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Gender, Occupational Position, and Incivility: The Role of Status on Rude Behaviors at Work

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GENDER, OCCUPATIONAL POSITION, AND INCIVILITY: THE ROLE OF
STATUS ON RUDE BEHAVIORS AT WORK

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This study examined the role of status (i.e., occupational position and gender) in the

frequency and experience of workplace incivility. Participants were 89 university

students over the age of 20 who currently were employed and completed measures

assessing their experiences of incivility at work, the instigator of the incivility, and job-

related outcomes (i.e., turnover intent, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment).

Consistent with hypotheses, supervisors were more likely to be instigators of incivility

than coworkers. Participants also reported lower job satisfaction when the instigator was

a supervisor, and lower organizational commitment and higher turnover intent when the

instigator was male. These results suggest that status does have some effect on the

consequences of incivility.

Gender, Occupational Position, and Incivility: The Role of
Status on Rude Behaviors at Work

Workplace aggression is growing in popularity in the organizational literature

(Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Baron & Neuman, 1996; Cortina, Magley, Williams, &

Langhout, 2001; Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereia, 2000; Neuman & Baron, 1998).

This could be due to the fact that workplace aggression is increasing in occurrence and

that the public is hearing more about it (Neuman & Baron, 1998). The public, however,

only hears about the more extreme and violent forms of aggression like when an

employee shoots his/her coworkers. Conversely, Neuman and Baron (1998) maintain that

overt forms of aggression such as physical attacks, property damage, and theft are less

likely to occur in organizations. In fact, the authors stated that verbal and passive forms

of aggression occur more frequently than these overt forms. Workplace incivility is one

type of passive aggression that occurs on the job and while it is embedded in a continuum

with violence, it is at the opposite end (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Even though

incivility may be a milder form of aggression, it deserves further attention (Andersson &

Pearson, 1999; Pearson & Porath, 2004) because it occurs more often than the violent

types and may be more pervasive in organizations (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

Workplace incivility is defined as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous

intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Andersson

& Pearson, 1999, p. 457). Some examples of incivility include sending a rude email,

excluding someone from a meeting, giving hostile looks or stares, or addressing a

coworker inappropriately or unprofessionally. The key feature behind incivility is that it

is ambiguous, with acts occurring because either it was the instigator's intent or simply

an oversight (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Pearson

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& Porath, 2004). Regardless of whether it was intended or not, personal experiences of workplace incivility can have negative effects on employees. For example, incidents of daily or regular acts of incivility have been found to be related to the suffering of personal and/or professional well-being (Cortina et al., 2001; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004), more serious forms of aggression (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Folger & Baron, 1996; Pearson et al., 2000; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001), and the erosion of effective work interactions (Johnson & Indvik, 2001; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Pearson et al., 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2004). Because of these negative consequences of incivility, more research should be done to better understand this workplace phenomenon. For instance, little research has examined how status differences between the instigator and the target affect the work-related outcomes of incivility. This study will attempt to narrow the gap in the literature concerning how status of the instigator is related to the experiences of incivility and consequences for targets. I will first describe some of the major consequences of workplace incivility for targets and then explain the role that status of the instigator may play in this relationship.

Consequences for Targets of Incivility

As indicated, there are consequences to experiencing incivility. Research has shown that higher levels of turnover intent are one of the more common consequences of workplace incivility (Barling, 1996; Cortina et al., 2001; Pearson et al., 2000; Pearson et al., 2001). For example, Cortina et al. (2001) found that employees were more likely to consider quitting their jobs upon experiencing frequent acts of incivility. Similarly, Pearson et al. (2000) found that many victims of incivility considered quitting their jobs and 12% of those actually did. This research suggests that when incivility is common in

the workplace, employees may consider finding a more pleasant or respectful place to work.

Job satisfaction is also shown to decline as workplace incivility rises (Cortina et al., 2002; Cortina et al., 2001; Lapierre, Spector, & Leck, 2005; Pearson et al., 2001). Incivility may lead to decreased job satisfaction in a similar way that it leads to increased turnover. An increase in uncivil acts can gradually wear away at a person's satisfaction with and on the job. This may be especially the case as incivility becomes part of the culture in the organization. Cortina et al. (2002) conducted a study to determine what kinds of interpersonal mistreatment (i.e., general incivility, gender-related incivility, and unwanted sexual attention) occur among practicing attorneys. They found that mistreatment was experienced in some form by most respondents and that job satisfaction steadily decreased with the occurrence of these forms of interpersonal mistreatment. Similarly, Lapierre et al. (2005) conducted a study among men and women comparing the outcomes of sexual versus nonsexual aggression (e.g., incivility, interpersonal conflict, and bullying) and found that nonsexual aggression had a more significant negative relationship with job satisfaction than did sexual aggression, especially among women. The authors suggested that women may have a stronger reaction to nonsexual aggression due to having less power and influence than men, having greater victimization histories than men, putting more value on pleasant working conditions than men do, and perceiving unwanted behavior as more threatening than men do. Some of these suggestions will be addressed further in the discussion on the role status plays in the experience of incivility.

Organizational commitment also appears to decline as workplace incivility becomes more common (Barling, 1996; Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 2001; Lapierre et al., 2005; Pearson et al., 2000). Pearson et al. (2000) found that a voluntary decrease in commitment to the organization may result from acts of incivility through, for example, no longer assisting coworkers. Barling (1996) broke down organizational commitment into two types: affective and continuance. *Affective commitment* refers to an individual's desire to stay with an organization (e.g., because he/she enjoys his/her work), while *continuance commitment* refers to an individual's need to stay with an organization (e.g., because he/she needs the paycheck). Barling (1996) found that affective commitment decreased and continuance commitment increased as incivility rose. Organizational commitment may decrease when the occurrence of incivility rises and becomes part of the culture because individuals may no longer feel that the organization is an environment where employees are valued and respected.

The Role of Status

The major goal of this study was to examine status differences between instigators and targets of incivility and how these differences influence work-related outcomes for targets. According to social power theories, social power and status inequities are at the core of social interactions making people with less power likely targets for mistreatment (Carli, 1999; French & Raven, 1959; Johnson, 1976; MacKinnon, 1979, 1987; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Wagner & Berger, 1993, 1997). Social power is the ability to exert control and influence over other individuals. Based on social structure processes, individuals are conferred different amounts of social power or privilege depending on membership in a dominant or subordinate group. Individuals in the dominant group

receive a large amount of power, status, and resources, while subordinate group members receive very little in the way of power, status, or resources.

Occupational position and gender are two status variables on which people can be evaluated and, according to Berger, Fisek, Norman, and Zelditch (1977), can help predict which individuals will have more power and influence. Occupational position is considered a *specific status* characteristic (i.e., is situation specific) and gender is considered a *diffuse status* characteristic (i.e., is carried across situations). In both cases, some individuals (i.e., employees in higher occupational positions and men) tend to have more power than others (Berger et al., 1977). Furthermore, these status variables may moderate the relationship between incivility and work-related outcomes. Social power theories offer an explanation as to why occupational position and gender might be related to experiences of personal incivility. This will be demonstrated below in the discussion on social power theories and in coming sections when the research on occupational position, gender, and incivility is reviewed.

One form of social power is called legitimate power. Legitimate power is defined as a person's perception that some individuals in authority are due this power (French & Raven, 1959). Likewise, some individuals who have legitimate power may feel they deserve greater respect and can dominate subordinates. Researchers have found that men have more legitimate power than women do (Johnson, 1976; Lips, 1991). This research suggests that men, because of this legitimate power, may feel that the mistreatment of females, who have less legitimate power, is warranted. In addition, individuals in higher occupational positions compared to the target may feel the misuse of power is acceptable regardless of gender.

Status Characteristics Theory (Wagner & Berger, 1993) is another theory related to status. This theory holds that power differences in society can translate into power differences in the workplace. This theory also predicts that gender can be an important factor in workplace interactions. Because men typically have more social power as a group, that power transfers to the workplace giving men more power than women in organizations. Similarly, Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) states that social groups are arranged in a hierarchical system containing dominant and subordinate groups. An individual's membership in a low-status group creates vulnerability among those individuals. For example, since women belong to a subordinate social group, women in organizations often possess less power than do men, and they may be more likely to be treated rudely as a result.

Social power and status theories allow insight into why those with less power are likely targets for mistreatment from the dominant group. The dominant group seeks to retain the higher status and stay in legitimate power. Thus, the mistreatment of groups with less power is one way to perpetuate power differences between the groups. Because of these power and status differences, consequences of incivility may differ depending on those involved in uncivil interactions. The following sections describe further how these two types of status, occupational position and gender, may be related to experiences of workplace incivility and their consequences.

Status of the Instigator

Occupational Position. As previously discussed, occupational position is one form of status that may play a role in experiences of incivility. Because employees in higher occupational positions typically hold more power than employees in lower positions,

individuals in high positions may feel it is acceptable to treat employees with less power rudely. In addition, because organizations formally recognize higher occupational positions as having more power, acts of incivility from higher status individuals to lower status individuals may be overlooked. Indeed, studies have shown that individuals in lower occupational positions in the workplace often experience more incivility and instigators of incivility are typically of higher occupational position (Pearson et al., 2000; Pearson & Porath, 2004). Furthermore, Johnson and Indvik (2001) report instigators are typically three times as likely to be in a higher position as the target. In line with this finding, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, and Hjelt-Back (1994) found that the majority of respondents in a Swedish university reported that uncivil acts came from persons in a superior position, and Pearson and Porath (2004) found that employees across a variety of industries reported that the majority of incivility came from individuals of a higher occupational status. Pearson et al. (2000) found that rarely do instigators aim incivilities upwards at their superiors, but typically direct uncivil behaviors at subordinates. Based on this research it is expected that individuals in higher occupational positions will be more likely to be instigators of incivility. Thus, this study seeks to replicate previous findings by hypothesizing the following:

> *Hypothesis 1: Individuals in higher occupational positions (i.e.,*
>
> *supervisors) are more likely to be instigators of incivility compared to*
>
> *individuals in equal positions (i.e., coworkers).*

Occupational Position as a Moderator. Research on incivility shows an emphasis (as discussed above) on identifying who the instigator and target of incivility are and on the consequences for the target. However, there has not been much research on the

relationship between the target and the instigator and whether status and power differences between them differentially relate to outcomes for targets. The present study adds to the literature on workplace incivility by examining the links between instigator, target, and outcomes and using social power theories to help predict how targets will react. Based on social power theories and previous research on the instigator of incivility, occupational position may be related to experienced outcomes of incivility. For example, when the instigator of incivility has more power and higher status (e.g., a supervisor) than the target, the target may feel powerless because of his/her lower status and limited resources. These feelings of helplessness in turn could cause the target to be negatively affected. Thus, employees may consider quitting, may feel less satisfied with the job, and/or may feel less committed to the organization if the instigator of incivility is of higher occupational position. The target may also consider leaving the organization to avoid the possible occurrence of future uncivil behaviors. Occupational position, then, is one form of status that may affect reactions to incivility. Moreover, research shows that individuals in higher occupational positions are more likely to commit uncivil behaviors (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; Johnson & Indvik, 2001; Pearson et al., 2000). Based on these ideas, it is predicted that instigators holding a higher occupational position than the target will be related to more negative outcomes for the target. Thus, I make the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 2: Employees will report higher turnover intentions, lower job satisfaction, and lower organizational commitment if the instigator of incivility is of higher occupational position (i.e., supervisor) than of equal position (i.e., coworker).*

Gender. Gender is another form of status where misuse of power (e.g., committing uncivil acts) may be prevalent. Social power theories would predict that men may be likely instigators of interpersonal mistreatment because they possess greater power and control, while women would be more susceptible to being targeted for hostility and mistreatment because they possess little societal power. The effect/danger ratio suggests another reason why men might act uncivilly toward their (female) co-workers. It proposes that an aggressor is motivated to use a technique to harm the target that will be effective while suffering as few consequences as possible (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Lagerspetz, 1994). For example, males have been found to be more aggressive than females (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Lagerspetz, 1994; Pearson et al., 2001), but because jobs can be lost or authority revoked if aggression is suspected, more indirect forms of aggression such as incivility may be used in order to minimize any risks that accompany such behavior. Rutter and Hine (2005) agree that men are also more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors at work because men might even expect some benefits of behaving aggressively. For example, Martin and Meyerson (1998) argued that men in organizations tend to display "typical" male behaviors (e.g., interrupting each other, bragging contests, angry outbursts, yelling) and see these behaviors as an appropriate way to do business. This discussion of how men may view workplace interactions lends support to the argument that men may be more likely to engage in what may be considered an uncivil act at work because it can occur with few costs and may have possible benefits. Indeed, research has shown that instigators of incivility are more likely to be men and that women are more likely to be victims of incivility (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back,

1994; Cortina et al., 2002; Pearson et al., 2000). This study seeks to replicate these

findings, by making the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 3: Men are more likely than women to be instigators of*
>
> *incivility.*

Gender as a Moderator. Gender of the instigator may also moderate the effects of

incivility on work-related outcomes. Male and female targets may have differing levels of

severity concerning the outcomes of incivility depending on whether the instigator is

male or female. Similarity-Attraction Theory holds that individuals prefer interactions

with individuals similar to them, and similarities on demographics, such as gender,

increases social interaction (Byrne, 1971). Research also shows that those individuals

who are dissimilar view each other with distrust and anger (Cox, 1993), while individuals

who are similar to each other view each other with more positive attitudes (Brewer,

1979). For example, women may trust other women more than they trust men because

women frequently have more in common with other women and often feel a connection

to them (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Because of this felt connection,

women may see acts of incivility directed at them from a woman as betrayal (Miller,

2001). While women may feel betrayed by another woman, she may be more likely to

feel angry at a male instigator's uncivil behavior because it may put her in a position

where she feels there is little she can do about the incivility, because of his so-called

legitimate power. This idea of women's feeling of helplessness and suppression of power

caused by male instigators follows, then, from the social power theories discussed earlier.

Therefore, women might be similarly negatively affected by a male or female instigator,

but the mechanism driving the harm may differ.

In contrast, men may see incivility from a woman directed at them as a threat. For example, Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, and Grasselli (2003) found that men are more likely to engage in harassing behaviors toward women as a defense due to various types of threats. One such threat is referred to as legitimacy threat and is present when a member of a group finds him/herself a part of an unstable status hierarchy. So if a man experiences incivility from a woman, he may feel that the woman is trying to flip the status hierarchy and this in turn could cause him to experience negative work outcomes. However, I do not foresee this same problem if a man instigates uncivil acts towards another man because uncivil behavior may be more accepted among men (Martin & Meyerson, 1998). This behavior may sometimes be seen as "typical" male behavior and therefore, more accepted in male interactions at work. Thus, I predict that the gender of the instigator will moderate the relationship between experience of incivility and work outcomes differently for male and female targets. Specifically:

> *Hypothesis 4: Men will report higher turnover intentions, lower job*
>
> *satisfaction, and lower organizational commitment if the instigator of*
>
> *incivility is female than if the instigator is male. In addition, although*
>
> *women will report worse outcomes the more they experience incivility, the*
>
> *gender of the instigator will not influence that relationship.*

Method

Participants and Procedure

The data used here is part of a larger study that was conducted a year prior to the current research. The participants consisted of 243 college students enrolled in psychology, business, and nursing classes at a southern university. The participants were 33% male (n = 79) and 67% female (n = 161) with ages ranging from 17 to 58 ($M = 23$ years). Participants included 83% undergraduate students (n = 202) and 17% graduate students (n = 41). Participants were 89% White, 7% African-American, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% did not respond. Work experience ranged from less than 1 year to 21 years of experience ($M = 2$ years). Participants reported working from 5 to 80 hours ($M = 22$ hours) per week in various types of work including retail (21.7%), food service (15.2%), healthcare (13.1%), clerical (8.6%), academia/education (8.6%), childcare (5.3%), and other (27.5%). Participants' managers were 47.7% male (n = 116) and 51.5% female (n = 125) while 0.80% (n = 2) did not respond.

The survey contained several Likert scales measuring experiences of incivility and work outcomes of turnover intent, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Employee demographics and work information were also collected.

Measures

Workplace Incivility. Experiences of workplace incivility were assessed using the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001), consisting of 9 items. The WIS measures the degree to which participants had been a target of disrespectful, rude, or condescending behavior in the workplace. An example of an item is, "During the past year, has a supervisor, manager, or coworker made

insulting or disrespectful remarks to you?" The occurrence of workplace incivility

was measured on a 4-point scale of 0 (never) to 3 (frequently). The participants

were asked to rate the occurrence of various behaviors in the past year.

Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .91.

Occupational Position of the Instigator. Participants were asked to report the

occupational position of the person who committed the acts of incivility most often. The

choices were "supervisor/manager" and "coworker."

Gender of Instigator. The participants were also asked to report the gender of the

person who committed uncivil behaviors most often. Participants recorded whether the

instigator was "male" or "female".

Turnover Intent. Two items from Porter, Crampon, and Smith's (1976) measure were

used to assess turnover intent. Participants responded on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree)

to 7 (strongly agree) about how often they think about quitting. Items included "I often

think about quitting this job" and "I will probably look for a new job during the next

year." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .65.

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using items from the Michigan

Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979).

Participants indicated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) the degree

to which three statements described their work. The items from this scale included, "All

in all, I am satisfied with my job," "In general, I like working here," and "In general, I

don't like my job" (reverse-coded). This measure has an internal reliability of .92.

Organizational Commitment. A truncated version of Allen and Meyer's (1990)

measure was used to evaluate the organizational commitment of participants. Two

items measured participants' affective commitment to the organization. Participants responded to items on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), which reflected participants' degree of commitment to the organization. Items include, "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my work life at this job" and "The company I work for has a great deal of personal meaning to me." Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .64.

Results

Hypotheses 1 and 3 were tested by performing chi-square tests while Hypotheses 2 and 4 were tested through moderated regression analyses.

Hypothesis 1, that instigators of incivility will hold a higher occupational position, was supported, χ^2 (1, $N = 185$) = 22.84, $p < .01$. Supervisors were more likely to be reported as instigators of incivility than coworkers. Hypothesis 2, that employees will report more negative work outcomes if the instigator holds a higher occupational position, was not supported (although there were main effects of incivility on all outcomes, replicating past research). Table 1 displays the results of the regression analyses for the three work-related outcomes: turnover intent, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3 stated that males are more likely to be instigators of incivility. The analysis for this hypothesis was not significant, χ^2 (1, $N = 186$) = .54, n.s., although more males (N = 98) were reported as instigators of incivility than females (N = 88). Hypothesis 4, that gender of the instigator and target will moderate the relationship between incivility and outcomes, was not supported. The results of the moderated regression analyses for the three work-related outcomes are presented in Table 2. Contrary to predictions, results showed that turnover intent increased at a higher rate if the instigator was male. However, the relationships between incivility and job satisfaction and incivility and organizational commitment were not affected by gender of the instigator or participant.

Table 1
Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Examining Occupational Position as a Moderator

Variable	Turnover Intent			Job Satisfaction			Organizational Commitment		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	B	*B*	*SE B*	β
Incivility	1.08	.33	.29**	-1.06	.27	-.33**	-.97	.29	-.30**
Occupational Position of Instigator (1 = *supervisor*, -1 = *coworker*)	.15	.15	.08	-.13	.13	-.08	-.25	.14	-.16
Incivility X Occupational Position of Instigator	.25	.33	.07	-.25	.27	-.09	.23	.29	.08

Note: ** *p* < .01

Table 2
Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Examining Gender on as a Moderator

Variable	Turnover Intent			Job Satisfaction			Organizational Commitment		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	B	*B*	*SE B*	β
Incivility	1.07	.28	.28**	-.94	.24	-.30**	-.70	.25	-.22**
Gender of Instigator (1 = *male*, -1 = *female*)	-.38	.14	-.22	.20	.12	.14	.20	.12	.14
Gender of Participant (1 = *male*, -1 = *female*)	.38	.14	.22	-.21	.12	-.14	-.17	.12	-.11
Incivility X Gender of Instigator	.59	.28	.17*	-.40	.24	-.13	-.21	.25	-.07
Incivility X Gender of Participant	-.47	.28	-.13	.34	.24	.12	.36	.25	.12
Gender of Instigator X Gender of Participant	.05	.14	.03	-.11	.12	-.08	-.20	.12	-.14
Incivility X Gender of Instigator X Gender of Participant	.08	.28	.02	-.18	.24	-.06	.29	.25	.10

Note: * *p* < .05   ** *p* < .01

Age sub-sample. Given the extensive past research and theory in this area, I was surprised so few findings were significant. One possibility for the lack of findings may be the population sampled. College students often have jobs that are not career-oriented, thus these findings may not be representative of employees in general. Therefore, I decided to conduct additional analyses with a slightly older sample (i.e., over 20 years of age) as a proxy for real-world experience. These participants were 37% male (n = 33) and 63% female (n = 56) with ages ranging from 21 to 58 (*M* = 28 years). Participants included 65% undergraduate students (n = 58) and 35% graduate students (n = 31). Participants were 84% White, 11% African-American, 3% Hispanic, and 2% did not respond. Tenure at the current job ranged from less than 1 year to 21 years of experience (*M* = 3 years). Participants reported working from 5 to 80 hours (*M* = 28 hours) per week in various types of work including healthcare (22.4%), retail (16.8%), academia/education (16.6%), business (8.8%), food service (6.8%), clerical (4.5%), and other (21%). Participants' managers were 50.6% male (n = 45) and 48.3% female (n = 43) while 1.1% (n = 1) did not respond. The same analyses that were run on the whole sample were run again on this smaller sample.

The hypothesis that supervisors are more likely to be instigators of incivility than coworkers (Hypothesis 1) was again supported, χ^2 (1, *N* = 88) = 14.73, *p* < .01. Supervisors were more likely to be reported as instigators of incivility than were coworkers. Hypothesis 2, that employees will report more negative outcomes if the instigator is of a higher occupational position, was partially supported. Table 3 presents the results from the moderated regression analyses for Hypothesis 2. There were significant main effects for incivility on turnover intent (β = .45), job satisfaction

Table 3

Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Examining Occupational Position as a Moderator

Variable	Turnover Intent			Job Satisfaction			Organizational Commitment		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	B	*B*	*SE B*	β
Incivility	1.74	.59	.45**	-1.59	.48	-.49**	-1.75	.60	-.47**
Occupational Position of Instigator (1 = *supervisor*, -1 = *coworker*)	.48	.27	.27	-.47	.22	-.32*	-.66	.27	-.38*
Incivility X Occupational Position of Instigator	-.21	.59	-.06	.15	.48	.05	.89	.60	.27

Note: * *p* < .05　　** *p* < .01

Table 4

Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Examining Gender as a Moderator

| Variable	Turnover Intent			Job Satisfaction			Organizational Commitment		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Incivility	1.12	.38	.31**	-1.11	.33	-.35**	-.66	.39	-.18
Gender of Instigator (1 = *male*, -1 = *female*)	-.27	.19	-.16	.16	.16	.12	.45	.19	.29*
Gender of Participant (1 = *male*, -1 = *female*)	.66	.19	.38**	-.22	.16	-.15	-.16	.19	-.10
Incivility X Gender of Instigator	.77	.38	.23*	-.44	.33	-.16	-.85	.39	-.26*
Incivility X Gender of Participant	-.86	.38	-.25*	.42	.33	.15	.43	.39	.13
Gender of Instigator X Gender of Participant	-.25	.19	-.15	-.02	.16	-.02	-.22	.19	-.14
Incivility X Gender of Instigator X Gender of Participant	.24	.38	.07	-.04	.33	-.02	.25	.39	.08

Note: * *p* < .05　　** *p* < .01
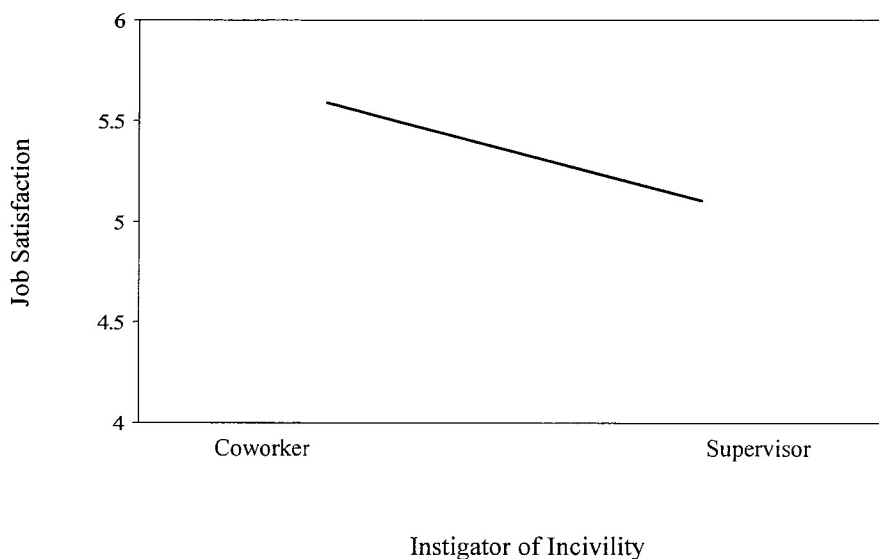
Figure 1. Effect of Instigator Occupational Position on Job Satisfaction

(β = -.49), and organizational commitment (β = -.47). Additionally, there were main

effects for occupational position of the instigator on job satisfaction (β = -.32; see Figure

1) and organizational commitment (β = -.38; see Figure 2). These figures show that

regardless of level of incivility, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were

both lower if the instigator was a supervisor. Turnover intent was not directly affected by

the occupational position of the instigator. In addition, there were no significant incivility

X occupational position of the instigator interactions on any of the work outcomes (see

Table 3).

Hypothesis 3 stated that males are more likely to be instigators of incivility than are

females. This hypothesis was again not supported, χ^2 (1, N = 89) = .55, n.s., although

males (N = 48) were reported more often than females (N = 41) as instigators; thus the

data were in the predicted direction. The hypothesis that gender of the instigator and

gender of the participant will moderate the relationship between incivility and the work

outcomes (i.e., 3-way interaction; Hypothesis 4) was supported in that gender of the

participant and gender of the instigator did show moderating effects, but not in the predicted directions. The results of the moderated regression analyses examining Hypothesis 4 are presented in Table 4.
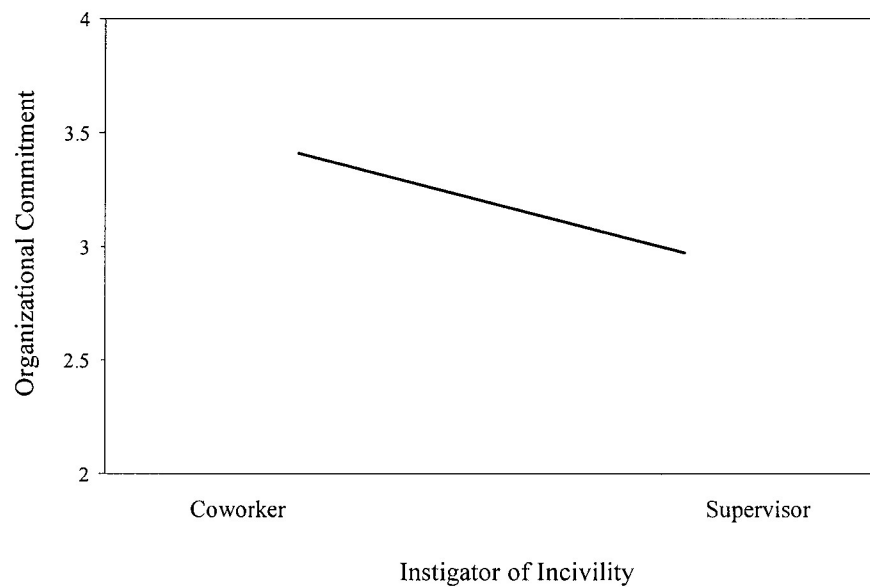

Figure 2. Effect of Instigator Occupational Position on Organizational Commitment

There were significant main effects for incivility on turnover intent (β = .31) and job satisfaction (β = -.35). There was also a main effect of gender of the *instigator* on organizational commitment (β = .29) and a main effect of gender of the *participant* on turnover intent (β = .38). These main effects were qualified by several interactions. There were significant incivility X gender of the instigator interactions on turnover intent (β = .23; see Figure 3) and organizational commitment (β = -.26; see Figure 4). Figure 3 illustrates that those individuals who reported high levels of incivility reported more thoughts of leaving the organization if the instigator was male compared to female,

regardless of the participant's gender. Figure 4 is similar in that where employees are

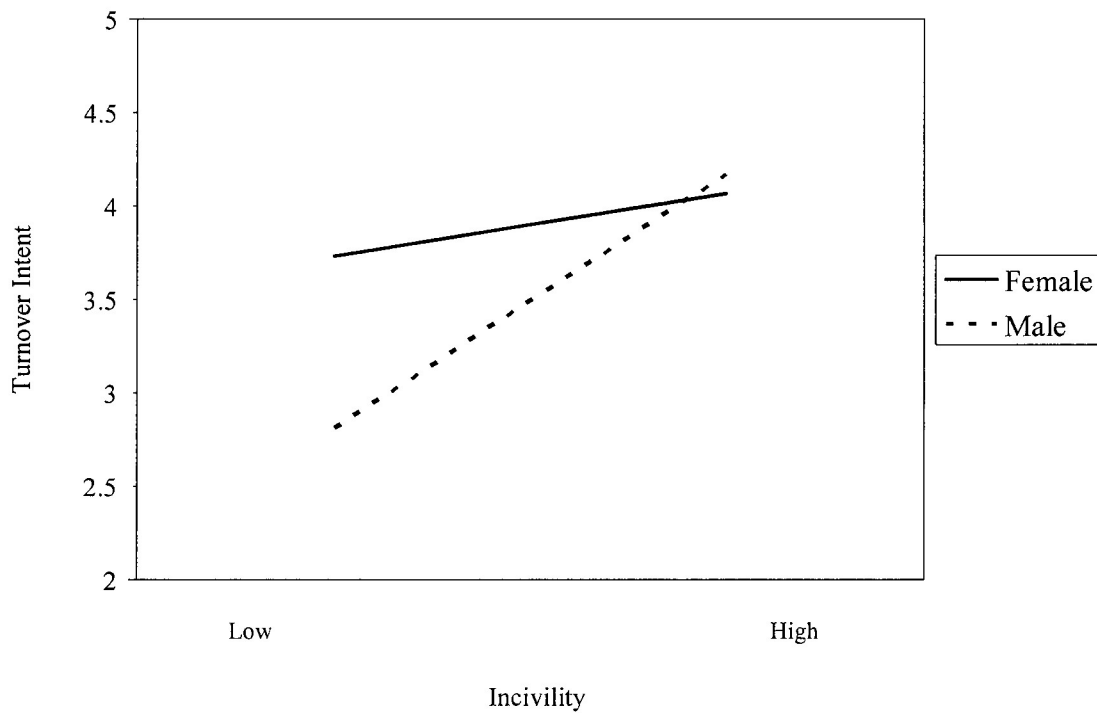relatively unaffected if the instigator is female, experiencing high

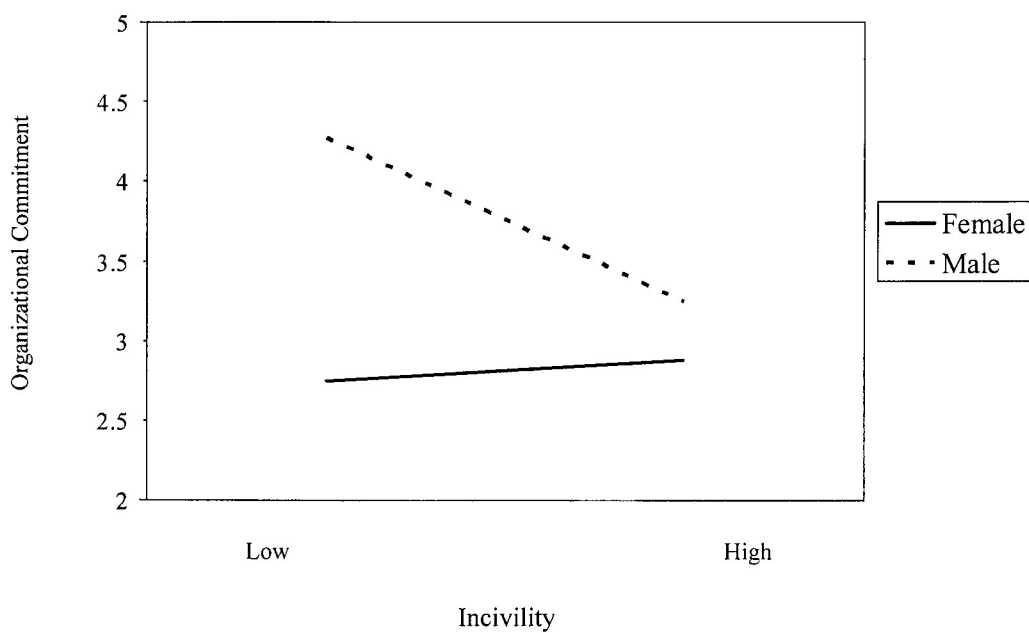*Figure 3.* Incivility X Instigator Gender Interaction on Turnover Intent

Figure 4. Incivility X Instigator Gender Interaction on Organizational Commitment

levels of incivility from a male relates to lower commitment to the organization, and this

too is regardless of participant gender. There was also a significant incivility X

participant gender interaction on turnover intent (β = -.25; see Figure 5). Figure 5 shows

that females are more likely to consider quitting as the experience of incivility increases

regardless of instigator gender.
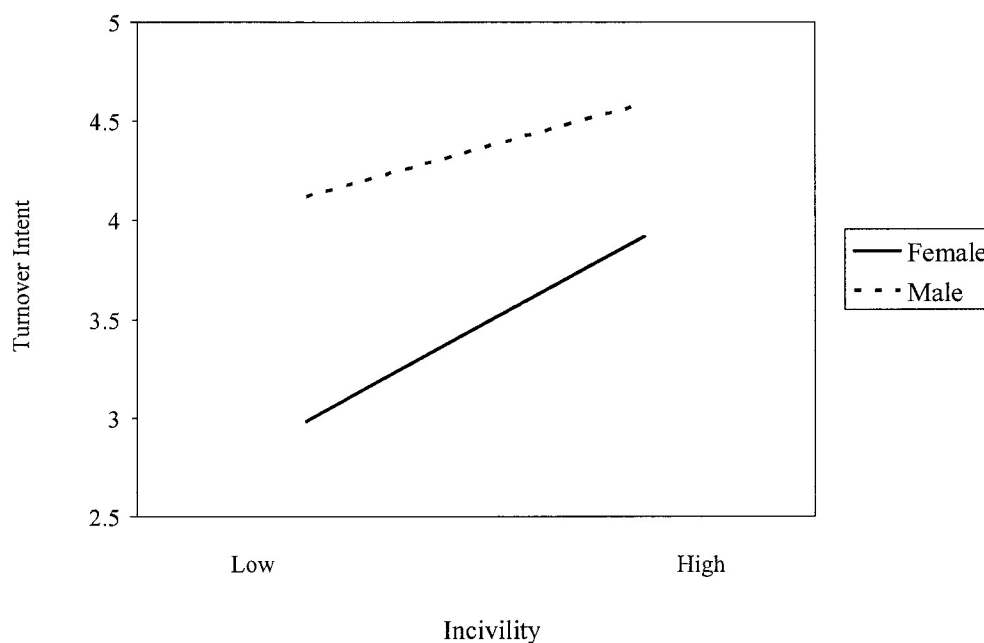
Figure 5. Incivility X Participant Gender Interaction on Turnover Intent

In sum, after considering the results of the data from the whole sample, a sub-sample

based on age was created and analyses were again conducted. Results from this sub-

sample did provide some support for the hypotheses. Findings show that instigators are

more likely to be supervisors. The results also show that employees are more negatively

affected (lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment) by incivility if the

instigator is a supervisor. In addition, instigator gender moderated the relationship between incivility and work-related outcomes in that employees who reported high levels of incivility reported more intentions of leaving the organization and less feelings of belonging to the organization if the instigator was male. Finally, female employees also reported especially high levels of turnover intent when they worked in highly uncivil contexts.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between the instigator's status (i.e., occupational position and gender) and the target's outcomes of incivility. Previous research has focused primarily on whom the instigator and target of incivility are and the consequences of incivility. For example, research has documented that workplace incivility has negative effects on those who experience it (Cortina et al., 2001). Following past research, turnover intent, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment were the outcomes addressed in this study.

Predictions were tested on the entire sample, which resulted in little support for the hypotheses. Results did confirm that supervisors were more likely than coworkers to be instigators of incivility, consistent with the hypothesis. However, no other hypotheses were confirmed. After further consideration of the characteristics of the sample, a sub-sample was chosen based on participants' age. Participants over 20 years of age were chosen because they were considered to be more likely to have more career-oriented work experience. The results of this sub-sample will be the focus in the following discussion.

Consistent with the hypothesis and past research (e.g., Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; Johnson & Indvik, 2001; Pearson et al., 2000; Pearson & Porath, 2004), supervisors were more likely to be instigators of incivility. However, the prediction that males are more likely to be instigators was not confirmed. This is inconsistent with previous research that suggested males are more likely than females to be instigators of incivility (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; Cortina et al., 2002; Pearson et al.,

2000). Thus, these findings of who the instigator is likely to be are somewhat consistent with previous findings.

Predictions for hypotheses concerning incivility, occupational status, and work-related outcomes were both confirmed and disconfirmed. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment were found to be lower when the instigator was a supervisor as opposed to a coworker; the relationship between incivility and turnover intent was not affected by occupational position. These negative effects occurred regardless of how frequently incivility was experienced. Turnover intent may not be affected because quitting may not be a viable option for an individual (e.g., because he/she needs a paycheck). This may be especially the case for someone in a lower occupational position where he/she may have less experience or opportunity to find another job. Nonetheless, these results suggest that occupational position does have an effect on outcomes of incivility. Mistreatment by someone in a higher occupational position can cause a person in a lower position to be negatively affected because he/she may begin to feel as though nothing can be done to remedy the situation. The combination of these findings suggests that targets of incivility are more negatively affected when the instigator holds a higher occupational position. These findings are in line with social power theories in that people with higher occupational status (i.e., supervisor) are more likely to engage in mistreatment of those with less power (i.e., coworker).

Results also showed that gender of the instigator moderated the relationship between incivility and work-related outcomes for the targets. The findings were inconsistent with the prediction that males would be more negatively affected by a female instigator and that females would be more negatively affected regardless of the instigator's gender. The

results instead showed that both male and female participants were more negatively affected (i.e., higher turnover and lower organizational commitment) by incivility when the instigator was male. Social power theories argue that women will be negatively affected because men are a higher status group (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Wagner & Berger, 1993). The finding that men are also more negatively affected is inconsistent with theory (Martin & Meyerson, 1998) and prediction, which suggest that men would not be affected because men are more likely to behave in ways that may be considered uncivil. My findings suggest, in contrast, that men may be negatively affected because they see it as another man exerting control over them and taking away their power. In addition, females who experienced high levels of incivility reported more thoughts about leaving the organization compared to females who experienced little mistreatment. This finding is in line with Lapierre et al. (2005) who suggested that women may place more value on pleasant working conditions than men do. These findings as a whole suggest that gender (of the participant and especially the instigator) plays a role in the relationship between incivility and work-related outcomes.

Limitations

As in any research, the current study has limitations. The most obvious limitation is that the sample was comprised of university students; many of the participants did not have much experience in the workforce. In addition, even though significant results were found, the sample size is still small. The sample was also not diverse; very few people of color were included. These factors limit the generalizability of the study's findings. Another limitation is that the study was cross-sectional. Thus, it cannot be certain that incivility and the instigator's characteristics caused changes in the work-related

outcomes. Finally, the questionnaire was self-report; participants may not remember events accurately. Moreover, if an uncivil act only occurs once or twice within the year, it may not be remembered by the target for reporting purposes.

Future Research

Future research should replicate this study for numerous reasons. As with any new perspective, one study's results will not satisfy the question at hand. Other reasons for replicating this study include the size and characteristics of the sample (e.g., college students). Specifically, a more diverse sample should be used that includes more people of color and more people with real work experience. In addition, this sample included participants who were mainly part-time workers; a sample of participants who are full-time would add to the generalizability of the findings.

Similar to the current study, future research could include race as a moderator of work outcomes of incivility. Social power theories suggest that gender and race are both characteristics that determine a person's status, and they could interact to affect outcomes of incivility. For example, studies could examine whether both Black males and females are more negatively affected if the instigator of the uncivil act is a White male.

Future research should also address perceptions of incivility. For example, future work might examine whether and why females perceive incivility differently than males. Preliminary studies suggest that women and men have different perceptions of incivility (Montgomery, Kane, & Vance, 2004; Young, Vance, & Ensher, 2003). A defining characteristic of uncivil acts are that they are ambiguous (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) and females may be more sensitive to them. This may be due to women being more interpersonally oriented in their work environment than men (Eagly & Johannesen-

Schmidt, 2001). Racial differences in perceptions of incivility could also be examined. For instance, future research could look at perceptions of uncivil acts among Black and White participants or among racial minorities and non-minorities. A participant's age may also affect how he/she perceives incivility. It may be that the older generations see acts of incivility as being rude more readily than do younger generations. Additionally, older generations may judge ambiguous acts uncivil more quickly from a member of a younger generation than a member of their own generation. While the current study has narrowed one gap in the literature, it has also made it clear that other gaps remain. Clearly, many doors could be opened by considering perceptions of incivility in future research.

Conclusion

One study cannot always answer all questions, especially when the perspective is new to the literature. However, the current study did narrow the gap in the incivility literature by examining the status relationship between the instigator (i.e., occupational position or gender), the target of incivility, and how that relationship affects (i.e., turnover intent, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment) the targets. Findings showed that work-related outcomes were negatively affected by the occupational status and gender of the instigator, with higher status instigators having more negative effects on targets.

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