

Reducing Incivility at Workplace: Primary Prevention is the Answer

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Abstract

We see millions of people going to work every day but there are only a few luck ones who don't experience workplace incivility. Workplace incivility originated by Anderson and Pearson in 1999 simply mean rude, discourteous behavior, hidden aggression towards anyone. Majority of the people are victim of uncivil behavior of some or other kind like verbal aggression, emotional abuse, bullying or even violence at workplaces. Research has already proved that place of business incivility is risky for all agencies and employees, but it has been extraordinarily overlooked due to its lots much less immoderate nature at the same time as in comparison with aggression. Usually the instigator of any uncivil behavior is not aware of the negative impact they are creating on the victims. The cost of the workplace incivility borne by organizations is too much in terms of unhealthy working environment, dissatisfaction and de motivation among employees, intensions to leave the job and many more. Whether done intentionally or not organizations must make sincere efforts in to detect and handle these issues in order to avoid any negative consequences. Workplace Incivility is been research by various dimensions in recent times as the cost associated with it is tremendous and can result in serious and deteriorating results for both employees as well as organizations. This article attempts to study workplace incivility and some prevention measures like Emotional Intelligence, Workplace relational civility and positive relational management. Past empirical research have reported that women is more exposed to uncivil act than men; thereby putting their well being at higher risk.

Keywords: Incivility, Employee turnover, Self efficacy, Bullying, Emotional exhaustion

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of modern societies results in more frequent uncivil acts. In a survey conducted in year 2002, 2000 American respondents, nearly 4 out of 5 considered themselves as being disrespected, lack of consideration, rudeness and nearly three out of five believe that the situation is more worsen up with passing years [1]. The workplace is no exception; various uncivil acts stories are very common at workplace these days. Due to globalization and continuous economic changes, increasing complexities and rapid technological advancements, workers experience of labour market

is very stressful [2]. Also coping with continuous change is equally stressful and demanding. This new workplace environment characterized by complex and fragmented workplace relationships results in more cases of uncivil acts [3]. Moreover challenging workloads and continuous flow of overloaded information creates a pressure of meeting deadlines and time lines which triggers workers to be less polite/ being uncivil in their interpersonal relationships [4]. Among the total workforce, nearly 10-20% has reported to witness incivility daily and 20-50% has been directly exposed to uncivil acts, mistreatments at their

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workplace [4, 5]. Notably, women have more frequently experience workplace incivility than men (Cortina et al, 2001), some intervention techniques in terms of primary preventive measures can be considered [6]. This will help in reducing uncivil acts and create healthier workplace there by benefitting employees. The present article focus on discussing some prevention measures construct to reduce the frequency of occurrence of incivility which are advantageous for both men and women [7].

Workplace Incivility Consequences

Workplace incivility is characterized as a low deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm others [8] Uncivil acts at workplace result in serious health implications in form of depression, physical symptoms [9, 10] Experiencing mistreatments at workplace can even damage one's self image and motivation [11]. Experiencing incivility can even decrease one's self esteem [12], self efficacy [13], Self confidence [14] and well being [15].

Most of the past research has supported the fact that workplace incivility is associated negatively with various variables like job/ task satisfaction which not only affect an individual mental health but badly impact the physical health resulting in dissatisfied life. As an outcome frequent job withdrawals, distress in life creeps in [16]. In addition, some more research have even focused on the fact that women consider negative relationship between sexual aggression and job satisfaction more stronger as compared to negative relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction.

Gradually Moving from Workplace Incivility to Relational Workplace Civility

The prevention approach [17, 18] is focused on reducing risks by following various preventive measures thereby making individuals more strengthful [19] and organizations more sound [20]. Ever since the concept of workplace has evolved the focus of work is on studying the incivilities rather than civility in the workplace [8, 21, 22]. Civility is considered to be an essential mandate in order to establish favorable conditions for developing adaptive relationships [23]. Being civil implies mutual respect towards individuals, courteous behavior and being aware about your own rights & of others [24, 25]. Relational workplace civility (RWC) construct is characterized by respect, empathy, concern awareness about self and others, being sensitive on interpersonal relations and being kind towards other [26]. It has three dimensions 1. Relational culture 2. Relational decency 3. Relational readiness.

Relational culture is the impact of cultural norms towards developing a kind and polite attitude toward others. Being Relational Decency is the ability to comprehend the dynamics of relationships in any given situation and then contribute constructively within the workplace. Relational Readiness is the ability to quickly understand other feelings and show proactive sensibility. The definite relationship between RWC and workplace incivility outcomes have been tested empirically [26, 27]. RWC is shown to be positive associated with high degree of self esteem and an individual social support mechanism. Perceived support mechanism is the degree of support a person receives from his family, friends and all other people an individual is associated with. This result is equally supported by the fact that social support mechanism helps an individual to minimize the deteriorating impact of workplace incivility [1] RWC is both related to Hedonic and Eudaimonic well being [26]. Hedonic is related with cognitive evaluation i.e satisfaction with own self [28] and affective evaluation (which studies the emergence of positive emotions over negative emotions) [29]. On the other, Eudaimonic is related with one's own self realization and optimal working i.e. finding the meaning of life [30, 31].

Preventive Measure: Developing Positive and Affirmative Relational Management

Relationships in a human life are very basic and fundamental; they are crucial for everyone's well being [32–34] both personally and professionally [20]. The ability is communicate effectively in work relationships, strengthening one's own self in relationship Management is the central part of positive and affirmative relationship Management. Maintaining positive relations refer to an individual ability to adapt the workplace relations and is characterized by three measures: 1. Mutual Respect (Respecting one own self and respect for others), 2. Caring (Caring for one's own self and care for

others) 3. Connectedness (a sense of connection a person shares with family, friends and all others he is associated with). This positive relationship preventive measure will help to develop positive and supportive relationship within the workplace. People who have higher personal relationship management component are more satisfied and lead a meaningful life [35, 36]. Flourishing life encompasses purposeful life, bring more positive and healthy relationships, self esteem and optimism in one's own & others life [37–39]. Hence, maintaining positive relationship management will not only work upon the well being of individuals but also constructively contribute to well being of organizations.

Preventive Measure: Emotional Intelligence and Developing Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Emotional Intelligence is an ability to discriminate, express and regulate one's own emotions and other's emotions [40, 41]. EI is characterized by three categories of emotions 1. The way of Expressing emotions 2. The way of regulating emotions 3. How emotions are used to make better decisions and to solve various problems [42]. Although literature has proposed various different models of EI [43, 44]) but the center was primarily on cognitive skills and some mixed models wherein wide variety of personality variables are included [40, 41, 45]. Several scholars have divided EI on two dimensions – ability based models [40, 41] and trait based EI Models which include self reported EI [46] and emotional self efficacy EI [45]. Different models have emerged around EI. Models which cover emotions recognition, regulation and reasoning are known as EI models, where as models which include personal characteristics which contribute towards developing positive work environment are known as emotional intelligence competencies [40, 41, 45, 47]. Recently in a holistic view of EI, numerous multiple levels have been proposed [10]. According to this, EI can be articulated in 3 levels: basic/ traits level, behavioral level and self perceived level. Despite different dimensions around EI and EIC, the evidence of these constructs on individual and organization well being is very clear. The higher score of EI are indicators of greater resilience and a greater sense of satisfaction from life [19]. This study also relates to eudaimonis well being and emotional intelligence [36]. Hence, it can be concluded that trait EI Score is strongly related with people perception of a good flourishing and meaningful life. On the other hand, ability based EI appeared to be unrelated to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being [17]. Hence, individuals who are good at managing, understanding and perceiving emotions also perceive good social support [48]. EI is associated with how people effectively manage both personal and professional conflicts, how they undertaking responsibility socially and morally, and how effectively they handle impulsive control. EI seems to be connected with how people manage conflicts at workplace [49]. Some recent research have explored on the relationship between EI instruments and individual resilience and hedonic well being [19].

CONCLUSION

Various past research have made it very clear and loud that incivility is very serious for an individual well being. The more heartbreaking part is that it is being differentiated on gender account wherein, women are at more risk to such uncivil acts as compared to men. Women are generally seen to be experiencing the ill effect more frequently. Since such unfavourable working conditions are penalizing women more than men, women are more likely to experience health and mental distress . This can even hinder women's career development and can even lead to long term sickness . The primary prevention techniques and the psychology of sustainable development focus on various constructs affected by interventions. In this sense, relational workplace civility, positive and affirmative environment, emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence competencies are conceived as trainable interpersonal abilities are worth taking into consideration. All these constructs are related with developing good social support, indicating that building positive and healthy workplace relationships can help to reduce the occurrence of uncivil/ mistreatments at workplace. Constant social support from supervisors, coworkers can help to generate larger job satisfaction . Social support does not automatically contribute towards shaping a healthy relational culture of an organization. Organizations should focus on promoting good relational awareness, developing strengths and

effective use of resources as a primary preventive perspective in avoiding dangerous relation dynamics. Interestingly, Emotional Intelligence competencies can play a positive role in the way people manage their emotions at workplace which can help to prevent unhealthy interpersonal relationships. Positive relationships at workplace can help to create individual's relational strength and improve worker's quality of life. Overall generating people's awareness and relational competencies positively contribute in shaping a healthy work environment for both women and men. Overall, both hedonic and eudaimonic well being appear to be affected by all these constructs. Hence, relational workplace civility and positive and affirmative relationship management are considered to be the most important. Thus future studies can focus on assessing these construct as to how they change through longitudinal studies. Various cultural and ethnic backgrounds can also be assessed for wider coverage. Further assessment can also cover various other contextual and temporal aspects for example, type of organization, organization setting, age, gender, the impact of these constructs for a constructive output and many more. The study has certain limitations, since the literature showed the improvement in terms of individuals; the same can be assessed in terms of organizational groups and organization as a whole to analyze how preventive measures actually work. To conclude, it seems primary preventive measures can effectively contribute for the goodness of organizations where in more frequent incivility acts are undergoing due to globalization and major technological advancements. This will help to promote gender equality for both men and women to grow equally to excel and advance in their careers.

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