duties with ease.

For a group to blend adequately there must be considerable possession of complementary characteristics, feeling of affinity by group members with little or absence of discord among group members (Toseland & Rivas, 2005). Also the personality of an individual worker is a factor that may influence the quality of group and work outcomes (productivity). For proper and cohesive relationships among work employees or colleagues organizations ought to consider personality dimensions of applicants in personnel selection and placement. Thus this study examined influence of openness to change as a personality dimension (openness to experience of the Big Five Factors) and group dynamics on workplace incivility of workers.

The current trend in the world of work is role sharing, role dependency and multi-tasking of workers, therefore it is quintessential for employees to possess the needed character disposition to function appropriately and blend adequately with one and another without manifestation of incivility. Openness to change exemplifies the breadth, depth and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life (Donahue & Kentle, 1991). Though employees require support from their employers, and may work even better in conducive and civil work environment they should also have better behavioural tendencies that can be used to describe them across similar and different situations that they have the capacity to do the job, work with team with reduced or no occurrence of uncivil behaviour.

Incivility is prevalent in workplace all over the world, between colleagues, employee to employers, worker to client, client to workers, and vice versa (Porath et al 2010), and it is a common problem in American workplaces (Pearson, Anderson, & Porath, 2000) but this research is carried out to ascertain the prevalence of workplace incivility in Nigeria. Uncivil behaviour in the workplace comprises, rudeness, lack of regards, social isolation, spreading of false rumours, bad manners, and many more. It can hamper the free flow of vital and relevant job related information (Cortina, Maglay, Williams, and Langhout, 2001).

A major setback is that workplace incivility is low intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the targets in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect (Anderson & Pearson, 1999) and it may be difficult to identify and dealt with, because motive is not known but it has tremendous negative impact on the target and the organization. Workplace incivility may occur without easily being noticed because it is oftentimes so complex that it may be linked to instigator's ignorance or oversight, target misrepresentation or overreaction (Anderson et al, 1999).

This study will provide relevant information that will guide investors and players of industries on how to entrenched civility in the workplace, which will have implication for policy making to reduce and eradicate negative impact of incivility manifestation. Also this study will bring about possible personality consideration in employee selection and placement to enhance group behaviour and effectiveness without internal fragmentation.

A major theoretical framework through which workplace incivility, group dynamics and openness to change has been explained is the reinforcement theory by Skinner (1966). Reinforcement theory asserts that behaviour is motivated by its consequences. Any event that increases the likelihood of indulging in a given behaviour is a reinforcement of the behaviour.. Reinforcement may be positive or negative. Positive reinforcement occurs when behaviour is followed by a reward, while negative reinforcement refers to the consequence that lead to the avoidance of an existing negative behaviours (Coon, 2004). It can be inferred that the consequences (events, happenings) that follow the manifestation of uncivil behaviours in the workplace will likely tell if the behaviour will continue or not.

When employees engage in workplace civility and it is rewarded and appreciated like giving of; awards, certificate of merit, recognition, and some add-ons it may likely increase the civility level of others. Also when appropriate measures are in place to deal with incidence of incivility, it may result in organizational members becoming civil in their dealing and handling of official matters in order to avoid the negative impact of being dealt with.

Herzberg's two factor theory can also explain workplace incivility, group dynamics and openness to change. According to the theory propounded by Herzberg (1966), there are two main factors that determines employees motivation behaviour in the workplace, they are; motivators and hygiene. Motivators are job element that when present bring out employees' positive behaviours, while hygiene are job context that when absent foster workers' negative behaviours. Examples of motivators are; responsibility, achievement and recognition, while examples of hygiene are supervision, interpersonal relation, and working conditions. The presence of motivators may likely reduce the deleterious impact of workplace incivility, while the absence of hygiene may increase the incidence of workplace incivility and group effectiveness. Though the two factors have

received quite a lot of criticisms on the ground of methodology but it can still be a strong theoretical background.

Another theory that explained the study is social exchange theory by Cotterell, Eisenberger and Speicher, (1992). The theory's main assumption is that reward must exceed cost for relationships to occur and endure. It also affirms that resources received from others are more highly valued, if they are given discretionally rather than prevailing circumstances beyond the donor. The emphasis of this theory in group dynamics is that groups are formed because individuals need beneficial interactions that are driven by obligation and backed by trust. So every member of the group tries to maximize their costs, therefore for a relationship to last, it must be profitable; for example knowledge sharing may be affected within work group, especially if the sharer feels it is not beneficial and this can be termed uncivil in the workplace. Individuals in the group carry out roles just the way business carry out economic exchange. The implication is that organization should define individual and group roles and remunerate according to avoid incivility of intentionally withholding information.

Another theoretical framework that has been used to explained workplace incivility, group dynamics and openness to change is psychological contract theory by Store and Tetrick (1994). Psychological contract is the perception of the expectations that employees and employers have concerning the employment contract (particular resources each owe one and another). From observation, the employer expects and demands unalloyed commitment, involvement, creativity in handling assigned tasks civil behaviours to customers and clients while the workers expect better emolument, benefits, training, promotions, welfares, and loans. A positive perception of the contract by employees and employers may result in civility in the workplace, quality group interactions, helping behaviour and openness to change, while a negative perception may lead to workplace incivility, reduction in group interactions and refusing to be open to change in discharging assigned roles. Psychological contract theory is abstract construct that may be abused by either of the parties involved and since it is perceptual, there may be misinterpretation of employment contract.

Toseland et al, (2005) identified four dimensions of group dynamics which are communication and interaction pattern, cohesion and attraction of members, social controls, such as norms, roles and status, and group culture. Workplace incivility is capable of reducing the effectiveness of group since groups are maintained because group dynamics connotes that group members are talking to one and another in the group (Nazzaro & Strazabosco; 2009). Individual employee may not be easily attracted to group members (one another) if incidence of uncivil behaviour is prevalent, since there should exist a standard rules and regulations guiding the group (norms), with assigned roles for each members of the group. It is expected of organizational members to work together for the actualization of the corporate objectives of the organization, but Satir (1972) identified four dysfunctional roles of members in group dynamics, which are: (a) the placater, trying to be accommodative and cooperative but indeed are not. (b) The blamer, trying always to bring out others fault, (c) the irrelevant member, trying always to distract and annoyed, and (d) the super-reasonable, trying to appear helpful but prevent any useful interaction.

However, Gladding and Binkley, (2007) posits that for there to be group dynamics, employees should exhibit the following extra work roles: (a) the facilitator, working as host to make people feel welcome and comfortable, (b) the gatekeeper, keeps group members on tasks, making sure established norms are followed, (c) the energizer, motivates other group members during time of boredom, or when action is needed, (e) the information seeker, helps gather relevant data and share information needed for the group operation, and (f)the elevator, encourages adjustment for greater efficiency. The dysfunctional roles are capable of breeding incivility in the workplace, while the constructive roles may likely result in civility in the workplace, aid organizational survival in the face of recession, ever increasing competition and technological advancement. Donelson (2006) concludes that group are more the sum of its parts because group processes cannot be deduced from individual members' characteristics but a multi facet approach. This assertion is in

agreement with Lewin's (1951) field theory which maintained that behaviour is a function of the person and environment.

Group is a living system of people with diverse behaviour, thoughts, attitudes, and belief. It can be deduced that group behaviour can to a large extent influence members' attitude, values, perception, and action (Gorse & Sanderson, 2007). Group interaction can provoke thoughts and manifest feelings that may not occur when working alone. Also interactions in work group may become scary that workers may avoid group interaction especially in cases of incivility. Workplace incivility is everyday small events that people often encounter but pay little attention to (Ismail & Zakaun, 2012).

Porath et al (2010) reported that workplace incivility is one of the major reasons in labour hearings in Malaysia, and some of the reported cases are unfair dismissal for being rude to guess, constructive dismissal; (superior uttering uncivil words to an employee), misconducts; (an employee wrote rude letter to his superior), and dismissal on the ground of poor performance; (an employee being rude to a customer and his superior). However there are dearth of studies on workplace incivility in Africa but the in-depth research on individual in work organizations could well advance interest on workplace incivility. Though documented cases of workplace incivility varies and rate of incidence virtually unknown, but its impact may be enormous (Pearson, Anderson, & Wegner 2001). Berlin (1996) model posit that violent workplace behaviour lead to negative mood, cognitive distraction and fear in target. This can in turn affect three categories of outcomes in targets: organizational, psychological and somatic (Cortina, et al 2001).

Workplace incivility is different from violent behaviour but their effects are closely related. Some manifestation of workplace incivility can be as a result of instigator ignorance or oversight, or can be attributed to target misrepresentation or hypersensitivity. (Anderson et al, 1999). Research has found that psychological conditions such as stress, depression, and anxiety experienced by employees can hurt organizations performance and productivity declines (Adams, 1998; Baba, Jamal, & Tourigny, 1999), decrease job involvement, job satisfaction, and organization commitment (Baba et al, 1998, Smither, 1998); tardiness and absenteeism; sick leave and health compensation claims, turnover intention, and rates, (Baba et al, 1998). It may lead organizational withdrawal behaviour, including early retirement.

Lim and Cortina (2005) in their study on interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace concluded that incivility and sexual harassment are both forms of interpersonal mistreatment that are linked. Gender harassment is indicator of sexual harassment and it may also be the type of harassment closely related to incivility. Unlike sexual attention and coercion gender harassment conveys hostility devoid of any explicit sexual motive. Also, incivility is manifested in terms of rude and disrespectful behaviours with sexual intent (Lim et al, 2005).

Farr & Cortina (2012) asserts that it is less clear how incivility relates to more specific forms of hostility; such as those based on gender and race, though they have common qualities such as degradation, intimidation and violation of social norms. Also Cortina et al (2008) opines that hostility and incivility are one and the same, and when women and people of colour are selectively biased, incivility represents a covert manifestation of gender or race bias. Ismail (2011) reported that incivility reduces helping behaviour among co-workers. For example helping a co-worker with heavy workload or showing a co-worker how to use unfamiliar software when one is not obligated to do so may be highly impossible in the face of incivility.

Incivility in the workplace either from co-worker to co-worker, or to clients will negatively impact the work organization.

METHOD

Design/ Participants

The study utilised an ex post facto design using cross sectional survey among telecommunication employees. Data were collected from three hundred and forty telecomm workers, out of which two hundred and sixty eight were completely filled (97 male and 171 female) their age range was 35-55 years, 2% had senior certificate examination, 4% had OND/NCE, 82% have B.sc/HND and has 12% M.sc/PhD. The participants were drawn from the GSM and Land phone operators, three telecomm companies were randomly selected, namely MTN, Glo, and Visafone telecomm workers through systematic and simple random sampling method. 150 Visafone, 100 Glo and 90 MTN workers participated in the study.

Procedure

The study made use multiple random sampling techniques (systematic and simple random sampling). The first phase was balloting of the four GSM companies (MTN, Glo-ng, Airtel, and Etisalat) by picking from Pot; MTN and Glo-ng were selected. Also through balloting of the major land phone service providers; Zoom and Visafone were picked to participate in the study, while Nitel was selected to represent government owned operator. However it was found that Zoom, Nitel has been liquidated or ceased to operate, Starcom and Multilink were on the verge of collapse as reported by their representatives. Data were distributed through administration of three hundred and forty questionnaires out of which two hundred and sixty eight questionnaires were duly filled with the assistance of customer relation officers in each of the selected telecomm companies.

Measures

The instrument used in this study was in four sections. Section A contained information on the demographic variables used in the study. Section B was a 7-item Likert format Workplace incivility questionnaire by Cortina et al (2001) with 0.89 Cronbach's alpha but this study reported 0.91 Cronbach's alpha. Section C was a 10-item scale Likert format openness to experience scale of the big five inventory by John, Donahue et al (1991) that has 0.80 and 0.83 (3 month test-retest) Cronbach's alpha but this study reported 0.72 Cronbach's alpha. Finally section D was a 14-item Likert format work Group Functioning scale developed by Seashore, et al (1982) and adapted by Omoluabi (1997) for Nigeria samples. Seashore, et al (1982) has 0.79 Cronbach's alpha, while this study reported 0.8 Cronbach's alpha.

Statistical Analysis

The hypotheses were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation, t-test of independent samples, and 2 X 2 Analysis of Variance.

RESULTS

The results in table 1 shows that there is no significant relationship between group dynamics and workplace incivility ($r(268) = 0.02, P > 0.01$). This means group dynamics in work organization may not decrease as workplace incivility increases or vice versa. Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Table 1 Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship Between Group Dynamics and Workplace Incivility

variable	\bar{X}	SD	N	1	2
Workplace incivility	28.35	12.14	268	-	
Group dynamics	68.5	9.16	268	.02	

Also PPMC was used to analyse hypothesis 2, which states that there will be significant inverse relationship between openness to change and workplace incivility and the result is presented in table 2 below:

Table 2 Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship Between Openness To Change and Workplace Incivility

variable	X	SD	N	1	2
Workplace incivility	28.35	12.14	268	1	
Openness to experience	54.65	8.4	268	-.16**	

The result in Table 2 shows there is significant inverse relationship between openness and workplace incivility ($r(268) = -.16^{**}$, $P < .01$). It can be inferred that as employees manifest high openness to change they will likely have low manifestation of workplace incivility. Hypothesis 2 was therefore accepted.

T-test of independent samples was used to establish the difference between male and female telecommunication employees on workplace incivility. The result is presented in Table 3:

Table 3 Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference between male and female telecomm employees on workplace incivility

variable	N	X	SD	df	T	P
Male	97	28.8	11.3	265		
					.39	>.05
Female	170	28.2	12.6	218		

Result in Table 3 report no significant difference between male and female employees on workplace incivility ($t(266) = 0.39$, $P > .05$). Hypothesis 3 was rejected. This implies that male employees of telecomm service providers and female employees reported comparable levels of workplace incivility.

The result in Table 4 below indicated that openness to experience has significant independent influence on workplace incivility ($F(1, 264) = .26$; $P < .05$), while group dynamics does not have significant independent influence on workplace incivility ($F(1, 264) = .00$, $P > .05$). Also Openness to experience and group dynamics do not have significant joint influence on workplace incivility ($F(2, 264) = 1.46$; $P > .05$).

Table 4 Summary of 2 x 2 Analysis of variance showing significant difference in workplace incivility in openness to change and group dynamics

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Openness to experience	1227.26	1	1227.24	8.54	<.05
Group dynamics	.56	1	.56	.00	>.05
Openness *group	208.62	1	208.62	1.46	>.05
Error	37933.95	264	148.69		
Total	254689	268			

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study is to investigate influence of group dynamics and openness to experience on workplace incivility among telecommunication employees. From observation it was assumed there are manifestation of incivility among the sample population in the discharge of their duties and work relationship.

The result of in Table 1 found that group dynamics in work organizations does not relate to workplace incivility. This corroborates the finding of Gladding and Binkley, (2008) that opines that group members usually exhibit constructive roles that will advance the effectiveness of the group members. The roles identified by Gladding and Binkley, (2008) roles will likely reduce the menace of incivility; they are the facilitator, the gatekeeper, the compromiser, the energizer, and the information seeker.

Also hypothesis 2 confirms that telecomm workers that manifest openness to experience personality will report low cases of workplace incivility and this is in line with McGregor's theory X and Y that categories workers into two distinct. Those in X category may be uncivil based on their inherent abilities than those in the Y category. This means openness to experience as a personality is related to the manifestation of workplace incivility. In other words openness to experience is a form of behavioural pattern that may reduce cases of workplace incivility. Just as Schein (1980) asserted that psychological contract is a key determinant of employees' attitude and behaviour in the workplace. More specifically, when employees have the perception that the organization is carrying out their mutual obligation, they will likely bring out their best and reduce incidence of workplace incivility.

However hypothesis 3 which states that there will be significant positive difference between male and female employees was rejected, meaning there is no proof that either male or female employees manifest incivility in the workplace and this in line with the findings of Farr and Cortina (2012), which opined that it is less clear how incivility relates specifically to gender and race.

Hypothesis 4 which states that there will be significant main and joint influence of group dynamics and openness to experience on workplace incivility was confirmed. The result supports the assertion of social exchange theory (Cotterell, et al 1992). Social exchange defined the relationship of group members as a form of social exchanges (transfer of attention, information, affection, favour and the like), which can be easily affected in the faces unpleasant interaction.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study it was glaring that openness to experience as a personality dimension has a lot to do with reduction or prevention of workplace incivility. This implies that the capacity and personality of employees to be opened to new experiences should be enhanced through training and there should be checklist as to what constitute workplace incivility and how to prevent incivility in the workplace through professionally designed checklist of civil behaviours

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