EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF CO-WORKER INCIVILITY ON WORKPLACE HAPPINESS AMONG RETAIL OUTLET EMPLOYEES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IDUKKI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Workplace happiness represents a critical component in the success and productivity of an organisation. Amidst various factors influencing workplace happiness, co-worker incivility emerges as a significant concern. This research paper delves into the impacts of co-worker incivility on workplace happiness, utilising contemporary research findings to outline its multifaceted consequences and propose viable interventions. Through a holistic evaluation, the paper underscores the imperative of cultivating respectful and supportive work environments to safeguard and enhance workplace happiness.

This study aimed to discuss the influence of co-worker incivility on workplace happiness among employees of organised retail outlets in the Idukki district, Kerala State. The sample comprised 56 employees working in organised retail outlets, especially electronics and home appliances outlets. The study reveals that there is a close relationship between co-worker incivility and workplace happiness.

Keywords: Incivility, Workplace happiness, Wellbeing, Co-worker relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern workplace, often characterised by its dynamic and fast-paced nature, is a crucible where the interactions and behaviours among colleagues play a pivotal role in shaping employees' overall well-being and job satisfaction. Incivility, defined as low-intensity deviant behaviour that violates workplace norms for mutual respect (Fritz, 2009), is a particularly concerning aspect of these interpersonal dynamics, as it can have detrimental consequences on employee happiness and organisational performance (Fritz, 2009). Factors like organisational chaos, conflicts of interest, and broader social closure projects surrounding class, race, and gender have been identified as underlying drivers of these uncivil behaviours.(Roscigno et al., 2009) The effects of coworker incivility are considerable, manifesting in decreased job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, as well as increased employee turnover and reduced morale.(Fritz, 2009) When left unchecked, incivility can erode organisational values and deplete valuable resources, undermining the overall well-being and productivity of the workforce.

Contemporary research underscores the profound impact of coworker incivility on workplace happiness. When colleagues exhibit rude or disrespectful behaviour, it creates a toxic atmosphere that significantly undermines job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Employees who experience such incivility often feel less satisfied with their jobs and less loyal to their company, which can erode the foundation of a supportive work environment (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Moreover, the effects of incivility extend beyond mere dissatisfaction. The stress and negativity stemming from uncivil interactions can severely impair employee performance and morale. This heightened stress makes it challenging for employees to concentrate, be productive, and maintain a positive outlook on their work (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Furthermore, the impact of incivility is not confined to the immediate workday; it also contributes to higher turnover rates. Employees who feel disrespected and unhappy are more inclined to leave their jobs in search of a more respectful and supportive work environment (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Thus, coworker incivility not only diminishes workplace happiness but also drives significant turnover, creating a cycle of disruption and dissatisfaction.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The contemporary workplace increasingly recognises the importance of employee well-being and its connection to organisational success. While factors like job satisfaction and work-life balance are often addressed, coworker incivility is a pervasive yet often overlooked issue threatening workplace happiness. Coworker incivility encompasses low-intensity, rude, and disrespectful behaviours among colleagues, creating a hostile and stressful work environment. Though often subtle and ambiguous, these actions can significantly impact employees' emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall workplace happiness. Despite growing awareness of workplace incivility, research exploring

its relationship with workplace happiness remains limited. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the nature, prevalence, and consequences of coworker incivility on employee happiness among retail outlet employees.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the most frequently experienced forms of coworker incivility by retail outlet employees
- To examine the impact of coworker incivility on workplace happiness

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research has consistently shown that coworker incivility can have a significant impact on workplace behavior and well-being. **Itzkovich (2016)** found that reduced co-workers' solidarity can lead to increased incivility and deviant behavior, while **Ferguson (2012)** demonstrated that this incivility can spill over into the family domain, affecting marital satisfaction and family-to-work conflict. **Manegold (2015)** further explored the multilevel process of incivility, highlighting its negative social exchange among coworkers. **Reio (2011)** expanded on this by testing the association between situational constraints, emotional reactions, and behavioral responses, finding that both supervisor and coworker incivility can lead to decreased organizational commitment and employee satisfaction. These studies collectively underscore the detrimental effects of coworker incivility on both individual and organizational levels. Workplace incivility, such as rudeness and disregard for others, has been linked to a range of negative outcomes, including reduced work effort and increased counterproductive work behaviors **(Muir, 2000; Sakurai, 2012).** This incivility can be perpetuated by organizational factors, such as job insecurity and low social support, and can create a culture of incivility within the workplace **(Torkelson, 2016).** The experience of incivility from coworkers can also lead to feelings of guilt, particularly in individuals with a high internal attribution orientation, which in turn can influence their organizational citizenship behavior **(Wang, 2021).** These findings highlight the complex interplay of individual and organizational factors in the perpetuation and impact of workplace incivility.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for carrying out this study is mainly designed with a descriptive work based on primary data obtained through well-structured questionnaire method.

The data analysis for the study is collected from the respondents through well-constructed questionnaire on the basis of first-hand information (primary data), secondary data was utilized whenever necessary viz., reviewing the magazine, journals websites etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is considered as a descriptive one. It includes 56 samples which have been selected from the organised retail outlet employees. The samples belong to different age class, income groups etc.

SAMPLE DESIGN & DATA COLLECTION PERIOD

Since it is difficult to contact entire retail outlet employees, therefore the convenience sampling method has been used in the study which consists of 56 retail outlet employees in Idukki District, Kerala State. The data was collected from Dec 2024 to Jan 2025.The data were analysed using descriptive analysis and Correlation analysis.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was restricted to Idukki District, hence the result obtained cannot be generalized as whole.
- The result depends on the information given by the respondents.
- The attitude of respondents may change, so the study is valid for specific period only.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CO-WORKER INCIVILITY

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ignored or excluded by coworkers	3.3400	1.29662
Demeaning or derogatory remarks	3.2000	1.44949
Interrupted or talked over in meetings	2.9800	1.37054
Belittled opinions or ideas	3.0600	1.24576
Rude or inappropriate gestures	3.0000	1.34840
Spread rumors or gossip	3.7600	1.14698

Condescending or patronizing behavior	3.6000	1.22268
Taken credit for work or ideas	3.7600	1.14698
Excluded from important meetings or communications	2.9800	1.37054
Refused assistance when needed	3.3000	1.33712
Made work more difficult intentionally	2.9000	1.41064
Publicly criticized or embarrassed	3.7800	1.15976
Sarcastic or harsh tone	3.6000	1.22268
Little interest in feelings or concerns	3.7800	1.14221
Undermined in front of others	2.9800	1.37054
Avoided or ignored communications	3.2200	1.38228
Treated rudely or impolitely	3.0000	1.34840
Dismissed contributions during group work	3.5000	1.36700
Experienced hostility or aggression	3.6000	1.22268

The descriptive statistics reveal that Publicly criticized or embarrassed and having little interest in feelings or concerns have the highest means (3.78), suggesting these were the most frequently or intensely experienced negative behaviors. Spreading rumors or gossip and Taking credit for work or ideas also scored relatively high (3.76), indicating these actions were common concerns. Made work more difficult intentionally has the lowest mean (2.9), followed by Interrupted or talked over in meetings, Excluded from important meetings or communications, and Undermined in front of others (all around 2.98). These behaviours were less frequent or intense compared to others but still averaged around a moderate level.

WORKPLACE HAPPINESS

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am satisfied with my current job.	1.4400	.57711
I feel valued and appreciated at work.	2.2400	1.61068
I have a good relationship with my coworkers.	1.3600	1.04511
My workplace environment is positive and supportive.	2.0400	1.47025
I feel motivated to do my best at work.	1.6200	.94524
I have a good work-life balance.	1.4800	1.18218
My job allows me to use my skills and abilities effectively.	1.7200	1.16128
I receive adequate recognition for my contributions at work.	1.5400	.83812
I feel a sense of accomplishment from my work.	1.8000	1.30931
I have opportunities for professional growth and development.	2.1600	1.47579
I am satisfied with the level of communication and transparency in my organization.	1.7200	1.08872
I feel that my job security is stable.	1.9800	1.30133
I have the resources and support I need to do my job effectively.	2.1400	1.47094
My workload is manageable and reasonable.	1.4600	.95212
I feel a strong sense of belonging at my workplace.	1.7000	1.24949
My workplace promotes a healthy work culture and environment.	2.8000	1.64130
I am happy with the benefits and compensation I receive.	2.1600	1.48956
I feel respected and treated fairly by my colleagues and supervisors.	1.4600	1.05386

The descriptive statistics reveal nuanced insights into employees' perceptions of their workplace, highlighting areas of strength and concern. The highest mean score, "My workplace promotes a healthy work culture and environment" (Mean = 2.80, Std. Dev. = 1.64), suggests that employees recognize efforts toward maintaining a positive culture. Similarly,

perceptions of workplace resources ("I have the resources and support I need to do my job effectively," Mean = 2.14, Std. Dev. = 1.47) and opportunities for professional growth ("I have opportunities for professional growth and development," Mean = 2.16, Std. Dev. = 1.48) are moderately positive. However, significant challenges are evident in other areas. The lowest scores are observed for job satisfaction ("I am satisfied with my current job," Mean = 1.44, Std. Dev. = 0.58) and coworker relationships ("I have a good relationship with my coworkers," Mean = 1.36, Std. Dev. = 1.04), indicating dissatisfaction and potential relational challenges. Additionally, low ratings for "My workload is manageable and reasonable" (Mean = 1.46, Std. Dev. = 0.95) and "I feel respected and treated fairly by my colleagues and supervisors" (Mean = 1.46, Std. Dev. = 1.05) point to stressors related to workload and equity in the workplace. The areas of recognition ("I receive adequate recognition for my contributions at work," Mean = 1.54, Std. Dev. = 0.83), motivation ("I feel motivated to do my best at work," Mean = 1.62, Std. Dev. = 0.95), and work-life balance ("I have a good work-life balance," Mean = 1.48, Std. Dev. = 1.18) also indicate dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that employees may feel undervalued, overburdened, and misaligned with organizational goals.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Ho: There is no significant relationship between co-worker incivility and workplace happiness

H1: There is a significant relationship between co-worker's incivility and workplace happiness

Variable		Workplace Happiness
Co-worker Incivility	Pearson Correlation	-0.360
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000**

**Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

Interpretation

Correlation coefficient between the co-worker incivility and the workplace happiness is -0.360 which indicate (-0.360^2 = 0.1296) 12.9 percent negative relationship between the co-worker incivility and the workplace happiness and is significant at 1% level. Thus, Hypothesis is accepted i.e., there exists a significant relationship between the co-worker incivility and the workplace happiness among the retail outlet employees.

8. FINDINGS

- The analysis reveals that "Publicly criticized or embarrassed" and "Having little interest in feelings or concerns" exhibit the highest mean scores (3.78), indicating these behaviors are the most frequently or intensely experienced by employees.

- "Spreading rumors or gossip" and "Taking credit for work or ideas" also demonstrated relatively high mean scores (3.76), suggesting that these actions are common and warrant attention as significant workplace concerns.

- The behavior "Made work more difficult intentionally" recorded the lowest mean score (2.90), signaling that while it is less prevalent, it still poses a notable issue within the workplace environment.

- Behaviors such as "Interrupted or talked over in meetings," "Excluded from important meetings or communications," and "Undermined in front of others" exhibited moderate mean scores around 2.98, implying that, although less frequent, they remain relevant and impactful aspects of workplace dynamics

- Job satisfaction is notably low (Mean = 1.44, Std. Dev. = 0.58), indicating a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction among employees with their current roles.

- Coworker relationships are similarly unfavourable (Mean = 1.36, Std. Dev. = 1.04), suggesting potential interpersonal challenges within the workplace.

- Workload management is a significant concern (Mean = 1.46, Std. Dev. = 0.95), indicating that employees may frequently feel overwhelmed.

- Perceptions of fairness in the workplace are lacking (Mean = 1.46, Std. Dev. = 1.05), implying that employees may view the organizational environment as inequitable or unjust.

- Recognition for contributions is insufficient (Mean = 1.54, Std. Dev. = 0.83), suggesting that employees do not feel adequately acknowledged for their efforts.

- Motivation levels are low (Mean = 1.62, Std. Dev. = 0.95), indicating that employees may not be sufficiently driven to perform at their best.

- Work-life balance is reported as inadequate (Mean = 1.48, Std. Dev. = 1.18), indicating that employees may struggle to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

9. CONCLUSION

Organizations should establish clear behavioural standards and provide training on emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. Introducing confidential feedback systems can enable employees to report concerns without fear of retaliation, while transparent communication channels and decision-making processes can reduce perceptions of exclusion or undermining. The study indicates significant areas of concern within the workplace, particularly related to negative behaviours, job satisfaction, coworker relationships, workload management, and overall employee well-being. High mean scores for negative behaviours such as "Publicly criticized or embarrassed" and "Having little interest in feelings or concerns" signal a culture where employees feel disrespected and undervalued. Additionally, low job satisfaction, poor coworker relationships, and insufficient recognition for contributions suggest that employees do not feel acknowledged or motivated. To address these issues, it is recommended that organizations implement comprehensive training programs focused on fostering respectful communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Policies that promote fair treatment and transparent communication should be reinforced to build trust. Efforts to enhance workload management through proper resource allocation and the introduction of flexible work policies can help reduce feelings of overwhelm. Recognition initiatives, such as employee appreciation programs, and measures to improve work-life balance should be prioritized. Ultimately, cultivating a culture of respect, fairness, and support can drive higher job satisfaction and overall productivity and workplace happiness.

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