

Chapter 39

Workplace Perceptions and Workplace Incivility in Egypt: The Mediating Role of Organizational Cynicism

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ABSTRACT

Using a sample of two hundred and ninety two administrative employees from five universities in Egypt completed the survey, the survey response rate was 58.4%, this study examined whether organizational cynicism mediated the effects of workplace perceptions represented in distributive, procedural, interactional justice (DJ, PJ and IJ), perceived organizational support (POS), and Perceived of Psychological Contract Breach (PPCB) on workplace incivility. DJ, PJ, IJ and POS were found to significantly and negatively influence both organization cynicism and workplace incivility. PPCB was found to significantly and positively influence both organization cynicism and workplace incivility. Results from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) also showed that organizational cynicism partially mediates the relationship among DJ, PJ, IJ, POS, and PPCB and workplace incivility. Implications for research and practice of our findings are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In general, individuals want to be treated with respect, a basic level of civility and respect is expected in any kind of relationship. In the workplace especially, employee would like to work in an environment where he or she is treated with respect and professionalism (Tarraf, 2012). As interest in deviant workplace behavior has grown, a distinct stream of research focused specifically on lesser forms of interpersonal mistreatment in organizations is emerging (Blau & Andersson, 2005). So, rude and discourteous treatment may lead to cynical employees, strained relationships, and an unpleasant work environment (Tarraf, 2012).

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Cortina et al. (2001) explain that organizational researchers and practitioners have paid increasing interest to interpersonal mistreatment at workplace such as violence, aggression, bullying, tyranny, harassment and deviance. One form of mistreatment, workplace incivility has attracted research attention as a milder type of behavior, it is more widespread in organizations and may result in many negative effects.

Organizational cynicism has been theorized to have a number of negative consequences, including reduced levels of performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, ethical intentions, prosocial behaviors, increased levels of intention to quit, alienation, burnout, antisocial behaviors and workplace deviance (Nafei, 2013; Özler & Atalay, 2011; Nair & Kamalanabhan, 2010; Arabac, 2010; James, 2005; Abraham, 2000; Dean et al., 1998). However, there is a lack of empirical studies measuring the impact of organizational cynicism on workplace incivility.

Many reasons may explain this rise of workplace incivility and organizational cynicism including workers' diversity causing more misunderstanding; perceived job insecurity; stress on employees; and lower job satisfaction, perceptions of politics, organizational of justice, psychological contract breach or violations, and perceived organizational support (James, 2005; Johnson & Indvik, 2001).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility is embedded within the larger construct of workplace deviant behavior, which defined as 'voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so threatens the wellbeing of the organization or its members or both' (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Johnson & Indvik (2001) defined incivility as the low end of the continuum of workplace abuse, and it is not violence or harassment or even open conflict, although it can build up to any of those things.

According to Andersson & Pearson (1999) workplace incivility is: "low-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". Sypher (2004) defined incivility as the rude or disrespectful behavior demonstrating a lack of regard for others, but definitional differences about what constitutes incivility at work seem to unnecessarily complicate the issue and even downplay the significance of incivility. Blau & Andersson (2005) argue that an workplace incivility, is gaining recognition as a unique form of interpersonal mistreatment characterized by ambiguity of intent and violation of workplace norms for mutual respect.

Along the continuum, intensity is regarded as the degree or magnitude of the behavior while intentionality involves the degree to which one purposefully or knowingly commits these acts. Thus, when intensity is high, intentionality is also more likely to be high (Sypher, 2004). Workplace incivility distinguished from other various forms of deviant behaviors such as workplace violence, workplace aggression, workplace bullying, and workplace harassment. Workplace incivility includes verbal abuse and nonverbal behaviors (Lim et al., 2008).

There are many examples of workplace incivility behaviors such as making condescending, demeaning, rude comments, conversations, excluding members, ignoring someone, giving someone the silent treatment, thoughtless acts, negative gestures, insulting or yelling at someone, cutting people off while speaking, overriding decisions without giving a reason, spreading rumors, talking negatively about another employee, writing disrespectful E-mails to coworkers, not listening, withholding information,

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