Witnessing Workplace Incivility towards Burnout: a Conceptual Perspective

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
History *Revised format: Nov 2018* *Available Online: Dec 2018*	**Objective:** This paper seeks to accentuate the significance in apprehension the factor, which is witnessed workplace incivility that resulted in burnout among the housemen in Malaysia where it is affecting the overall situation in healthcare industry
Keywords *Workplace Incivility, Witness, Burnout.*	**Methodology:** This is a proposed quantitative study that will be conducted in peninsular general hospitals in Malaysia by using self-administered questionnaire which related to workplace incivility and burnout. **Implication:** The study is expected to be useful as an insights for future research and it is particularly useful for the Ministry of Health in dealing with the challenging issues related to house officers nowadays.

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1. Introduction

Looking at broad scale, the competitive pressures has taken its toll on the healthcare industry. Changes in structural events, outraging increments in public reckoning, new diseases revelation, expansion number of patient and social media intrusion have shown their remarkable impact on the healthcare service quality. The employees especially the professional backbone in the healthcare industry, doctors are among those who are facing big challenges in delivering their responsibilities daily through the emergence changes that happening nowadays.

One of the biggest challenges that encountered by the healthcare workers especially among the physician is the high level of stress (Hafiz, Ima-Nirwana & Chin, 2018) which eventually turned into burnout, the prolonged stress consequences (Czaja, Moss & Mealer). Initially, burnout has taken its toll on the physician well-being throughout the world (Shanafelt, Dyrbye & West, 2017). Physician burnout has reach its prevalence when it has been documented that more than 50% of the practicing and trainee physician (house officers) experience high level of burnout (West, Dyrbye, Erwin, & Shanafelt, 2016) and burnout influenced the physician's professionalism, mental health, physical endurance and eventually affecting their quality of services towards patients.

Several factors have been found to be associated with the higher level of burnout among the physicians especially the house officers who are just about to begin their journey practically in the healthcare

industry. The factors that have been discussed among the scholar are also include the organizational factors, physician's capability, environmental factors (relationship with co-workers) and also related to the areas of work life (Hafiz, Ima-Nirwana & Chin, 2018). From the numerous discussion that took place over the years, this show that it is important to address the possible factors that potentially become the factors which related to burnout since this can affect the wellbeing of the house officers, eventually lead to negative work outcome, such as burnout.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Workplace incivility from witness/observer perspective.
Workplace incivility is defined as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (p. 457). Incivility is not penetrated only by the individuals in managerial positions but it can also be executed by the coworkers or external parties such as customers or any other third parties (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016).

Over the last two decades, workplace incivility as part of the workplace negativity has been discussed as one of the focal point in the organizational behavior literature as one of the elements that able to bring significant impact towards the organizational, group and individual level (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016). Besides, workplace incivility managed to attracted the researchers' attention from different areas where it is found that this element able to reduce the employee's satisfaction towards the job, colleagues and superior (Cortina, Magley, Williams & Langhout, 2001), reduce the level of retention (Griffin, 2010), also affecting the physical condition and mental health of an individual (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008).

In understanding the diversity elements of workplace incivility, it is not just focusing on the target perspectives, but there is also a growing number of research has taken place in understanding this elements from the third party (witness/observer) view as a result from the injustice forms of behavior, by the perpetrators towards the victims (Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). Furthermore, witnessed incivility also being addressed as the stressor factors which lead to several negative workplace and individual outcomes such as towards individual's emotional appraisal, employee's satisfaction, turnover intention and job neglection (Miner & Eischeid, 2012).

Several reasons need to be outlined to point out that witnessing/observing incivility behaviors such as rudeness will lead to negative effect either on organization or individual's emotional responses (Porath, & Erez, 2009). Kollock (1998) stated that human being is not just being driven solely by the self-interest, but people are also concern with the wellbeing of others. Besides, human being is also having that side of judgment that punishing people who they assumed to be unfair in treating others (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler, 1986; Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress & Gee, 2002). Thus, this is understood that the situation when a person receives any unfair treatment from others could lead to an inclination in negative emotional responses as anger, impatience and even hatred (De Cremer & Van Hiel, 2006). Besides, the negative effects that occur from witnessing the incivility behavior could reflecting a person evaluation upon their self-interest (Truss, 2005) as they will keep thinking if they will be the next target of the perpetrators and this situation will lead to nervousness, anxiousness which make them scared of their own wellbeing (Porath, & Erez, 2009).

2.2 Witnessing workplace incivility on burnout
In understanding the impact of the observer/witness related to workplace incivility, this will enable us in looking in depth how this element does affecting the perpetrators, victims and organization as a whole (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). However, workplace incivility that also involves the witness able to predict the emotional appraisal of an individual which later became the stressor and increasing employee's dissatisfaction, triggering turnover intention and caused the job neglection (Miner & Eischeid, 2012; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007).

The parallel result have been found in few studies where through observing the workplace incivility or uncivil behaviors that occurred at the workplace, this will give the negative impacts towards the employees especially affecting the creativity, performance and helpfulness, and other mentally affects as same as the target (Schilpzand, Leavitt & Lim, 2016). Additionally, Hamblin, Essenmacher, Upfal, Russell, Luborsky, Ager and Arnetz (2015) in their research has found that it 89% of the employees in the hospitals (nurses and physicians) have experienced in both types of incivility, where they have been victims and the observer throughout their working experiences. The authors further discussed that the implication from the workplace incivility is not just involving the victims, but on greater picture where the other employees who are not directly in the mistreatment accidents were experiencing feeling of fear as they are afraid they will be the next target (Yang, Caughlin,, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector, 2014).

Since incivility involved the targets, perpetrators and witnesses, it can be concluded that it is a damage to the employees and workforce system (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008). Workplace incivility conducted by the supervisors or the co-workers lead to negative organizational outcomes, contradict to the norms that there should be a good role models displayed inside the organization (Estes & Wang, 2008). The observers of the uncivil conducts, as in direct or indirect way will adapting the similar approach and interaction style from how they witness in every single day (Pearson, Andersson & Porath, 2000), thus contributed to more counterproductive work behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) and harming the organization as a whole (Meier & Semmer, 2013).

3.0 Proposed Framework
Based on the above reviewed literature, there would be two (2) variables involved in this research which are witnessing workplace incivility (independent variable) and burnout as the dependent variable. The proposed framework will be as follows:
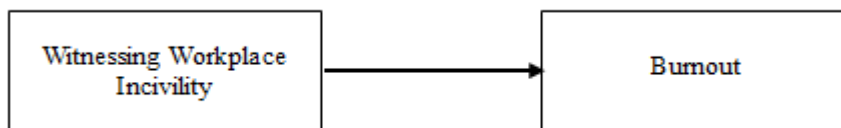
4.0 Proposition
Accordingly, understanding on several factors related to workplace incivility has enable researcher in exploring their impact towards workplace behavior or outcomes. So, it is presumed witnessed workplace incivility can be associated to burnout especially among those in professional industry such as house officers (HO) in Malaysia's public hospitals. Therefore, this paper advocated that:

H1: Witnessed incivility can be associated with burnout among the HO in Malaysia.

5.0 Conclusion
Referring to the previous exploration and established propositions, it is aimed that the future direction of this research will be able to investigate in depth the connection between witnessing workplace incivility and burnout.

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