

**UNDERSTANDING GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS’
EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand workplace incivility experiences and its impact on Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) (non-teaching) who were employed at a large public university in the United States of America (USA). Workplace incivility is a growing problem of our society and is rapidly rising. Incivility prevails in all types of workplaces, corporate, small businesses, government agencies, and educational institutions. While several studies on workplace incivility have been carried out in business settings, there are fewer studies that have been conducted in educational settings. Specifically, studies on workplace incivility in the higher education context have been conducted primarily in the nursing education context and/or with graduate/undergraduate students. Further, fewer studies in higher education have explored workplace incivility in relation to individuals that are of a lower position such as, Graduate Assistants (GAs). Studies that do exist on the mistreatment of GAs have revealed that universities take advantage of them, and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) face incivility from undergraduate students. However, it appears that a study on Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) (whose responsibility should be to assist with research) experiences of workplace incivility had not been conducted. Within the naturalistic paradigm, I used the phenomenological approach. Eight diverse participants (GRAs) were interviewed twice for this study. Data was analyzed using techniques unique to phenomenology such as, horizontalization.

The findings revealed that although participants faced challenges due to incivility they transcended those experiences in order to achieve academic success. Participants experienced incivility from powerful individuals as well as those who were in lower and similar positions. Further, participants experienced incivility due to their race, gender, culture, job, and job description. Incivility impacted participants' personal, professional, and academic life. Nevertheless, participants developed coping mechanisms, and one of which was reciprocating incivility in conspicuous manners to avoid jeopardizing their role as an employee and student. Most importantly, participants build resilience and developed a new identity which helped them in becoming goal-oriented so they could obtain their degree. Based on the finding, a new conceptual framework was developed to capture the essence of GRAs experiences of workplace incivility. Implications for human resource development were drawn and specific future research directions were discussed.

DEDICATION

To: Those who believed in me, and gave me the strength and courage to progress and achieve this milestone. And most importantly, to those who doubted my potential because they are the ones who truly kept the fire burning.

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NOMENCLATURE

GA	Graduate Assistant/s
GRA	Graduate Research Assistant/s
GTA	Graduate Teaching Assistant/s
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one is an introductory overview of the study. It provides a brief background of the study, ascertain the problem and purpose of the study, and the theoretical framework upon which this study is based. Further, it briefly discusses the methodology, significance of the study, and the boundary of the study.

Background of the Study

Workplace incivility is an epidemic that is rapidly increasing in today's workplaces. Pearson and Porath (2009) reported that about one-fourth of the workers they polled in 1998 faced rude treatment once or more in a week. By 2005 that number had risen to nearly half; about 95 percent reported experiencing incivility from their coworkers (Pearson & Porath, 2009). It is terrifying yet a reality that incivility exists in all types of organizations. Pearson and Porath (2005) confirmed that incivility prevails in Fortune 500 companies, medical firms, government agencies, national sports organizations, academia, and many other for-profit and non-profit organizations.

Workplace incivility scholars have defined it in a variety of ways to capture the complexity and intensity of the phenomenon. However, Andersson and Pearson's (1999) definition of workplace incivility is most cited throughout the literature and encompasses the key characteristics of the construct. They defined incivility as "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" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457).

Incivility is known to have detrimental consequences for both victims and organizations. Victims suffer from psychological distress due to disrespectful actions and words (Estes & Wang, 2008). They also experience anxiety, depression, insomnia, low self-esteem, and stress (Estes & Wang, 2008). Individuals who have encountered incivility are often traumatized and constantly worried that they may be targeted again (Cortina, 2008). In fact, they spend the majority of their time at work thinking and talking about the uncivil experience/s they went through (Cortina, 2008). These experiences reduce their creativity, performance, motivation, focus, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Estes & Wang, 2008; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). Workplace incivility impacts an organization's bottom line and competitive edge; thus, threatening its position in the market (Cortina & Magley, 2009). In addition, observers of workplace incivility are also likely to engage in uncivil behaviors, and as a result increasing the prevalence of organizational incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

A number of studies have been conducted on workplace incivility. The majority of these studies have focused on explaining its nature, prevalence, consequences, and management (e.g., Cortina & Magley, 2009; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Estes & Wang, 2008; Reio & Ghosh, 2009; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2005; Zauderer, 2002). Incivility has been declared as an individual-level problem by many researchers who have suggested correcting employees' interpersonal treatment and communication (e.g., Cortina & Magley, 2009; Pearson et al., 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2005). Bierema (2009) stated that power and its impact are

rarely examined from a structural perspective. Similarly, Callahan (2011) argued that workplace incivility often indicates a structural problem of power and inequity at the organizational level. These interpretations lead to the conclusion that power or one's position within an organization plays a significant role in employees' experiences of incivility. Those in power seldom experience incivility; instead, they are often perceived as instigators (Callahan, 2011) who negatively impact subordinates (Estes & Wang, 2008). However, given that these studies have been conducted in non-academic settings, it is reasonable to claim that the findings are generalizable only to individuals who work in those settings, namely, government offices, large and small corporations, military, and non-profit organizations. Estes & Wang (2008) called for a need to examine this complex phenomenon in different contexts and explore experiences of underrepresented groups. One such underrepresented group is of graduate assistants (GAs) who are an integral part of many higher education institutions; yet their experiences of workplace incivility in the context of their job as a GA have received very little research attention.

Problem of the Study

Caza and Cortina (2007) acknowledged that very few studies have focused on experiences of incivility in applied contexts outside of the workplace such as educational institutions. Only a small number of studies have been conducted on workplace incivility in academia, with the bulk of them being conducted either on graduate/undergraduate nursing students or nursing educators (e.g., Clark, 2008; Luparell, 2004; McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas 2008; & Reybold, 2009). Research on incivility in higher education (nursing school, community colleges, and universities) can be divided into

four categories: (a) students' perceptions of faculty incivility (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2011; Del Prato, 2012; Lasiter, Marchiondo, & Marchiondo, 2012; Schnee & VanOra; 2012); (b) faculty perceptions of student incivility (Clark & Springer, 2007; Knepp, 2012; McKinne, & Martin, 2010); (c) Student and faculty experiences of classroom incivility (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Boice, 1996; Braxton & Bayer, 2004; Summers, Bergin, & Cole, 2009); and (d) causes and alleviation of academic incivility (Caza & Cortina, 2007; Gilroy, 2008; Luparell, 2004). Further, a few studies in academia with regards to incivility and interpersonal mistreatment have been conducted with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, and women (e.g., Browne & Bakshi, 2011; Burgin, 2011; Horncastle, 2011). Additionally, it is critical to note that the majority of these studies have been conducted quantitatively.

Clark (2008) conducted a study to examine nursing students' perceptions of faculty incivility and its impact on students. Her main findings were that faculty treated students unfairly through their rigid practices and pressured students to conform to unreasonable demands. Del Prato (2012) and Lasiter et al. (2012) found that faculty made students feel incapable, belittled them, humiliated them, and talked about them to others. This negatively influenced students' self-efficacy and self-confidence, and also interfered with their learning.

In contrast, Knepp (2012) found that faculty experienced student incivility in various forms including sarcasm, holding distracting conversations, arriving late to class or a meeting, and being unprepared. In a survey with faculty members and undergraduate students of 15 large universities regarding their experiences of incivility

and the frequency of experiencing incivility, McKinne (2010) found that faculty did not experience incivility from students nearly as often as students experienced it from faculty. Similarly, Clark and Springer (2007) found that students reported greater faculty incivility; whereas, faculty reported uncivil behaviors from students rarely occurred.

Power is the primary reason for the difference between students' and faculty members' experiences, and the frequency of uncivil experiences (Caza & Cortina, 2007). Power relationships often determine how uncivil experiences unfold in a university setting (Caza & Cortina, 2007). In an applied setting outside the workplace such as educational institutions, hierarchical and relational status determines how individuals experience and respond to interpersonal mistreatment (Caza & Cortina, 2007). Ashforth (1994) and Tepper (2000) confirmed that interpersonal mistreatment is often instigated from higher-status individuals. This suggests that individuals who are of a lower-status are highly likely to experience mistreatment from higher-status individuals that affects their personal and professional well-being (Caza & Cortina, 2007).

GAs are typically perceived as lower-level employees who work with an assigned faculty member/s or an administrator/s; however, they may also be assigned to work at administrative offices or academic programs (Flora, 2007). GAs are full-time students who provide services to the university in exchange for stipend and sometimes tuition waivers (Flora, 2007). Their services vary based upon whom they are assigned to work with. Nevertheless, broad categories of their services involve teaching (Graduate Teaching Assistant), researching (Graduate Research Assistant), or administration

(Graduate Assistant – Non-Teaching) (Flora, 2007). In spite of these different titles they are generally referred as GAs.

In their role as a GA, students interact with many individuals namely, students, faculty members, staff, and administrators. During these interactions there is immense possibility that they could have or can experience/d incivility. However, through a thorough literature search, I was able to locate only two studies that briefly discuss the experiences of graduate assistants. The first study was by Somers et al. (1998) who concluded that GAs are treated with inequity by universities for their advantage. The second study was by Nilson and Jackson (2004) who focused on just graduate teaching assistants and stated that types of incivility they experience from students. Therefore, though these studies exist, they paint an incomplete picture of GAs experiences of incivility. Specifically, at least there has been a study conducted on graduate teaching assistants experiences and some conclusions on their experiences can be drawn from research on faculty and adjuncts' experiences of incivility due to the similarities in their role; however, such is not the case for GRAs. I was unable to find a study that solely focuses on the experiences of GRAs. Therefore, GAs working in a research capacity, that is, Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), was a population that required exploration in terms of their incivility experiences, which was the aim of this study.

Also, as mentioned earlier, while studies have been conducted on graduate students' incivility experiences, they are mainly situated in the nursing context. It was essential to bring forth incivility experiences of GRAs, with an aim to raise awareness and provide solutions. Caza and Cortina (2007) acknowledged that it is important to examine the

social and antisocial experiences of everyday life among students, professors, administrators, and staff. With this study, I aimed to fill the gap that existed in capturing the experiences of GRAs whose majors are varied and who work in varied contexts.

Purpose and Research Questions of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand workplace incivility experiences of Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) (non-teaching) who were current employees at a large public university in the United States of America (USA). The following questions guided this study:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

These questions were investigated through the qualitative methodology, specifically, the phenomenological approach, as it would help create a deep understanding of GRAs' incivility experiences.

Theoretical Framework

Workplace incivility has only recently emerged as an important construct. Therefore, theories specific to workplace incivility are scarce. Most researchers who have conducted empirical studies on workplace incivility have used theories, models, typologies, and/or conceptual frameworks from other disciplines such as organizational psychology, sociology, management, organizational behavior, and economics, as a foundation for their study (e.g., Chullen, Dunford, Angermeier, Boss, & Boss, 2010; Cortina & Magley, 2003; Everton, Jolton, Mastrangelo, 2007; Roscigno, Hodson, & Lopez, 2009; Zoghbi-Manrique de Lara & Verano-Tacoronte, 2007). Therefore, much

work still remains to be done in order to fill the theoretical gap prevailing in workplace incivility. This study was particularly informed by Callahan's (2011) framework of power, and Andersson and Pearson's (1999) spiral theory of incivility.

Callahan's Framework of Power

In the construction of civility/incivility Callahan (2011) outlined three levels of power: power of, power over, and power to. "Power of" refers to the power organizations have in labeling behaviors as civil or uncivil. Specifically, those who are in higher positions or better labeled as the "elites" of an organization set the rules and norms. When employees are in accordance of those standards, they are civil; however, if they violate the rules and norms, they are considered uncivil or rude. "Power over" refers to those higher power employees who exert their power over employees in lower positions in order to ensure they are complying with the organization's standards and rules. If at all an employee steps outside the norms and rules, it is likely that he/she will be faced with individual incivility from those in higher positions. "Power to" is the incivility deliberately caused by employees in order to resist and prevent uncivil behaviors from employees in higher positions or elites of an organization. This level of power is primarily viewed as a positive force to bring about a constructive change towards an incivility free environment within an organization. According to Callahan (2011), power to rebel and power over employees can exist at almost all levels of an organization because almost all members interact with those in greater power.

A few key points can be drawn from Callahan's (2011) framework of power. First, powerful individual or elites of an organization influence civility and incivility. Second,

decision-makers foster uncivil behaviors through their unjust practices, rules, and norms that eventually result in greater incivility from employees who desire equity. Third, incivility appears to start from the top and flow downwards. Similarly, if civility is practiced and put in practice by those who make decisions within an organization, civility is bound to transfer downwards to the rest of the units and individuals within an organization. A positive and equitable top-down approach is likely to bring about civility.

Andersson and Pearson's Spiral Theory of Incivility

Andersson and Pearson developed the spiral theory on incivility in 1999. Since then, their theory has been widely used as a means to understanding incivility and its escalation. The spiral begins at the starting point where an uncivil act is acknowledged and perceived as uncivil by an individual due to violated norms or unacceptable conduct (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). The victim's reaction is either the desire for revenge triggered by negative affect or a decision to depart from the organization, which could take place at any point throughout the spiral. The desire for revenge is likely to result in an act of incivility as a response to the incivility experienced. As the spiral continues, one party or both parties are likely to reach a tipping point due to anger, loss of face, or insult, which could trigger intentional intense behaviors such as violence or aggression. The spiral of incivility is an epidemic that could continue until justice is restored, forgiveness is given or asked, or one of the parties resigns.

Further, the primary spiral could trigger a secondary spiral. A secondary spiral is triggered by observers of incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). For example,

members who observe incivility spirals are likely to engage in uncivil acts; thus, increasing organization wide incivility. Further, observing negative responses to incivility also gives rise to secondary incivility spirals.

Based upon the spiral theory of incivility it can be concluded that incivility is a vicious cycle that can be triggered from a minor issue and escalate to severe coarseness. Essentially, it can spread like a virus which can become difficult to stop or control. In order to discontinue incivility spirals, it is imperative to establish a civil culture and climate in the organization, specifically, a culture of zero-tolerance towards incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Methodology

Qualitative or naturalistic inquiry was the methodology selected for this study as it would effectively help investigate the questions posed within the study. The primary aim of qualitative inquiry is to make sense of things by studying them in their natural settings and understanding how people make sense of their world and their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Since this study was intended to understand how GRAs experienced workplace incivility and how it impacted various aspects of their life, the most appropriate approach for conducting this inquiry was through qualitative research, which strives to understand people's experiences.

Further, there are many paradigms that researchers use to guide their inquiry; however, inquirers have tended to focus on the positivist/postpositivist paradigm (Guba, 1990). Consequently, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that researchers must ensure that the research question/s guide the research paradigm that will be used to carry

out the study. Accordingly, based on the purpose of this study, the positivist/postpositivist paradigm (that is, quantitative) would not be appropriate because it emphasized prediction, control, measurement, and generalizability, which are in direct contrast to what this study aimed to achieve. Rather, this study aimed to interpret how GRAs experienced workplace incivility and how their experiences affected their personal, professional, and academic life. It also attempted to understand how GRAs engaged in meaning making of uncivil experiences; hence, the interpretive paradigm (that is, qualitative inquiry) was the most appropriate methodology for this study. Additionally, the qualitative approach would have enabled me to elicit an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and gather rich descriptive data (Merriam, 2009), specifically attempting to fill the gap that existed in the literature.

More specifically, I used the phenomenological approach of qualitative research. Although there are two types of phenomenological approaches namely, hermeneutic and transcendental, a generic phenomenological approach was utilized for this study as it could effectively help answer the questions of this study. A phenomenological study focuses on lived experiences (van Manen, 1990) and since this study aimed at capturing GRAs experiences of workplace incivility it was the most plausible approach for answering the question.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with GRAs who were working at a large public university in USA. In this study, I used purposive sampling to identify participants for this study. Specifically, criterion-based sampling, snowballing, and convenience sampling strategies were used. At first, participants were recruited from my

personal and professional contacts who met the set criteria. Data analysis was conducted by using techniques that were unique to the phenomenological approach such as, horizontalization.

Significance of the Study

I was able to find only two studies that briefly discussed graduate assistants' experiences of incivility. This study filled that gap while stimulating researchers to further inquire this topic qualitatively with the same population and in the context of higher education. Since majority of the studies on the topic of workplace incivility have been conducted quantitatively, this study not only filled a methodological gap but it also filled a contextual gap by looking at a population that remains under explored. Subsequently, this study encourages researchers to investigate this phenomenon in other contexts that remain underexplored or unexplored.

Also, the study allows various concerned entities in higher education to understand the plight of GRAs with regards to workplace incivility, and will foster development and implementation of policies and practices that will create an incivility free environment. Additionally, with an enhanced understanding of learning the manifestation of workplace incivility in the academic context specific to GRAs, HRD researchers and practitioners will be able to design interventions that will help prevent the occurrence of incivility. Also, HRD researchers can carry out research on workplace incivility in higher education and other educational settings. Consequently, HRD research and practice are likely to stimulate the efforts of theory building on workplace incivility which is imperative because only a limited number of theories exist on this phenomenon.

McLean and McLean (2001) defined HRD as “any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults’ work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organizational community, nation, or ultimately, the whole of humanity” (p. 322). To summarize, the purpose of HRD is to develop humans for the benefit of their progression as well as that of the society. This study will be exploring the experiences of those who are going to be future educators, practitioners, and researchers, who will shape others’ future by their influence. Thus, by understanding GRAs experiences of incivility and its impact, HRD practitioners and researchers will be able to help alleviate their uncivil experiences; thereby, leading to a better future not only for GRAs and higher education institutions, but also for the society.

Boundary of the Study

This study had three boundaries. First, this study focused on GRAs who were found in a large public university in United States. Second, this study was only concerned about the incivility experienced during their work as a GRA and not the incivility they experienced as a graduate student in general or in other roles of their life. Third, the study was bound to only those who worked as graduate research assistants and not graduate teaching assistant, that is, those who are employed as GRAs.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation contains five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study. It presents the problem, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, significance of the study, and boundary of the study. The second chapter reviews literature relevant to

workplace incivility in the context of non-academic organizations as well as academic organizations. The third chapter describes the methodology and methods for design, sampling, data collection and data analysis. The fourth chapter reports the findings of the study. The last chapter discusses the findings in relation to current literature, and draws conclusions, and implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to workplace incivility in general and in higher education in particular. The chapter consists of three main sections. The first section provides an overview of workplace incivility by discussing its nature, key players, causes, impact, and targets' experiences and coping strategies. The second section highlights perceptions on workplace incivility management in non-academic/educational contexts, that is, corporations, and small or medium-sized businesses, and discusses strategies for curtailing incivility as documented in current literature. The third section reviews literature on workplace incivility in higher education. Finally, a brief chapter summary will be provided.

Overview of Workplace Incivility

The aim of this section is to offer a brief understanding of workplace incivility and create an awareness of its antecedents through available literature on the topic. Most studies on workplace incivility have been conducted from the quantitative paradigm and have primarily focused on explaining its manifestation, impact, and management. Figure 1 summarizes the key points discussed in this section.

Nature of Workplace Incivility

Incivility, a regular occurrence in workplaces (Pearson & Porath, 2005), has evolved as a topic of interest in organizational and social sciences (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). It has encapsulated our society and workplaces like a plague (Pearson & Porath, 2009). Additionally, members in today's organizations operate in an environment that is

fast-paced, high-tech, and involves global interactions. Consequently, employees do not have time to be nice; thus, resulting in incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

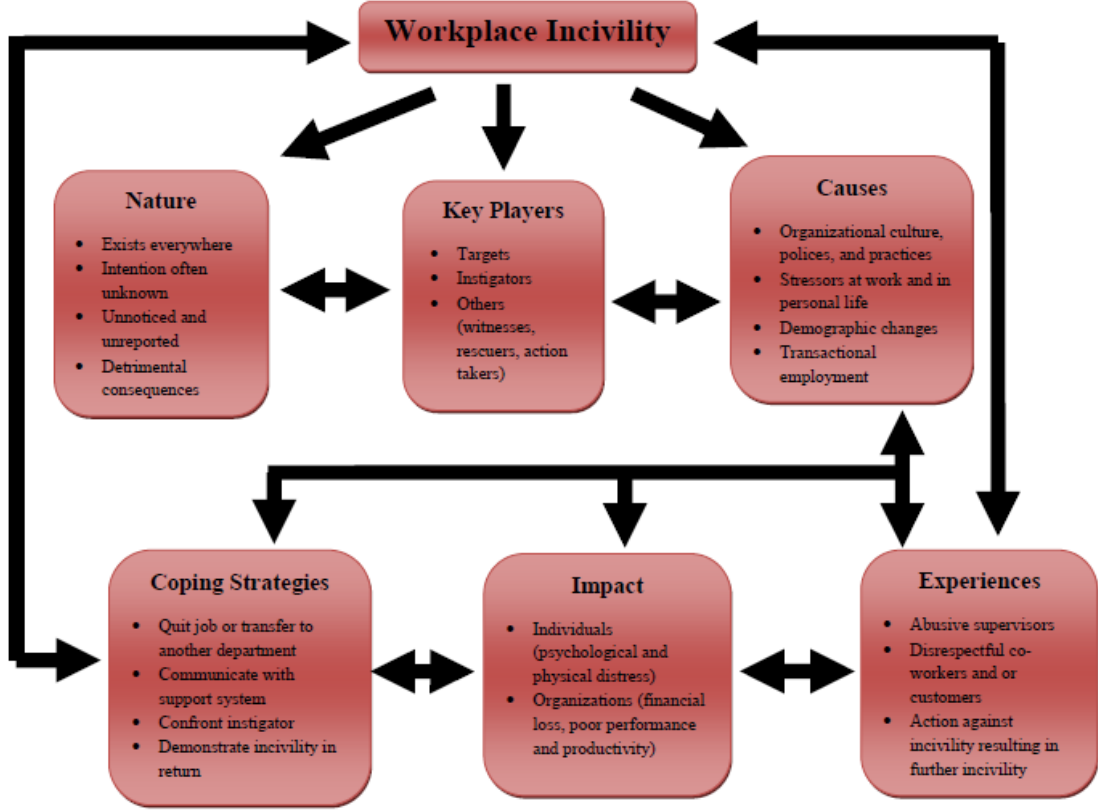


Figure 1. Overview of Workplace Incivility

Based upon the previously mentioned definition of workplace incivility (see Chapter 1), the key characteristics of incivility are ambiguous intent, low intensity, and norm violation (Pearson et al., 2001). These characteristics are ones that lead to uncivil behaviors such as sarcasm, avoiding individuals and job tasks, glaring and excluding individuals (Lim et al., 2008), displaying a temper, harassing individuals, and being inattentive when someone is speaking (Rau-Foster, 2004). According to Martin (1996), examples of incivility in the workplace include inappropriately answering the phone (E.g., merely saying “yeah”), failure to use politeness (e.g., please and thank you), impatiently waiting over the desk of someone who is busy, and leaving half a cup of coffee to avoid brewing another pot. Ignoring phone calls, negative gestures, rude behavior or tone during communication are other forms of incivility.

Essentially, workplace incivility occurs as a result of employee deviance from acceptable and/or expected behaviors of an organization (Lim et al., 2008). The intentions of uncivil behaviors are usually ambiguous and could be a result of the instigator’s unawareness or personality (Lim et al., 2008). However, incivility is conducted with a desire to harm the target or the organization for one’s benefit (Lim et al., 2008). Basically, an instigator could actually cause harm with or without knowing that he or she is engaging in incivility. On the other hand, instigators might not reveal intentions of uncivil behavior to prevent scandals and protect their image (Lim et al., 2008). Alternatively, due to lack of laws regarding incivility, the risk of complaints rising to the surface is high (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Thus, most incidences and effects of incivility go unnoticed and are unreported by targets (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Moreover, in spite of the fact that uncivil behaviors are usually less intense, there is a possibility of them escalating to aggression (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) and intentionally causing harm to each other (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Intentional or unintentional, incivility is detrimental. Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout (2001) surveyed 1,180 public sector employees who worked in the federal court system to explore their experiences of workplace incivility in the last five years. Specifically, Cortina et al. (2001) investigated the incidence and impact of workplace incivility. Their findings revealed that 71% of employees reported experiencing workplace incivility in a period of five years. Most respondents stated that they experienced incivility from their supervisor or people in higher positions. Incivility experiences resulted in job dissatisfaction, job withdrawal, and career salience. These individual consequences cause financial adversity for employers who bear the burden of employee discontent, poor productivity, and absence. (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

Key Players

Incivility has three primary players: targets, instigators, and others. A target or a victim is someone who directly experiences incivility. Pearson and Porath (2005) reported that targets of workplace incivility might be someone who is vulnerable such as a new employee, a young female, and an individual in a position below that of the instigator. Their research also revealed that although men are more likely to be instigators compared to women, they are just as likely to experience incivility as women are. Furthermore, power plays a key role in terms of incivility (Cortina et al., 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2005). The victim is often someone who is of a lower status than the

instigator. Alternatively, a victim is also someone who appears to be vulnerable due to their unmarried status and underrepresentation of their ethnic group and gender in the workgroup (Cortina et al., 2001).

An instigator or perpetrator is someone who engages in uncivil behaviors towards colleagues. Pearson and Porath (2005) found that a majority of the individuals admit to behaving disrespectfully at work at some point or another. In other words, they have occasionally engaged in uncivil behaviors. Instigators often engage in demeaning behaviors such as belittling employees who are in a lower position, disrespect their bosses behind their backs, and express annoyance to anyone who crosses their path. (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Often individuals who are instigators receive attention and gain power as a result of their uncivil behavior. On the other hand, there are individuals who take advantage of their power and abuse it to cause harm to others or organizations (Cortina et al., 2001).

The third group of key players are those who witness incivility, try to rescue the target, or attempt to prevent or take action against it, for example, boss/bosses, peers, subordinates, or colleagues of the instigator or the target (Pearson & Porath, 2005). These individuals take varied actions while observing incivility. Some shut their office doors and remain separated from the situation, some protect the victim from the instigator, while those in higher positions than the instigator may engage in taking corrective action/s against the uncivil behavior or choose to remain silent by turning a blind eye to the uncivil occurrence (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Causes of Workplace Incivility

Several elements may trigger workplace incivility. The organizational context such as the management philosophy, and organizational culture, and structure plays a crucial role in enabling or inhibiting incivility (Cortina, 2008). Organizational leaders develop and influence the organization's culture, policies, and practices; thus, they also dictate what are considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Callahan, 2011).

Essentially, incivility tends to cascade downwards from an organization's top management and their actions (Estes & Wang, 2008). Power and social status also cause incivility. Those high in power and social status are more likely to be uncivil than those in lower positions, especially because their actions often do not have dire consequences (Cortina et al., 2001; Estes & Wang, 2008; Pearson & Porath, 2005). Callahan (2011) noted that retaliation as a means to discontinue unjust practices in the workplace can also lead to incivility.

Incivility can also be triggered by workplace stress, lack of work-life balance, poor working conditions, and unaddressed issues (Rau-Foster, 2004). Different cultural norms and beliefs that prevail in our workplaces due to increased diversity can also be a source of incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008). Pearson and Porath (2010) stated that changes in demographics such as Generation X are being steadily replaced by the more ambitious and supposedly loyal Generation Y. Further, today's organizations are becoming informal with the aim to accomplish work faster, which results in employees being abrupt and discourteous (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Johnson and Indvik (2001) claimed that whether covert or overt, office rudeness is on the rise due to stressors at work and in individual's personal life, which cause employees to insult, yell, condescend, ignore, disrupt meetings, and take credit or not give credit. Moreover, Pearson and Porath (2009) stated that we live in a society where individuals are increasingly selfish and competitive, and under extreme time pressure that triggers incivility. Also, employees nowadays perceive their employment as transactional rather than loyalty-based because they are in a grave need to progress in life and create better living conditions for themselves and their families (Pearson & Porath, 2009). These are the most common driving forces for workplace incivility.

Targets' Experiences of Workplace Incivility

Victims of workplace incivility experience uncivil behaviors in a variety of ways. In this section, I attempt to bring forth some of the commonly occurring experiences of workplace incivility. Employees frequently experience incivility from their supervisor/s, coworkers, and customers. Tepper (2000) defined abusive supervision as the extent to which subordinates perceived their supervisors as being verbally and non-verbally hostile. Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) surveyed individuals who were called on jury duty in a Southeastern U.S. court to examine the relationship between abusive supervision and employee deviance. Their findings not only suggested that abusive supervision negatively affects employee attitudes and their desire to engage in positive behavior but it also results in counter incivility towards the organization and interpersonal relationships at work. Further, Cortina and Magley's (2003) survey results revealed that employees who retaliate against incivility faced further victimization or greater

incivility, leading to higher levels of physical and mental deterioration. Also, severe incivility silenced the victim and thereby increasing health-related costs.

Sliter, Sliter, and Jex (2011) conducted a survey with 120 bank tellers to examine the relationship between co-worker and customer incivility on sales performance and withdrawal behaviors (absenteeism and tardiness). Their findings suggested that co-worker and customer incivility predicted decreased sales performance and increased absenteeism and tardiness. Further, Felps, Mitchell, and Byington (2006) acknowledged that one co-worker's negative behavior or incivility can be a starting point for another member/s to behave uncivilly, thus, reducing creativity, motivation, cooperation, and withdrawal of the rest of the employees or group members. Aquino and Thau (2009) and Cortina (2008) listed some incivility incidences from the targets' perspective. They are emotional abuse (verbal nonverbal expressions or any action that violates interpersonal norms, petty tyrant (abuse of power and authority to harass people), silent treatment, failure trust an employee's judgment, and making jokes at an employee's expense.

Impact of Workplace Incivility

Research has revealed that workplace incivility can have adverse effects on both individuals and organizations. According to Estes and Wang (2008), targets feel hurt due to uncivil behaviors, and recognize the unjust treatment or incivility upon assessing the incidence/s. Individuals often face distress and psychological issues due to disrespectful actions and words (Estes & Wang, 2008; Lim & Cortina, 2005). For instance, victims face anxiety, depression, insomnia, low self-esteem, and stress (Estes & Wang, 2008). They also tend to feel embarrassed, guilty and ashamed due to incivility (Yamada, as

cited in Estes & Wang, 2008). In addition, those employees who witness incivility can also be left traumatized or fearful that he/she might be the next target (Estes & Wang, 2008). On the other hand, some victims demonstrate anger and engage in subtle acts of sabotaging the uncivil party (Skarlicki & Folger, as cited in Estes & Wang, 2008).

Lim, Cortina, and Magley (2008) conducted a study to identify the impact of workplace incivility on personal and workgroup outcomes. They administered surveys amongst employees who worked in a large U.S. circuit federal court. Findings revealed that workplace incivility has adverse personal impacts such as poor supervisor and coworker perceptions that increase turnover intentions and cause poor mental health. Next, employees who experience incivility spend majority of their time worrying about the incident and future interactions with the instigator (Estes & Wang, 2008). Their performance is affected too because most of their time is spent in discussing the incident with colleagues. Victims also lose interest in their jobs and resign, their creativity decreases, and commitment to the organization is reduced (Cortina, 2008). Furthermore, targets experience poor job satisfaction, burnout (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009), and poor physical health (Cortina, 2008; Lim et al., 2008). Incivility also impacts workgroups in a similar way; however, Lim et al. (2008) stated that effects of incivility are greater at the individual level than at the group level.

Such detrimental individual outcomes of incivility have far-reaching effects on the organization. Pearson, Andersson, and Porath's (2000) research revealed that employees who experienced incivility reduced their work efforts and limited them only to the tasks listed on their job description. Some discontinued services such as helping new

employees and assisting colleagues. Others quit their job or contemplated resigning, and reduced their innovative contributions. All these affect the organization's bottom-line, that is, performance and profits of the organization deteriorate (Cortina et al., 2001; Estes & Wang, 2008). This further affects the organization's competitive edge and overall stability in the market.

Target's Coping Strategies

Different individual personalities and their varied perceptions of incivility incidences cause them to react and cope in ways that they regard as appropriate (Milam, Spitzmueller, & Penney, 2009). Few employees file formal complaints about uncivil behaviors and bring them to the attention of organizational authorities (Cortina & Magley, 2009). Some employees quit their job or transfer to another department. Often employees discuss the matter with individuals in their support system and then take appropriate or suggested action/s. Nevertheless, many victims focus on avoiding the instigator. Victims who are firm conflict avoiders refrain from confronting their instigators (Cortina & Magley, 2009). Additionally, certain targets opt to be uncivil in return (Callahan, 2011; Cortina & Magley, 2009).

State of Workplace Incivility Management and Strategies to Curtail It

Although few in number, studies have been conducted to examine ways to manage workplace incivility. Nevertheless, these studies have mainly been situated in the context of Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies, telecommunication industry, pharmaceuticals, or government agencies (e.g., attorneys, federal court staff, law

enforcement officers), and nurses and nursing staff. Subsequently, based upon literature, the sections below discuss ways to curtail workplace incivility.

Change the Organizational Culture and Climate

Pearson and Porath (2005) engaged in eight years of rigorous research on workplace incivility through focus group interviews, questionnaires, experiments, and executive forums in United States and Canada. During that period, Pearson and Porath (2005) administered a survey to identify employees' satisfaction with how their organizations handled workplace incivility revealed that only one-fourth of the targets were satisfied with the way their organization dealt with the incivility experienced by them. This shows that in spite of research efforts that have recognized workplace incivility as a catalyst of various organizational problems, many organizational leaders have not acknowledged it as a problem of great concern (Estes & Wang, 2008). Top-management often establishes rules and norms of expected behaviors but rarely follow through with them due to the fast-paced work environment (Pearson & Porath, 2005). In addition, executives themselves fail to adhere to values, expectations, rules, and norms for interaction, and fail to reinforce those to their employees (Holloway & Kusy, 2010). Many times, executives do not have buy-in from their employees on the values that have been established (Holloway & Kusy, 2010). Such an organizational culture inhibit progression to a civil workplace.

Nadler (2006) defined organizational culture as “the values, beliefs, and behavioral norms; the informal rules and work practices; the patterns of communications and influence; [and] the actual behavior of leaders, rather than their prescribed roles” (p.

259). Organizational climate is defined as “observable practices and procedures that compose the surface of organizational life” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 464).

Organizational executives must outline what constitutes as incivility and civility with the help of a Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioner (Estes & Wang, 2008).

Inclusion of an HRD practitioner will allow them to gain insight on current workplace incivility perceptions, including the voice of line workers and managers, and other

relevant research that will allow them to effectively set a benchmark for acceptable behaviors within the workplace (Estes & Wang, 2008). It is important that both,

management and employees have a common understanding of what constitutes as civility and incivility; only then a change to civility can take place (Rau-Foster, 2004).

Top-management must pay specific attention to the way organizational members treat each other, including their interactions with subordinates to avoid an incivility spiral or secondary spirals. The organizational culture must be one that reflects a civil environment where everybody feels respected and is respected (Rau-Foster, 2004).

Once values of respect, courtesy, and civility are established, they need to be communicated to all organizational members effectively along with the need for a new organizational culture and climate. Without buy-in from organizational members change efforts are likely to fail (Burke, 2008). Next, not only must organizational management model the new expectations and ethics but they must also regularly enforce them amongst organizational members (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Halloway & Kusky, 2010).

Executives must also develop policies and practices about uncivil behavior so that instigators can be sanctioned promptly, justly, and consistently (Bandow & Hunter,

2008; & Estes & Wang, 2008). Policies must comply with local, state, and federal laws in order to ensure their legality and enforcement (Bandow & Hunter, 2008). Practices of informal and formal complaint must also be established (Bandow & Hunter, 2008). For instance, informal complaint is a discussion between the perpetrator and victim. However, if an informal complaint fails to resolve incivility, a formal complaint can be filed with the HR department who will then communicate the matter to the corporate office, or the person or people next in the chain of command depending upon the incident and the perpetrator. The person/people responsible will be required to take appropriate action towards the perpetrator, which will be to investigate the matter and then take or suggest appropriate action such as, counseling, training, or even termination. Further, top-management must also include the new expectations of civility in the performance appraisal process (Halloway & Kusy, 2010). Therefore, if any member of the organization fails to reflect the specific behaviors, appropriate actions could be taken. Executives must punish those who breach the policies and practices that have been put in place (Estes & Wang, 2008).

Nowadays the climate of many organizations tends to be informal with an aim to promote innovativeness, stimulate creativity, and encourage free-flowing communications (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This informality is evident through dress code, word choice, conversational patterns, posture, emotional expressions, and other nonverbal cues (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Informal settings make it difficult for employees and leaders to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in themselves as well as others, thus, promoting incivility. It is essential to replace an

informal climate with a climate that is formal, and with clearly outlined boundaries on how organizational members must conduct themselves. A formal climate gives little leeway for employees to breach acceptable behaviors, and unspoken rules of politeness and professionalism due to less ambiguity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

Most importantly, every aspect of the organization must reflect clear expectations on civility including its mission statement (Estes & Wang, 2008). Also, it is fundamental that the organization promotes regular learning to educate all members on uncivil behaviors and their impact, and ways to discontinue incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008; Halloway & Kusy, 2010). This will allow developing zero-tolerance towards workplace incivility, which should be the aim of any organization who wishes to progress and sustain.

It might be legitimate for any organization to question the possibility of bringing about such a large-scale change. After all it is not easy to change an organization's culture and climate; it requires careful planning and procedure. Lewin's three-step change model is popular and effective in facilitating change efforts (Burke, 2008). The steps are: unfreeze, movement, and refreeze (Burke, 2008). During the unfreeze stage, the current way of doing things are thawed because in a new and malleable condition, the system is easily accessible and open to change interventions. At this stage, the need for change is communicated; new behaviors, policies and practices are put forth. The next stage is movement during which the organization moves forth in the new direction. Refreeze is the last stage and it involves reinforcement of the new policies and practices with an aim to sustain the change. This is done in order to prevent the change from

dissipating. Thus, following Lewin's model should allow effective change in the organizational culture and climate.

Demonstrate effective leadership. Cortina (2008) and Zauderer (2002) stated that leaders' words and actions are observed by other members of the organization. Their existence sets a tone for the rest of the organization. Essentially, leaders set an example of how other employees of the organization are expected to behave (Cortina, 2008). Pearson and Porath (2005) stated that one-fourth of the organizational members who behave uncivilly claimed they do so because their leaders behave in an uncivil manner. Due to their influence within the organization, leaders are in the perfect position to portray themselves as role models of acceptable behaviors that are respectful (Estes & Wang, 2008). One way of setting an example is by constantly learning about workplace incivility, and reminding themselves of the importance of fostering and maintaining a civil environment to develop positive psychological capital of their own and other employees (Estes & Wang, 2008).

Leaders must engage in self-examination of their attitude towards other leaders and subordinates (Pearson & Porath, 2005). They can do so by engaging in peer feedback, video-taping meetings, and/or involving consultants to help them take a closer look at their own behaviors (Pearson & Porath, 2005; & Pearson & Porath, 2009). Once subordinates observe their leaders learning about incivility and their self-monitoring attitude, they are likely to follow the same and thus, help in reducing incivility in the workplace.

Further, during self-examination leaders must also carefully consider the impact of their practices and relationship with subordinates. The leader-member exchange theory (LMXT) posits that an employee's perception of the overall quality of his or her relationship with a leader or supervisor influences various aspects of their work-life (Chullen et al., 2010). The perception held by employees impacts their job satisfaction, behaviors, attitudes, turnover intentions, and job performance (Chullen et al., 2010). Research has revealed that unjust practices and poor leader-subordinate relationship cause employees' deviant behavior (e.g., Chullen et al., 2010; Everton et al., 2007; Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Everton et al. (2007) noted that employees were highly prevalent to engage in deviant behaviors such as violence, absenteeism, theft, and incivility, if they found managers and leaders to be unfair, rude, and impolite. Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) also confirmed that abusive supervision causes employees to feel they are treated unfairly, which causes a decline in positive attitudes and behavior. Thus, it is important that leaders and supervisors treat employees with respect, and support them.

Next, leaders must learn to weed out problematic employees before they enter the organization. Pearson and Porath (2005) claimed that executives whom they polled during a learning forum stated that the easiest way to foster and develop civility is to hire civil employees. Therefore, leaders should participate in training, and developed practices to hire employees who would be the correct fit for the organization and refrain from incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

In addition, leaders must not leave incivility unattended. Regardless of who engages in incivility (subordinates or executives), incivility must be hammered (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Failure to correct instigators can lead to incivility spirals. Hence, leaders must be proactive in tackling incivility, and become good role models who set an example of civility.

Teach incivility/civility. Pearson and Porath (2005) reported that one-fourth of the instigators they surveyed blamed their uncivil acts on lack of training. Other reasons instigators claimed for their poor behavior include stress and limited time which prevented them from being nice (Pearson & Porath, 2005). An organization-wide formal classroom training should be conducted that teaches all members about incivility, namely: 1) what is incivility?; 2) what is civility?; 3) the impact of incivility; and 4) ways to curtail incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2009; Zauderer, 2002). Training must also include how to recognize and respond to incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2009). Specifically, improving employee competencies such as “conflict resolution, negotiation, dealing with difficult people, stress management, listening and coaching” can help diminish workplace incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 13). This knowledge will not only contribute to employees’ enhanced performance but also their career advancement.

Organizations can hire an external trainer or an in-house expert on workplace incivility to teach employees. It is imperative that this training be provided in a formal context so that employees can practice identifying uncivil behaviors and procedures (Pearson & Porath, 2009). Upon completion of the training employees will be aware of

what constitutes as acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Employees will also learn consequences of engaging in uncivil behavior.

However, any training provided to adults will be ineffective unless the importance of training is conveyed. According to Knowles' principles of andragogy, adult learners must be ready to receive training, which can be only happen when they know how the training will help them with their personal and professional goals (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Thus, trainers and leaders must remember this theory prior to conducting training.

Involve subordinates. Pearson and Porath (2005) stated that 54 percent employees do not report their incivility experiences as it is likely to pose a threat to their current job and career opportunities. Top-management must discontinue this fear in employees by explicitly encouraging them to speak up about their experience with incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Such encouragement will assist in eradicating incivility.

Often employees fear taking actions against incivility (e.g., filing a complaint) because the perpetrator is normally in a higher position within the organization (Pearson & Porath, 2005). However, regardless of whom the perpetrator is, employees must bring it to the attention of a leader. After an employee brings the perpetrator's uncivil conduct to the attention of a leader, he or she must take appropriate actions against the perpetrator (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Failure to do so will not only discourage the employee from reporting uncivil incidents experienced in the future but it will also cause the victim trauma. In addition, lack of action against the perpetrator will also discourage other employees from reporting incivility due to lack of trust in management's practices.

According to the social learning theory, individuals learn by observing and imitating others (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Thus, if employees observe just practices taken towards the perpetrator it is likely that they will be encouraged to partake in the fight to eradicate incivility and report uncivil behaviors. But to bring about this change management must pay attention to employees' perceptions and experiences, and not refrain from taking action even if the perpetrator is an executive.

Next, another way of curtailing incivility is engaging in 360-degree feedback (Pearson & Porath, 2005). 360-degree feedback is a means to collecting information using surveys and is often conducted for development purposes rather than evaluation (Conger & Benjamin, 2006). Several people who are in different positions throughout the organization complete the survey. It can anonymously help gather constructive criticism on individuals who are in higher positions from subordinates who would otherwise be less susceptible to share their critique (Conger & Benjamin, 2006). Accordingly, if top-management takes a bottom-up approach to soliciting feedback from various members of the organization, they are likely to obtain information on the patterns and prevalence of incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Research has demonstrated that instigators are often perceived as experts and capable individuals by management; hence, obtaining such feedback will be an eye-opener for leaders (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

In addition, managers should seek information on employee-to-employee interactions as a means to clearing the path for problems to surface (Pearson & Porath, 2009). This can be done via an open-door policy or with the help of the HR department.

It is of utmost importance to hear and respect the voice of employees in lower positions to curtail incivility. Individuals in lower positions know details that top-management might be unlikely to witness. Thus, having a bottom-up approach, where employees in lower positions are objectively heard, shall enhance the process of creating a civil workplace that has zero-tolerance for incivility.

Workplace Incivility in Higher Education

This section will discuss four key aspects pertaining to workplace incivility in the higher education context. The first part discusses the current state of incivility in higher education. The second part provides information on the faculty, student, classroom, and GAs experiences of incivility. The third section highlights strategies to curtail incivility in academia.

Current State

Workplace incivility is equally prevalent in colleges and universities as it is in other areas of the workforce and our society. Knepp (2012) stated that incivility in higher education occurs at an alarming rate and is steadily increasing. Gilroy (2008) acknowledged that incivility is eroding our nation's colleges and universities. Clark (2007) defined academic incivility as "rude, discourteous speech or behavior that disrupts the teaching-learning environment" (p. 458). These behaviors may range from misuse of cell phones, sarcastic comments, to threats or physical harm (Clark, 2006).

Faculty and students, the two main entities of higher education, are major contributors of incivility (Knepp, 2012). Gilroy (2008) stated that there have been countless reports of contentious behavior on campuses. Connelly (2009) claimed that

incivility in higher education is often categorized as less serious or more serious. Less serious behaviors are those that are considered annoying or rude, and are disruptive or a disturbance. In opposition, more serious behaviors of incivility are those that involve threats or violence.

Knepp (2012) provided several reasons for the prevalence and escalation of incivility in academia. The diversity of university students, their unpreparedness for college-level work, immense pressure to perform, and difficulty of juggling multiple roles are major causes of student-to-faculty incivility and classroom incivility.

Alternatively, faculties are trained as researchers and often focus on research rather than teaching, which could be perceived by students as faculty-to-student incivility, and has the potential to invoke uncivil behaviors from students towards students or peers. Abuse of power, that is, taking advantage of one's higher-status and position, can also cause incivility (Ashforth, 1994). Basically, uncivil behaviors violate norms of respect for the learning process and the academy (Knepp, 2012). Also, unintentional misunderstandings and incivilities are likely to give rise to further adversities (Muir, 2000).

Further, incivility is experienced by other members of academia such as staff members and individuals from minority groups, both of whom are also a key component of universities and colleges. Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2007) conducted a survey with 871 females and 831 males to find out the consequences of misogyny amongst faculty and staff. It revealed that observing hostility towards women and employees' perceiving the organization as oblivious towards harassment led to organizational withdrawal for both men and women. Similarly, Anwar, Sarwar, Nisa, and Arif (2011), and DeSouza

(2011) found that women faculty experienced greater incivility compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, Liu, Chi, Friedman, and Tsai (2009) found that one's culture and conflict self-efficacy (i.e., an individual's perception of their ability to manage direct conflict) can predict their victimization and instigation of workplace incivility. Liu et al. (2009) found that participants who had a background of collectivism and poor conflict self-efficacy were less likely to instigate workplace incivility and more likely to experience it, compared to those who came from an individualistic culture and had stronger conflict self-efficacy.

Overall, workplace incivility is present and spreading in the higher education institutions. Staff, faculty, and students are victims and instigators of this phenomenon. However, it is important to note that although limited research has been conducted on power (i.e., one's hierarchical status) and its relationship to workplace incivility in an academic context, it is suspected to be a major determinant of workplace incivility (Caza & Cortina, 2007). Therefore, in spite of the fact that students do engage in uncivil behaviors, it is imperative to understand that they have limited power compared to faculty and most staff members. Thus, chances of their victimization are greater.

Experiences of Incivility in Academia

This section discusses the incivility experiences of faculty, students, and graduate assistants that take place.

Faculty experiences. In spite of the fact that faculty are in a superior position than students and many staff members, they experience incivility. Although predominantly they experience incivility in the classroom, sometimes they experiences it from students

outside the class and at times from other members in the academic environment such as individuals in higher positions than them (e.g., administrators). Luparell (2004) stated that the results of a 2001 national survey of 409 nursing faculty were alarming. The survey revealed that all faculty members experienced incivility from their students. The most common experiences were coming late to class, failure to attend class, and inattentiveness in class. Some of the more serious behaviors reported by faculty included being yelled at by students and unwelcomed physical contact. Clark and Springer (2007) reported some other student behaviors towards faculty that are uncivil, for example, groaning disapprovingly during class, making sarcastic remarks or gestures, monopolizing discussions, and using cell phones or other technology during class. However, Clark and Springer's (2007) survey revealed that faculty reported student incivility occurred rarely or sometimes. This is important to note as student-to-faculty incivility although present, the frequency is usually less compared to faculty-to-student incivility due to the hierarchical difference that explicitly exists between faculty and students.

Apart from in-class incivility, faculty sometimes experience uncivil behaviors outside of the classroom environment. Bjorklund and Rehling (2011) surveyed faculty at a Midwestern public university to identify the incivility faculty experience from students outside the class. Their findings suggested that students behave inappropriately in the following manner: missing scheduled appointments, dressing in clothes that are revealing, and requesting a grade change. Subsequently, Hastings and Finegan (2011) found that those students who lacked ethical ideology were more likely to engage in

deviant behaviors than those who possessed ethical ideology. Such student behaviors resulted in faculty feeling disappointed, pressured, disheartened, and discouraged, and even considered changing their profession.

Further, faculty tend to experience incivility from each other or individuals who work in higher positions than them. Keashly and Neuman (2010) conducted a review of literature on aggression research to identify faculty experiences of bullying in higher education. Their findings revealed that those in power (e.g., administrators) are often perpetrators but colleagues can be perpetrators, too. For instance, tenured faculty are more likely to be instigators who victimize non-tenured faculty, but at the same time, tenured track faculty could also behave uncivilly with each other (Keashly & Neuman, 2010); which is known as lateral incivility (Caza & Cortina, 2007). Similarly, adjunct faculty surveyed by Cronin and Smith (2011) reported that they faced incivility from administrators and colleagues. The primary cause noted by respondents was rank-based discrimination. In other words, in spite of being faculty, adjunct faculty were seen as outsiders. Although minority adjunct faculty were less likely to leave and protest, Cornin and Smith (2011) reported that upon controlling the demographic variables they still found that perceptions of leaving were associated with rank-based mistreatment. Thus, this confirms that one's rank within an organization can predict their engagement in workplace deviance and interpersonal mistreatment while negatively affecting the victim.

Student experiences. This part discusses the experiences of undergraduates and graduates. Although it would be good to compare and contrast their experiences, it is

virtually impossible to do so as the studies found on students' experiences of incivility have failed to make their distinction. Rather, most studies stated that the population was either undergraduate students or all students above the age of 18 years old. Hence, this section reports students' experiences without differentiating their experiences based upon their classification.

Bjourklund and Rehling (2011) acknowledged that research on incivility in higher education has focused largely on faculty perceptions of students' behavior in a classroom. However, it is essential to understand that faculty and student interactions do take place outside of the formal classroom settings and those interactions could hamper both students and faculty (Bjourklund & Rehling, 2011; Clark & Springer, 2007). Clark and Springer (2007) conducted a mixed-method study to understand student and faculty perceptions on incivility. According to their results, students perceived faculty as condescending, having poor teaching and communication skills, behaving arrogantly and demonstrating superiority, as well as threatening to fail students. Further, faculty tend to overlook their irrational and unrealistic beliefs that students should be attentive, respectful, and interested in the course content the entire time (Knepp, 2012). Berger (2000) also stated that faculty do not engage in immediacy a necessary principal of andragogy. Faculty behaviors such as, fast-paced lectures, poor involvement in student learning, unapproachable attitude, failure to maintain office hours, are all seen as uncivil behaviors by students (Knepp, 2012).

Power is a huge factor that causes students' experiences of incivility. Clark (2008) found that faculty attitude of superiority was a major contributor to their incivility. This

resulted in faculty “1) exerting position and power over students, 2) setting unreal student expectations, and 3) assuming a “know it all” attitude” (Clark, 2008, p. 44). Such behavior from faculty negatively affects students’ self-efficacy, self-confidence, and hinders their academic progress (Caza & Cortina, 2007).

Caza and Cortina (2007) acknowledged that little research has been conducted on incivility outside of the workplace, for example, educational settings. Since social relations in educational settings are crucial, it is imperative to examine the social and anti-social relations between students, professors, administrators, and other staff (Caza & Cortina, 2007). With an aim to explore this relationship, Caza and Cortina (2007) developed a model (see Figure 2) to demonstrate how students experience incivility in a university setting.

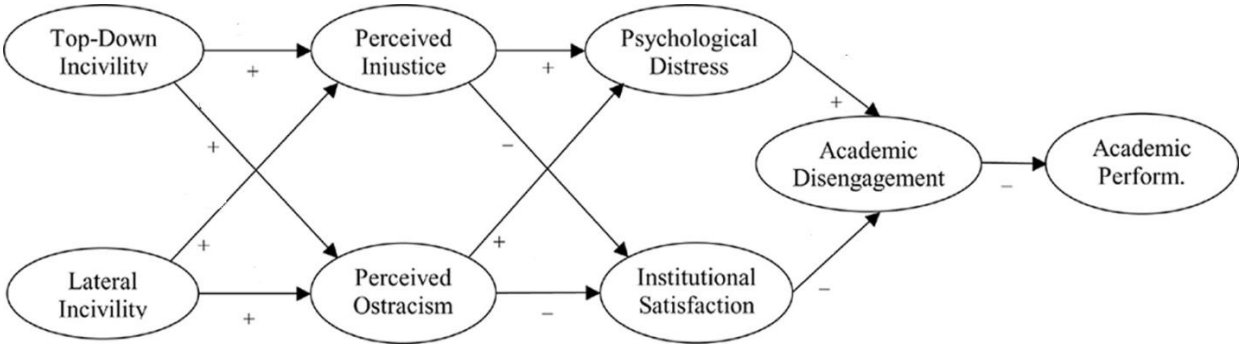


Figure 2. Caza and Cortina’s (2007) Model of Student Experiences’ of Workplace Incivility

As depicted in the above model, incivility can be experienced by students from higher-status individuals (top-down incivility) as well as from other students (lateral incivility). Once incivility is perceived as injustice and/or ostracism, the possible outcomes are institutional dissatisfaction and psychological distress which then leads to academic disengagement and poor academic performance. Facing incivility from peers or higher-status individuals can result in students' negative psychological and academic health.

Graduate assistants' experiences. As mentioned in Chapter 1, incivility experiences of graduate assistants remains to be explored. It is a known fact that GAs work in a variety of different roles for a small amount of money and sometimes stipend and/or tuition reimbursement (Flores, 2007). GAs' services take various forms ranging from offering teaching and research assistance to administrative support (Flores, 2007). During their work GAs interact with various members within the university (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators, colleagues, and peers); thus, there is a possibility of them experiencing incivility.

In assessing campus climate for faculty and students, Somers et al. (1998) stated that graduate assistants are vital for the functioning of any university; however, they found that GAs were treated unfairly. GAs are both staff as well as students. In spite of that, they do not get certain privileges that staff members do such as failure to provide a parking permit and if at all they get one, it is for the farthest lot, no overtime pay, and increased tuition prices, to name a few. Somers et al (1998) found that GAs believed that they were treated as staff and student based upon how it would benefit the university.

Nilson and Jackson (2004) stated that large universities often require adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants due to specialization and the increasing number of students. Subsequently, demographic and personal characteristics of graduate or adjunct instructors cause them to experience incivility from students. For instance, instructors' accent, age, gender, status within the university determines the frequency of uncivil experiences (Nilson & Jackson, 2004). However, although Nilson and Jackson's (2004) report confirmed that GAs experience incivility during their teaching role, it failed to address the incivility they are likely to experience from their faculty supervisor, peers, colleagues, and other actors in the university environment. Further, they failed to capture the experiences of graduate assistants that work in a research capacity, or administrative capacity. Hence, it is essential to investigate GRAs' experiences of incivility to effectively understand their situation during their specific work roles.

Classroom incivility experiences. Classroom incivility is a growing concern in higher education as it is aversive in nature and costly (Boice, 1996). Although there is limited research on incivility in higher education, researchers have attempted to explore the nature, and student and faculty perceptions' on classroom incivility (e.g., Ausbrooks, Jones, & Tijerina, 2011; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Rehling & Bjorklund, 2010; Summers, Bergin, & Cole, 2008). Boice (1996) conducted a five-year study through systematic observations and surveys on classroom incivility. He discovered that students found faculty aloofness, distant mannerisms, and discouragement of student involvement during lectures, particularly uncivil. On the contrary, faculty perceived the following

student behaviors as uncivil: untimely arrival and departure to and from class, noisiness, unpreparedness, and sarcastic remarks.

Similar to Boice's (1996) findings, McKinne and Martin's (2010) survey results showed that students' perceptions of incivility differed from those of faculty. While students did not find certain behaviors as uncivil, faculty regarded those as highly uncivil behaviors. For example, behaviors such as cutting class, creating tension in class, cheating on exams, belittling other students, using discriminatory remarks, using vulgarity towards the teacher, were regarded as highly uncivil by faculty than students. In addition, students reported that faculty behaviors contributed to their uncivil behaviors resulting in more frequent occurrence of classroom incivility.

In contrast to the above results found by McKinne and Martin (2010), Rehling and Bjorklund (2010) who conducted a study amongst faculty and students of a large Midwestern university to compare their perceptions of classroom incivility demonstrated that students and faculty were in consensus that the aforementioned behaviors are uncivil. However, they also found that students' perceived incivility occurred more frequently than faculty members did.

Although these perceptions hold value and will guide future research and practice in this area, it is important to understand that incivility in classrooms can adversely affect teaching and learning, which is an important purpose of a higher education institution. Braxton and Brayer (2004) effectively summarized these effects (see Figure 3 below).

	<i>Effects on Teaching</i>	<i>Effects on Learning</i>
Faculty incivility	Deviant faculty behavior affects one's teaching performance and classroom environment. (For example, intoxication and inadequate course planning yield disorganized instructional content.)	Deviant faculty behavior affects student learning. (For example, faculty cursing, religious bigotry, and personal political commentary detract from an open learning environment.)
Student incivility	Deviant student behavior affects faculty member's classroom performance. (For example, students' disruptive behaviors redirect instructor's activity from education to discipline and authoritarian classroom management.)	Deviant student behavior affects other students' learning opportunities. (For example, a student's insolence and rude interruptions distract other class members from attentiveness to the instructor.)

Figure 3. Effects of Faculty and Student Incivility (Braxton & Brayer, 2004)

Importance of Exploring and Alleviating Incivility in Higher Education

From the above discussion, it is apparent that incivility is a persistent problem in academia. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are all involved in this vicious whirlpool of rudeness. Therefore, it is imminent to put an end to it. However, it is virtually impossible to do so without examining all aspects, actors, and antecedents of this phenomenon especially since there is a dearth of research on incivility in the academic context. One of many gaps in this context will be addressed through this study that aims to explore GRAs experiences of workplace incivility and its impact on them.

Scholars such as Harper (2001) and Luparell (2005) acknowledged that acquisition and development of ethics and values are of prime concern, and should be demonstrated as well as taught to students and faculty. Today's students are tomorrow's future

professionals and professors. Therefore, it is essential that they are taught how to behave and communicate with an aim to pass the same ethics and values to future generations.

Further, administrators must remember to ensure that their practices and policies are fair. For example, Zoghbi-Manrique de Lara and Verano-Tacoronte (2007) conducted a study by surveying 270 teachers at a Spanish University to identify the relationship between procedural justice (PJ) and workplace deviance. PJ is organizational members' perceptions on the fairness of organizational procedures. Findings revealed that PJ was directly related to teachers' deviant workplace behavior targeted towards the organization. Accordingly, if justice and equity become top-down practices there is a great possibility that faculty and students will learn the same and follow through.

Finally, the overall well-being of faculty, students, and the educational process can be jeopardized. Thus, it is important to address, track, and strategically eliminate incivility at all levels (Morrissette, 2001). Some ways to reduce incivility in academia are: effective communication, clearly stating academic and behavioral expectation, and outlining corrective actions (Morrissette, 2001).

Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the concept of workplace incivility within the non-academic context and the academic context. Although the review of the literature shows that workplace incivility is a fairly new topic and further research is needed in this area, it is also important to note that there is greater literature on workplace incivility in the context of business while there is a dearth of literature in the educational settings. Further, majority of the studies on incivility are conducted from the quantitative

methodology. While there is a need for further studies on incivility in higher education from the qualitative and other paradigms, it is also necessary to explore the perspectives of various actors whose voices have not been brought forth or explored in-depth such as, administrators and GAs. In addition, very little is known about how incivility affects individuals in an educational setting and ways in which incivility can be managed. Also, HRD seems to have given less attention on investigating this complex phenomenon in the context of higher education. This study attempted to fill some of these voids by qualitatively exploring GRAs experiences of workplace incivility in higher education the impact of those experiences.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology and method employed for this study. It starts with the restatement of the research. It then provides a rationale for using qualitative approaches, followed by the epistemological underpinnings of qualitative inquiry and how they differ from quantitative methodology. This chapter then moves to discuss the phenomenological approach adopted. The methods for sampling, data collection, and data analysis are also presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the role of the researcher, as well as trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Restatement of the Purpose and Research Questions

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to understand workplace incivility experiences of GRAs who were employed at a large public university in the USA. Specifically, I wanted to understand how GRAs make meaning of their lived experiences of workplace incivility. The two questions that guided this study were:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

Rationale for Qualitative/Naturalistic Inquiry

Qualitative research is a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) Accordingly, qualitative researchers study

things within the natural setting and attempt to interpret a phenomenon based upon the meanings individuals bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Rather than establishing cause and effect relationships, qualitative researchers strive to understand how individuals interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and the meanings they associate to their occurrences (Merriam, 2009).

Creswell (2007) stated that qualitative research begins with a desire to inquire the meaning individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems that have arisen from assumptions, theoretical foundations, research, or worldviews. Qualitative research could be conducted using a wide range of approaches such as ground theory, phenomenology, narrative research, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2007; & Merriam, 2009). Grounded theory is the process of developing a theory after examining individuals' experiences of a concept or phenomenon. Phenomenology describes the meaning of several individuals lived experiences of a phenomenon. Narrative research focuses on understanding experiences in lived or told stories, usually of one or two individuals. Ethnography examines shared patterns in groups of individuals, usually more than twenty individuals (e.g., a cultural group). Case study involves examining an issue in one or more cases within a system. Based upon Creswell (2007) and Merriam's (2009) aforementioned definitions of these five qualitative approaches, it appears that they differ in their purpose, procedure, and outcome; however, all these approaches adhere to the common characteristics of qualitative research, certain procedures of conducting research, and require researchers to have specific competencies (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) and Merriam (2009) listed four common characteristics of qualitative research: (a) researcher must focus on the meaning and understanding of individuals' experiences of a phenomenon; (b) a researcher is the primary instrument in all qualitative studies as he or she is the primary person to collect and analyze data; (c) data analysis must be an induction process, where researchers develop patterns, categories, and themes from the data to establish a comprehensive set of themes; and (d) all products of qualitative research must include rich descriptions such as words and illustrations to demonstrate the findings of the inquiry.

Further, in terms of the competencies, all qualitative researchers must (a) have the ability to examine their work and life with a critical eye to understand why things are the way they are; (b) feel comfortable with ambiguity; (c) have the ability to be a careful observer; (d) demonstrate the skill of asking good questions; (e) have the capability to think inductively; and (f) possess effective writing skills.

Although there are no agreed upon structures to design a qualitative study, Creswell (2007) suggested that there is a generic method to all qualitative approaches. To begin with, qualitative study is carried out because an issue needs to be explored (Creswell, 2007). Next, the researcher determines the participants and begins collecting data after approval from the necessary parties. Data analysis is the next step, which is conducted with an aim to develop themes that effectively describe participants' experiences of the phenomenon. The study is then written with the theoretical or conceptual frameworks that were developed. Finally, the study is made available through publication as a means of contributing to the body of knowledge, and to inform practice.

Epistemological Underpinnings of Qualitative Research

Qualitative and quantitative approaches differ in their philosophical paradigms. Paradigm is “a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to the world and its parts” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). There are many paradigms that could guide a researcher’s inquiry namely, positivism, postpositivism, constructivism/interpretivism, and critical theory (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; & Merriam, 1994). These paradigms differ based on ontology (that is, what is the nature of reality), epistemology (that is, the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known), and methodology (the means of finding knowledge) (Guba, 1990).

Quantitative methodology is predominantly guided by the positivist or postpositivist paradigms; whereas, qualitative methodology is often guided by the interpretive/constructive paradigm (Merriam, 2009). Positivists believe in a single, objective reality that exists out there which can only be discovered if the researcher adopts a distant, non-interactive position (Guba, 1990). Slightly different, postpositivism is a modified version of positivism that still believes in realism; however, acknowledges that reality can never be fully apprehended (Guba, 1990). Purists of postpositivism acknowledge that it is necessary to maintain an objective stance but also accept that a researcher has the ability to influence findings, as they emerge from the interaction between the inquirer and inquired (Guba, 1990).

Interpretive/constructive paradigm is where qualitative research is housed (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) acknowledged that the term “constructivism” is often used interchangeably with “interpretivism”. According to these paradigms, there are multiple realities which are constructed by the human mind (Merriam, 1994). Further, interpretivism views the world as a subjective phenomenon that is interpreted rather than measured (Merriam, 1994). More specifically, the epistemology of interpretivism is subjectivist, that is, “the inquirer and inquired are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two” (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Hence, social construction is at the heart of qualitative research, where researchers seek to understand the world in which they live and work through meanings that are subjectively derived on a specific phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 2007). Participants’ views are examined to understand how they make sense of the world in which they live and what they experience (Merriam, 1994). Researchers accept that meaning is ingrained in participants’ experiences and mediated by the inquirer’s perceptions (Merriam, 1994). These views are in contrast to the positivist paradigm that believes in a single, objective, and static reality (Guba, 1990; Merriam, 2009). Overall, qualitative researchers assume that reality is socially constructed and there is no single observable reality.

The debate between qualitative and quantitative research has been ongoing (Burke Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Firestone, 1987). Proponents of each have criticized the other due to their differing philosophical beliefs; however, Peshkin (1993) clearly stated, “No research paradigm has monopoly on quality. None can deliver promising outcomes

with certainty” (p. 28). Each approach has something valuable to contribute to the society. However, the choice of methodology should be determined by the question that the researcher is trying to investigate. Accordingly, the best way to understand GRAs’ experiences of workplace incivility was the phenomenological approach of qualitative study, as it helped in depicting the essence of GRAs’ lived experiences of incivility.

Methodology: A Phenomenological Study

To address the research questions, I adopted the phenomenological approach. Origination of phenomenology can be attributed to Kant and Hegel; however; Vandenberg (1997) considered Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher as the founder of phenomenology (Groenewald, 2004). Others such as, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty are known to have expanded upon Husserl’s views of phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). Husserl essentially developed phenomenology with an intention to study, describe, and classify mundane experiences of life-world; a term that means how we as humans coexist with each other, perceive and experience culture and society, and act on them (Goulding, 2005). Phenomenology has been regarded as a key research methodology in many areas, for example, social and health sciences, education, psychology, and sociology (Creswell, 2007). In spite of this widespread usage of phenomenology, scholars have differing understanding and assumptions of phenomenology and philosophy (Creswell, 2007). Nevertheless, Creswell (2007) shared the nature and purpose of phenomenological research and its philosophies that are commonly agreed by most scholars of phenomenology.

Phenomenology is a study that “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). Essentially, the primary focus is on exemplifying what all participants have in common with regards to the experiences of a phenomenon. Individuals’ experiences of a phenomenon are reduced in order to provide a description of the phenomenon that explicitly conveys the nature of that phenomenon. Merriam (2009) stated that a phenomenologist is interested in lived experiences that require him or her to go to the source itself, and explore the phenomenon that has been obstructed by theoretical patterns. Thus, a phenomenologist studies conscious experiences of peoples’ life-world and then depicts the essence or structure of the experiences (Merriam, 2009). There are two types of phenomenological approaches: (a) hermeneutic phenomenology, which studies lived experiences and interprets texts of life; and (b) transcendental phenomenology that focuses on more on description of participants’ experiences rather than interpretations of a researcher (Creswell, 2007).

The nature and purpose of phenomenology is based on four philosophies that are most commonly agreed upon by phenomenological researchers. Creswell (2007) stated these philosophies as: (a) reinstating traditional tasks of philosophy, that is, seek for wisdom without using empirical means; (b) the necessity to suspend all judgments about reality until they are discovered on a more certain basis; (c) intentionality of consciousness, where reality is a product of subject and object as they appear in consciousness; and (d) the reality of an object is only perceived through the meaning of

the experience of a person. Therefore, these philosophical underpinnings guide phenomenological inquiry.

This study used the generic phenomenological approach to explore GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility. Since the purpose of this study was to understand lived experiences of GRAs with regards to workplace incivility, it was most appropriate to use a generic phenomenological approach rather than hermeneutic or transcendental phenomenology, because it aligned with the focus of a generic phenomenological study that was to enlarge or deepen the understanding of immediate experiences of a phenomenon (Goulding, 2005).

Method

Although all qualitative approaches use some common methods to design a study, and collect and analyze data, there are certain techniques that are unique to phenomenology and were used in this study such as, bracketing/*epoche*, and horizontalization. Bracketing/*epoche* is a process where the researcher attempts to remove or become aware of all prejudices and judgment regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 2009). Next, it was important to identify the best means to collect data (Merriam, 2009), which in this case was in-depth interviews with GRAs who were experiencing incivility while being employed at the selected large public university. Thereafter, data analysis was carried out, and involved steps such as horizontalization, and developing themes (Moustakas, 1994). The validity and reliability of the study were ensured through member checks, audit trail, (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009) and review of data analysis by an experienced researcher (Groenewald, 2004).

Finally, the findings were to be communicated through rich description (Merriam, 2009) and in the format suggested by Moustakas (1994). These steps will be discussed below detail.

Sampling Procedure

Padgett (2008) stated that sampling should depend upon the research question and goals. Since the main purpose of this study was to understand workplace incivility experiences of GRAs from a large public university in USA, I used purposive sampling to recruit participants. Patton (2002) defined purposive sampling as a method of strategically and purposefully selecting cases that are rich in information. According to Patton (2002), there are 16 different strategies of purposive sampling; however, for this study I used three: (a) criterion-based sampling, (b) snowballing, and (c) convenience sampling.

Thereby, purposive sampling for this study began with a pre-developed criterion. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) stated that in criterion sampling the researcher creates a list of attributes essential to the study and then proceeds to locate a unit that matches the list. Patton (2002) claimed that this strategy is a means of quality assurance. Basically, it is a means of ensuring that the criteria directly reflects the purpose of the study and allows the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009). Consequently, I identified and recruited potential candidates through my professional and personal contacts using the following criterion: (a) must be currently employed as a GRA at the selected large public university in USA; (b) must have experienced the phenomenon of workplace incivility as a GRA; and (c) must have worked as a GRA for at least one

semester. These set criterion will ensured that selected GRAs can share rich information on their experiences of incivility.

In addition to criterion-based sampling, snowballing was used to identify potential participants. Groenewald (2004) described snowballing as a technique where upon locating a few key participants, they are asked to recommend others who will be suitable for the study. After I develop a list of potential candidates who met the aforementioned criterion, I used snowballing to help me recruit further participants where potential candidates were requested to suggest other suitable participants for the study. Adding to that, convenience sampling strategy was adhered to during participant identification process. This ensured that all participants are conveniently accessible. Patton (2002) stated that convenience sampling is applied to save time, money, and efforts. Accordingly, I selected candidates who lived in the same city in order to save money and time.

I aimed to recruit both males and females, and continued seeking participants until saturation was reached. Creswell (2007) recommended that phenomenological studies interview as many as ten individuals because the key is to describe the meaning of a phenomenon for a small number of people who have experienced it. Following Creswell's (2007) guidelines, I recruited up to ten participants for this study; however, I reached saturation at eight participants; therefore, did not proceed with interviewing additional participants.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection in this study was phenomenological interviewing. Upon identifying approximately 10 to 15 participants who met the set criteria, I sent an invitation to participate in the study via email, and provided them with a brief introduction of the study. Once participants accepted email invitations and gave their written consent, I scheduled face-to-face interviews in a place which was convenient and comfortable for the participant.

Creswell (2007) stated that phenomenological studies often require researchers to conduct multiple in-depth interviews. As most phenomenological interviews, the interviews (initial and follow-up interview) of this study were also in-depth (Creswell, 2007) and were conducted with the help of a semi-structured interview guide to foster a conversation (Merriam, 2009) that lead to detailed incivility experiences of the participants. According to Groenewald (2004), in-depth interviews help elicit participants' experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions about the phenomenon. Further, a semi-structured interview guide "allow [the] researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 90). Essentially, semi-structured interviews provide researchers and participants the flexibility to obtain and provide information as experienced by the participant; it allows the participants' voice to actually flow through.

For the initial interview I developed open-ended interview questions to elicit rich narratives of type of incivility experienced by GRAs and how incivility was manifested. Merriam (2009) stated that open-ended questions and less structure gives participants the

ability to portray their world in unique ways. Apart from open-ended questions on incivility, participants were asked demographic questions (see Appendix A). Questions for the follow-up interview were determined after the first round of interview. Each round of interview lasted around 60-90 minutes; followed by the second round of follow-up interviews lasting around 30-45 minutes. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to effectively conduct data analysis.

Data Analysis

Phenomenology has specific structured methods for analysis which will be utilized (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The first step is to engage in epoche (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994), which I completed prior to beginning the interview process. Epoche is a Greek word and it means “to refrain from judgment...In the Epoche, the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings are set aside, and the phenomenon are revisited” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Then, a list of significant statements from each interview transcript about individuals’ experiences of the phenomenon was developed. Essentially, this technique is called horizontalization where each extracted statement is treated equally important while ensuring that the list is non-repetitive and non-overlapping (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Next, the significant statements were grouped together into larger units of information called meaning units or themes (Creswell, 2007). I found eight major themes from the data of this study (see table on p. 87). I developed a textual description that consisted of what the participants of the study experienced, and a structural description which was a verbatim of how the experience happened by reflecting on the setting and context where

the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2007). Eventually, a composite description that contains both the textual and structural description was written to provide the essence of what and how incivility was experienced by GRAs. These descriptions were used to create a conceptual framework of the study.

Role of the Researcher

Prior to beginning data collection or data analysis, I engaged in epoche or bracketing. According to Merriam (2009), researchers engage in this technique prior to beginning the interviewing process as a means to temporarily setting aside all personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions of the phenomenon of interest by exploring his or her own experiences with the phenomenon. Once personal beliefs are bracketed, the researcher's consciousness will be heightened and will not interfere with effectively observing the elements or structures of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009).

With this in mind, I acknowledged the fact that I have experienced workplace incivility in previous jobs. Although I did not face detrimental consequences, I know of close family members and friends who did as a result of workplace incivility. Also, as a minority woman who comes from a conservative culture where power distances are huge, I have experienced incivility in various roles throughout my life. In spite of that, I have tolerated and despised it at the same time. This is the prime reason why this topic is of utmost importance to me. Further, I currently work as a GA, a role which requires me to interact with the faculty member I work for and report to as well as a variety of people who hold varied positions within the organization. I am fortunate to have a great relationship with my faculty supervisor; however, I am aware that some GAs do not

share a pleasant relationship with the faculty member/s they work for, and have experienced negative consequences as a result of incivility. In addition, often employees in lower positions treat GAs uncivilly because of jealousy or the fact that GAs are more educated than them. It was my responsibility to ensure that these perceptions or experiences do not influence my ability to obtain the essence of participants' experiences of workplace incivility. Thus, I assumed the role of an active listener who was solely trying to efficiently capture what participants experienced and how.

Trustworthiness

Prior to writing the findings, it was essential to check for validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). The value and soundness of quantitative studies is depicted through validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). However, the terms validity and reliability are not associated with qualitative studies. Trustworthiness is the term used in qualitative inquiry that equates to validity and reliability in quantitative studies. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) stated that trustworthiness demonstrates methodological soundness of naturalistic inquiry.

Trustworthiness promotes credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Erlandson et al., 1993). Credibility stresses the importance of findings being an accurate depiction of the participants' experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is a process where the findings from a study could be used and applied to other situations and contexts; however, this burden lies on the seeker rather than the researcher whose job is to provide rich description that could assist with the transferability process (Merriam, 2009). Dependability or consistency emphasizes that

others should get the same results of the data collected and that they concur the researcher's results (Merriam, 2009). Finally, the confirmability ensures a researcher's objectivity, that is, would the researcher's findings be confirmed by another researcher even though qualitative studies are not replicable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The above-mentioned four aspects of trustworthiness can be carried out through various techniques unique to qualitative inquiry. In this study I utilized member-checking, reflexive journal, and review of the data analysis by an experienced researcher. Member-checking is a process of sharing the data/transcript with the respective participant to ensure credibility of the interpretations and representation of the phenomenon (Erlandson et al., 1993). I conducted member-checking within four to five days after completing an interview so that the content was fresh in the participant's mind as well as mine. This process ensured that participants' experiences were effectively interpreted. Maxwell (2005) described member-checking as "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed" (p. 111).

A reflexive journal supports credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through maintaining a daily journal that contains information regarding "researcher's schedule, logistics, insights, and reasons of methodological decisions (Erlandson et al., 1993). Although this takes a lot of discipline, I did so in order to ensure trustworthiness. Finally, I requested an experienced researcher (my dissertation chair) to

review the data analysis that was conducted, an idea that was obtained from Groenewald (2004).

Ethical Considerations

According to Merriam (2009), the validity and reliability of a study depends upon the ethics of a researcher. I followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines while conducting this study. In order to ensure ethical conduct I made participants aware of their rights, that is, they could choose to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Further, I obtained written consent from participants prior to interviewing them and recording their interview. During interviews, I respected participants' decision of not answering question/s which made them feel uncomfortable. Also, I planned to store interview transcripts for a minimum of two years in a place that is a safe and secure so that nobody but I can access them. I protected and will continue to protect the confidentiality of participants by not disclosing their identity or affiliations. In addition, Merriam (2009) mentioned that ethical dilemmas often occur during data collection and data analysis; therefore, both the processes were carried out carefully to avoid manipulation and/or misinterpretation of the data.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology and methods of the study. Specifically, it discussed the qualitative research paradigm and the phenomenological approach adopted for this study. In addition to the research design, the chapter provided details on sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis, the researcher's roles, and strategies

that would ensure rigor and trustworthiness (an important aspect of qualitative research) of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of graduate research assistants (GRA) (non-teaching) who have experienced workplace incivility during their employment as a graduate research assistant. The study was conducted using the phenomenological approach of naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The study was designed with an aim to answer two research questions:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

These two questions were addressed by interviewing eight men and women who were employed as graduate research assistants at a large public university in USA. These individuals are diverse in terms of their disciplines, race, personalities, and backgrounds. Each participant was interviewed twice. The first round of interviews generated 223 pages of data and the follow-up interviews generated 132 pages of data, which totaled to 355 pages of data.

This chapter presents the major findings related to the two research questions stated above. First, the participant profiles will be provided with an aim to offer an understanding of each participant, and as a context within which the major themes of this study emerged. Second, the major themes derived from the data collected will be discussed. These themes reflect what the participants experienced and how they experienced it (Patton, 2002). Data analysis was conducted through the

phenomenological data analysis process as described by Creswell (2007) and Moustakas (1994). Direct quotes from participants' transcripts will be provided in order to convey the depth of their experience. Each quote is identified by the participant's name and the page number from their transcript where the quote was taken from (e.g., Isabella, 14).

Participant Profiles

Eight men and women were interviewed for this study. Participants and all other real names they used have been replaced by pseudonyms for the purpose of confidentiality. All individuals who participated in this study were employed as graduate research assistants (GRA). According to Flores (2007), the duty of a graduate research assistant primarily involves assisting with research. All participants received a stipend every month and had their tuition paid each semester. Coincidentally an even number of men and women were interviewed for this study, which generated perspectives of both genders on their experiences of workplace incivility. All but one of the participants were doctoral students; this was a mere coincidence. They majored in a wide range of disciplines such as engineering, psychology, public health, and agriculture. In spite that the participants all worked as graduate research assistants, their roles varied and the context in which they worked. However, due to the nature of their job and employment as a GRA, similarities also existed in their jobs and experiences. All participants except one worked in the same department where they were pursuing their degree, and six out of the eight participants directly worked for their dissertation chair, that is, they were both their advisor and their boss. The average number of years for which the participants worked as a GRA was 3.6 years. Participants were from diverse racial, cultural, and

ethnic, backgrounds. Their diversity added strength to the findings. A snapshot of the participants is provided below in Table 1.

Table 1
Profiles of Participants

No.	Name	Race/Ethnicity*	Age*	Gender*	Graduate Program Classification*	Discipline*	Number of Years Employed as a GRA*
1.	Isabella	African American	25	Female	Master's	Public Health	1
2.	Neil	Asian	29	Male	Doctoral	Aerospace Engineering	5
3.	Sara	Middle Eastern	28	Female	Doctoral	Civil Engineering	3
4.	Bill	White/Caucasian	32	Male	Doctoral	Psychology	4
5.	Patty	African American	32	Female	Doctoral	Mechanical Engineering	8
6.	Olivia	White/Caucasian	29	Female	Doctoral	Agriculture	3
7.	John	White/Caucasian	28	Male	Doctoral	Psychology	2
8.	Ronnie	Asian	31	Male	Doctoral	Veterinary Bio Medicine	3

Isabella

Isabella was a 25 year old African American female. She was working on her master's degree in public health. Isabella was the only participant in this study who was not employed in the same department in which she was pursuing her degree. Rather she worked for a department that specialized in family development and resource management. When interviewed, Isabella reported that her supervisor did not hold a Ph.D. degree and was not a faculty member unlike other participants of this study. Also,

Isabella's supervisor, Jane, did not have any influence upon the acquisition of her degree because Isabella was only her employee, not her graduate student.

Isabella's primary work duty was to design emergency preparedness curricula. Essentially, Isabella designed curricula for elderly individuals with chronic diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's, Diabetes, and heart diseases) and their care givers. This curricula was to serve as a guide to help elderly individuals survive natural disasters, and assist their caregivers in protecting them from the same. The five main topics covered in the curriculum were: bioterrorism, maintaining health during and after a disaster, continuation of care in terms of like Social Security and like Medicare or Medicaid, returning to normal after a disaster, and managing stress.

Having had no prior experience in curriculum development, Isabella conducted intensive research to fulfill her GRA duty. For example, Isabella looked up government websites and resources, articles, and past empirical studies to successfully create the curricula. After acquiring information she created scripts that Texas agents would use to educate elders and their caregivers. Isabella commented, "Information that's going be able to be taught to people who really don't know how to prepare themselves for an emergency" (Isabella, 3).

Although the number of hours she was supposed to work were 20 hours per week, Isabella's work hours exceeded up to 30 or more hours during most weeks within one year of her graduate research assistantship. She was not expecting her work hours to exceed beyond 20 hours per week based upon the job description she was given prior to beginning her assistantship. According to Isabella, her job description stated that "You

are responsible for doing literature searches as directed” (Isabella, 22). However, in actuality Isabella was asked to develop curricula. Therefore, she had to educate herself and then create curricula with very little direction. She felt like she was pursuing two degrees because her GRA job was very much like school where she was also expected and required to research, analyze, synthesize, and write.

At work, Isabella interacted with her supervisor, faculty members, staff, some administrators, and other graduate assistants. She described her work environment as relaxing because she had the flexibility to come in and leave whenever she wanted as long as she completed the assigned work. However, Isabella pointed that working from the office had caused her to notice and experience incivility. She recognized that uncivil experiences in her workplace prevailed due to hierarchy that was distinctly visible.

While interviewing Isabella, I found her to be a conscientious person who worked hard in accomplishing her goals. She expressed a strong desire to pursue a Ph.D. degree in order to make a difference. “Employees with PhDs are the ones who have the most weight in the office” (Isabella, 13). Isabella demonstrated utmost value and respect for education because she viewed it as a key to success. She appeared to be a highly determined woman with high aspirations.

Neil

Neil was a 29 year old Asian male of Indian origin and was pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Aerospace Engineering. He had a master’s degree in the same discipline and had been working on his doctorate for the last three years. Neil worked in the GRA position for five years. Neil’s assistantship was in his home department. In fact, the chair of his

dissertation committee was also his GRA supervisor. Neil mentioned that his position was non-traditional compared to other GRAs due to “having a lot of involvement with the students” (Neil, 1). He described that he was responsible to assist with a major undergraduate class within the discipline and was listed as a teaching assistant on the course syllabus. Thus, in spite of being listed as a graduate research assistant who should be working on assisting with research, Neil’s role was more of a teaching assistant.

As a teaching assistant for the class, Neil had several tasks assigned to him. He attended the face-to-face class twice a week, taught students, helped students develop their aircraft models, ordered parts for students so they could build their models, kept inventory of the parts, took students to the part shops and machine shops where they could develop their models, and took students to test their models twice a semester. Apart from these surface level tasks, Neil also engaged in deeper level tasks including searching for the most reasonably priced parts to save the department money, researching and cogitating on ways to improve his instruction to enhance students’ learning, and working on his own technical abilities so that he could train students effectively. Neil summed up his responsibilities by saying, “Everything the student needs to do, the first, I’ll be the point of contact to get to anything that they want. So it’s a lot of responsibility” (Neil, 2). He further stated that even the professor of record for the class who is also his chair and boss, turned to him to complete majority of the work for the class except for grading.

When asked how many hours he dedicated to his assistantship, Neil responded by saying, “I think I put in around 20+, but it can go up to 30 hours. Sometimes weekends

are needed” (Neil 1). Neil claimed to be a workaholic and found it hard to say no to people when they approached him due to his Indian culture where one was expected to always agree with and obey elders and superiors. He stated:

I over-promise. People from my culture never say “no, this is not possible”, because we think that it’s going to taint our reputation, or it’s going to make us lose our job. We never say it’s not possible – we promise this can be done.

(Neil, 18)

In addition to his work duties, Neil also volunteered in the local community when requested to do so by his advisor. He participated in giving youth of the local community tours of the college campus. Neil periodically held and attended research meetings related to research projects in which he was involved in with his chair/boss. Overall, Neil not only worked as a teaching assistantship for his GRA role but he also worked on many other tasks while being a full-time doctoral student who was still taking courses.

Although Neil shared that he enjoyed the control and decision-making power he held as a teaching assistant of the course, he felt that he had received no help or direction from the instructor (also his chair and boss). All the instructor did was grade assignments and left the rest of the teaching related activities for Neil to take charge. This extensive workload reduced Neil’s productivity and progression on his dissertation, and other work as a student, thereby prolonging his Ph.D. graduation. In fact, according to Neil, 70 percent of his day involved helping students.

Neil worked primarily from his office and seldom from home. As a person, Neil took interest in arts. His hobbies included making music, singing, and photography. Although he was versatile, Neil was eager to complete his doctoral degree.

Sara

Sara was a 28 year old Middle Eastern female. She was in the third year of her doctoral program when interviewed, and was a doctoral student in Civil Engineering. Sara appeared to be a very shy, modest, and sensitive person. Born and raised in a patriarchal environment, she was a relatively reserved and timid individual. Her primary reason to move to USA was to escape the highly suffocating patriarchal environment in her home country. Sara commented, “In the Middle East, in my country, I see that people degrade women” (Sara, 19).

Sara worked as a GRA for her dissertation chair and had been a GRA for three years. Her work duties were research oriented only. She was working under the supervision of her chair/boss on a large project where she was responsible for certain aspects such as collecting and developing a code to analyze data. In addition, Sara’s research duties involved data analysis, writing reports and papers, running codes, and collecting data. She had to look at trends in the data and identify important factors for the clients that her advisor/chair’s research team worked for. Sara had experience in both analytical and experimental research. She stated that her advisor/boss defined her research related tasks each week when they had weekly meetings. In each meeting Sara reported her progress and then her advisor/boss discussed things that went well and identified the areas to which she needed to pay attention.

As a part-time employee Sara was required to work for 20 hours per week; however, most weeks she worked for at least 40 hours. She stated:

Officially it should be 20 hours, but we work more than that, maybe 40 hours a week. So maybe for the client it is enough to graph, but for our further research, we have to go deeper. That's why we need more and more hours to work on our job.” (Sara, 2).

Sara had a positive attitude towards work and said she did not mind working more but it made a difference how she was asked to work longer or more. For example, Sara expressed that if her advisor/boss politely asked her to work overtime she did not mind doing so; however, when he asked rudely or demanded she work more than 20 hours per week Sara felt disrespected and was demotivated to continue working.

Sara experienced severe workplace incivility from her advisor/boss. She interacted primarily with her boss/advisor and other graduate students. Occasionally, Sara interacted with other faculty members within the department with regards to coursework or research projects which required collaboration. She also experienced incivility from some fellow students which was particularly hurtful to Sara. When Sara could not take it anymore, she complained to the department head about her advisor. The department head was supportive; he reassigned her to work with another professor as his GRA and doctoral student. Sara was relieved with the action she took and its outcome.

Bill

Bill was a 32 year old Caucasian male who was pursuing a doctorate in psychology. Bill was in the second year of the doctoral program and was still taking courses when interviewed for this study. He worked as a GRA for his dissertation chair and was

funded through a grant by his advisor/boss had received. Bill was a family oriented man who took pride in his family. He was married and a father of three children. As a doctoral student who works and supports his family, Bill is an extremely busy individual. Bill confirmed, “I’m busy – I have 3 kids. My life is busy no matter what” (Bill, 21).

In terms of his role as a GRA, Bill was mainly required to conduct and /or assist with research projects. Bill conducted primarily quantitative research. His role was to conduct literature searches and reviews, collect data, analyze data, and write reports. As an organized person, Bill created spreadsheets for new projects and kept track of their progress. Often Bill held and attended meetings for research projects with and/or on behalf of his advisor/boss. On behalf of his advisor/chair Bill often contacted individuals who were on their research team and acted as the middle-man between his between his advisor and others on the team. Occasionally, Bill taught in his advisor’s class, proctors tests, and grade tests for him. Apart from his official work duties which take a lot of time, Bill is a student representative of his program and shares information between faculty and graduate students. He also organizes brown bags for students within the department. Bill stated, “It’s important that you do service work” (Bill, 16). Therefore, Bill participated in service work. He also believed that it would look good on his CV.

Bill confirmed that just his role as a GRA takes up to 30 to 40 hours of his time each week. In addition, Bill worked on coursework and his own research. Overall, Bill attributed a total of 60 hours of work per week for GRA work and course work alone.

Additional time was put in for plus personal study time for courses that he was enrolled in, Bill commented.

Bill preferred working from campus where he shared office cubicles with eight other graduate research assistants. Hence, the workplace was often noisy. When asked about his work environment and climate, Bill mentioned that for the most part things were okay and usually everybody supported each other. However, there were people who were rude and uncivil to each other and to him on occasions. “Seeing each other daily and working together is bound to create some conflict”, shared Bill (Bill, 7). Incivility was instigated largely from other graduate assistants. Bill seldom faced incivility from his advisor/boss. He took pride in the high quality research they produced but simultaneously he acknowledged that “there will always be people that annoy you and behave inappropriately” (Bill, 18). In opposition, Bill claimed, “I am a friendly, likeable person who goes out of his way to help others. I mean I interact well with people” (Bill, 8). It can be a little frustrating and annoying when others treat him poorly especially because he had a personable nature towards others.

Patty

Patty was a 32 year old African America female who was pursuing her Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering. She was in the sixth year of her doctoral program when interviewed. Patty started her Ph.D. right after receiving her master’s degree, which took her two years to complete. Patty had been working as a GRA for eight years in the same department where she pursued her master’s and was pursuing her doctorate.

Although Patty's advisor was not her immediate supervisor, he was the director of the lab in which she worked for eight years, and he was also the one who assigned her to projects that she worked on. During the first two years of her assistantship, Patty was assigned to the field work team and the rest of the years she was assigned to work with the data analysis team. Patty explained:

When I started working with my advisor, that is when I started working for the lab, he asked me, would I prefer a data analysis position or a field position. And I told a field position, and I said why I wanted it, and he said, "okay, that makes sense, so I'm going to put you with this group," and I said okay. So I worked with that group, and my field experience was limited, and then I was assigned to work with a data analysis group. (Patty, 25)

When assigned to the field work, Patty worked with technicians and other graduate students whose primary role was to go on-site and collect data. Patty was the only female and only black person in the team, and she believed that being a female had something to do with the tasks she received during this assignment of her employment. That is, Patty seldom had the opportunity to go out in the field to collect data with the team. Rather, she was assigned tasks that the male technicians believed a woman should be doing such as filing and remodeling the office. Patty stated, "Because I was the only female, I feel like there were times when I was assigned tasks that they felt like they should give to the girl which has nothing to do with me being an engineering student" (Patty, 4). Essentially, Patty was given tasks that needed to be completed by someone and were not related to engineering. On a positive note, Patty had set hours during these

two years of her assistantship which ensured that she was not working more than the required twenty hours of her assistantship.

Upon beginning her doctoral studies, Patty was assigned to work with the data analysis team. In spite of the fact that Patty had plenty of experience in data analysis, her advisor assigned her to work with this team. Having wanted field experience, Patty was not pleased with this assignment; however, she accepted it because this job was her only means of survival during graduate school. When asked what her job description was, Patty responded, “I don’t know that I have a job description” (Patty, 2). She was working on an energy savings and efficiency project, and her primary role was to analyze data. Patty also developed data analysis programs and worked on reports of the analysis.

Patty did not have any specific people she was assigned to work with. “I have basically 3 different people that can assign me work, so I call them all my supervisors” (Patty, 2). She further stated that her job description also does not specify who her boss is.

As most GRAs, Patty is also officially required to work for 20 hours. However, her hours can fluctuate, that is, sometimes she has to work longer and other times she works less. But Patty stated that she does not like keeping track of the hours she works because she does not like to know when she is working more. Her supervisors do not mind what hours she works. As long as she completed her work they did not mind the times she was present in her office.

Patty shared her office with another female and two males, and she was pleased to have another female working there. Patty stated, “It is definitely better having another female in the office” (Patty, 7). However, she is still the only black female. Patty mainly interacted with her officemates and supervisors; occasionally, she was asked to work with other students on project related tasks. Patty enjoyed this because it helped reduce her workload.

When asked about uncivil experiences, Patty did not hesitate to state that she had experienced incivility in during her GRA position. Patty experienced incivility from technicians, her advisor who was also the director of the lab where she was a GRA, and her current supervisors. When asked how incivility impacted her, Patty responded by saying that it had a professional, personal, and academic impact, and considered it one of the reasons for why she was still working on her doctorate even though she was done with coursework long time ago.

Olivia

Olivia was a 29 year old Caucasian female. Her undergraduate degree was in horticulture. Olivia had a master’s degree in agriculture and she was pursuing her Ph.D. in the same discipline. Prior to beginning her master’s program of study Olivia worked full-time in many areas. She said, “I was a high school teacher. I was a garden manager for two garden centers, and developed curriculum for the master gardeners and junior master gardeners. I did radio shows to help people with horticulture” (Olivia, 19). After having a variety of jobs which Olivia called “real jobs”, it was very tough for her to transition to being a full-time graduate student. Olivia appreciated her husband’s support

during her journey as a student and expressed that she would not have been able to do it without his support.

Olivia worked as a GRA for her doctoral committee chair. She had worked in this role for four years. Her duties included completing paper work for grants, and working on grant projects. Specifically, Olivia was responsible for conducting literature review, data collection, data analysis, writing papers, and grant implementation. In addition, Olivia worked on writing IRB reports, applications, and conclusions. She claimed that one of her tasks was to do grant reporting where she gathered information from the Principal Investigator (PI), set up budget spreadsheets, and coordinated with the Office of Research to get the research and its various components established effectively. She summed it up by saying, “I do whatever he [advisor/boss] asks me to do” (Olivia, 3).

Adding to the above roles Olivia also worked as a graduate teaching assistant. Although her job title was GRA, she was required to teach courses. Olivia stated, “Contractually, there is not any identification of a separation. They just have us as graduate research assistants. And we are expected to teach and research both” (Olivia, 6). Olivia explained that she was required to teach three credits per semester, that is, three class per semester (one three-hour class was equal to one credit). At the time of this interview Olivia was teaching three courses. Olivia taught undergraduates and was responsible for all the grading; some assignments could also be resubmitted which meant more grading. Olivia stated that each class had approximately 50 to 100 students. As a result, she had an extremely hectic schedule.

It was astonishing to discover that Olivia only got paid for being a 20-hour GRA when she was not only fulfilling her duties as a research assistant but also teaching three classes. I was curious to ask how she managed to do that along with being a full-time doctoral student who was writing her dissertation. Olivia responded:

So I wake up at 3:30-4:00 a.m.. I work until 7:00 a.m., get ready, come to work.

I work from 8:00 a.m. until . . . I'm here at 7:30 a.m., work from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00-6:00-7:00 p.m. at night. Go home, go to bed, and do it again. Yeah, I work a lot. (Olivia, 7).

Olivia also mentioned that when it is the conference season she often stays at work till midnight. However, she positively stated that she enjoyed researching.

On a daily basis, Olivia interacted with her advisor/boss, her committee members, students, other GRAs, faculty, administrators, and staff. She stated that she has definitely faced incivility during her time as a GRA. Some of the things Olivia mentioned were: a huge workload, working as a graduate teaching assistant when she was only supposed to work as a graduate research assistant, belittling from faculty members, gossiping, and treated as a personal assistant during social events by faculty. Olivia mentioned that she got progressively better at dealing with uncivil behaviors; however, she experienced adverse effects as a result of incivility. For instance, Olivia fainted a few times, was always extremely anxious, had emotional breakdowns every three to four months, and ruined her body either by eating too much or working out too hard. She stated that she had to develop a thick skin to put a stop to how some people treated me yet there are few

people whom she would not cross because Olivia was concerned about their power and how influential they are.

John

John was a 28 year old Caucasian male. He was an ambitious person and a go-getter. As an Ivy League graduate in economics, John enjoyed and valued education. He had a master's in psychology, and was pursuing a Ph.D. in psychology. At the time of the interview John was in the second year of his doctoral studies. Along with being a full-time graduate student John also worked as a GRA. He began his assistantship at the same time when he began his doctoral degree. In fact, John's advisor was also his boss. He was required to work for 20 hours per week; however, it goes over that time in most weeks, especially when there are work related deadlines such as journal submissions. John's work duties were divided in thirds. He stated:

Basically I split that time up, probably in thirds, reading stuff, writing stuff, and then doing like administrative kind of various stuff, you know, emails and organizing and stuff like that. And sometimes that probably becomes about half my time, but anyway.
(John, 2)

John worked on grant projects and researched on topics such as politics and women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields with and for his boss. His role as a GRA required him to collect data, analyze data, and write papers or write specific sections of papers. He primarily conducted quantitative research and worked on a longitudinal study, too. John also worked on IRB applications and completion reports.

When asked about his work environment, John stated that he had an office which he shared with other GRAs of the department but he mainly worked from home so he had limited interaction with faculty, staff, and GRAs. However, John came to work when he needed to do some work from campus, and when he had a meeting with his boss. John met with his boss almost every week to discuss work and his progress on tasks he was assigned to.

John stated that he had experienced incivility from his advisor, staff, as well as other GRAs. Regarding his boss, John stated that she cancelled meetings in the last minute and failed to respond to emails. In fact she required that he chase her if he needed something and if she had failed to respond to his query. He stated, “She told me early on to keep badgering her if I needed something” (John, 7). John felt that his boss’s nonresponsive behavior and frequent last minute cancellation of meetings slowed his and the research group’s productivity. He had also experienced some funding issues from his boss who had informed him few weeks before summer that he would not be funded that summer. The way this was communicated to him was inappropriate, stated John and he was unable to sleep for days because he worried about making ends meet.

In terms of other GRAs, John has experienced exclusion from other GRAs who failed to inform John of a social event that might be taking place soon or important information about a grant or travel funds that may be offered. John believed that other GRAs did not share information with him because he did not work from campus, rather worked from home. His perception was that they were jealous he was able to work from home and privileged to do so while their boss required them to be on campus daily.

John faced some incivility from staff as well. He was treated rudely and abruptly by them. However, John decided to treat them with care and respect, and was always overly nice to them. In his words, he “sucked up to them.” He also flirted with them and he knew he could get away with that because of his good looks whereas his other colleagues could not.

For the most part, John claimed that he was a positive person; hence, incivility did not impact him severely. John expressed that he constructed his world and choose to ignore behaviors that were likely to bring him down. Rather he focused on completing his doctorate and moving on with his career. He was also not afraid to stand up against incivility and had taken action when absolutely necessary, for example when his funding had been suddenly cut off for summer.

Ronnie

Ronnie was a 31 year old Asian male. He was from Indian origin but was born and raised in Dubai. He was pursuing he doctorate in Veterinary Bio Medicine and had worked as a GRA for three years. He was in the third year of his doctoral program and was also a certified veterinarian. Prior to pursuing his Ph.D., he lived in India where he completed his undergraduate degree in veterinary medicine.

As a GRA, Ronnie was required to work for 20 hours per week. However, he worked longer than that. Although he did not have set work hours, Ronnie indicated that there was an unsaid rule that one had to be in from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, Ronnie went to the office when he was able to and was not reprimanded for failing to be there from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. because he got his work accomplished. Ronnie stated:

I don't have a schedule. I mean I can come in whenever I want, but there's an unsaid rule you're there from 9-to-5. But I come in, and I can come at 8:00 a.m. or 1:00 in the afternoon, you know, as far as I'm able to give them results when we meet weekly or whenever we sit down, that's fine. There's no fixed routine per se. Very often it's way late, and I sometimes have to go in at 2:00 a.m. or 3:30 a.m. or on the weekend. (Ronnie, 2)

When asked about his duties as a GRA, Ronnie responded, "My contract pretty much says nothing ... it's always worded in those funny words. But it basically it says that I'll need to support this prof. for so many hours and that's about it" (Ronnie, 1). Essentially, Ronnie stated worked on research and publications with his professor who was also his doctoral committee chair. He worked on conducting tests and experiments, and a lot of hands-on lab work such as purifying, impurifying, and proving. which generated funds for the lab. Ronnie stated that these experiments were not conducted on any animals, dead or alive, rather he sent the material to another lab where they tested it and sent the results back to Ronnie. Although he worked on experiments related to monkeys, Ronnie never physically tested anything on monkeys. In addition, he was responsible for conducting literature reviews, data collection, data analysis, and writing manuscripts for publications. Ronnie worked on these manuscripts with his professor, and other lab-mates. Apart from these tasks, Ronnie also worked on developing posters, handling the logistics of getting posters printed, and then delivering them to the conference venues.

Ronnie interacted primarily with the lab technician who ran the lab in the absence of his advisor/boss who traveled majority of the year. He also interacted with the associate director of the lab who reported directly to Ronnie's advisor/boss, the director of the lab. There were several graduate and undergraduate research assistants in the lab with whom Ronnie interacted and occasionally worked on projects. These individuals came from various countries. According to Ronnie, his lab was an icon of various nationalities as people in the lab comprised of Indians, Austrians, Germans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thailand, Italians, Turkish, and Japanese. Diverse cultures was one of the primary causes of workplace incivility that Ronnie encountered and witnessed. In his words, "this diversity caused a lot of cultural conflicts" (Ronnie, 13).

When asked about incivility experiences, Ronnie stated that he experienced incivility mainly from the lab technician who managed the lab where he worked. Ronnie described her as a moody, arrogant, vindictive, manipulative, unhelpful, and uncongenial person who likes to gossip and spread rumors. In Ronnie's words, "My only problem with that particular lady – she makes life hell sometimes ... she's a royal pain" (Ronnie, 5). Ronnie had often found himself in trouble because of her as she had falsely complained to the assistant lab director.

In addition, Ronnie faced some incivility from his boss/advisor who prior to hiring him, asked if Ronnie could take orders well from a woman because most Indian guys have that problem. Ronnie responded politely that he did take orders well from superiors. However, he did not appreciate the question and stereotype towards his culture and ethnicity. Furthermore, Ronnie had noticed, on many occasions, that his boss

and the assistant lab director turned a blind eye on the uncivil things that the lab technician did. For example, Ronnie mentioned:

She was actually lashing out at the lab manager in front of the bosses, and the bosses didn't say anything. They didn't say a word, and you know, they just laughed it off, which is weird, because if it was me in place of her they would have been like, "Shut the fuck up and get out. (Ronnie, 12).

Apart from that, Ronnie encountered some other uncivil incidences from his lab-mates which he found annoying but not terribly. They were mainly rude behaviors originated by cultural differences.

When asked how incivility had impacted him, Ronnie stated that at first he would think about the lab technician's behavior all day long; however, now he just carried on with his work. He shared, "It was hard to deal with this when you're in a new environment and new country adjusting to everything plus this bullshit. So before I was worried all the time, but now I'm immune to it" (Ronnie, 39). Additionally, Ronnie claimed that incivility lowered his productivity and faith in the lab and his leaders. Overall, he did not feel like working due to such experiences.

Graduate Research Assistants' Experiences

Participants of this study were classified as both graduate research assistants and graduate students. GRAs interacted with staff members, other graduate assistants and students, undergraduate students, faculty, administrators, and their faculty supervisor/boss/dissertation chair, from whom they experienced uncivil behavior. The realm of their job description as a GRA was broad, leaving room for work tasks to

emerge at the convenience of their boss/es or superiors. This ambiguity/flexibility resulted in greater work pressure, long working hours, and increased workloads. Although the context in which they worked and studied may have differed, power dynamics played a huge role in GRAs' experiences of incivility as they were frequently looked down upon as lower level employees from most individuals they interacted with. Further, majority of the participants worked for or alongside their doctoral committee chair, placing them in a vulnerable position due to the direct or indirect influence that their chair/boss had upon their graduation. Their role as a GRA resulted in dire circumstances causing various negative impacts that promoted them to developed strategies to cope with the effects of incivility. This section presents multifaceted experiences shared by GRAs regarding the first research question: *What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?* Table 2 presents an overview of the findings for each research question.

Table 2
Overview of Findings

Research Question	Category	Major Themes	Subthemes
1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?	Graduate Research Assistants' Experiences	Workplace conditions	i) Increased work hours ii) Unclear job description
		Conduct of Those in Power	i) Abuse of power ii) Undervaluing based on position iii) Unprofessional demeanor iv) Strategies employed to meet unreasonable demands
		Conduct of Those in Similar or Lower Positions	i) Cattiness ii) Exclusion iii) Disrespect of personal space and diverse views iv) Crossing set boundaries
		Diversity Issues	i) Culture ii) Race iii) Gender
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?	Impact	Personal Impact	
		Professional Impact	
		Academic Impact	

Working Conditions

Working conditions can be healthy or unhealthy. Healthy working conditions such as work-life balance, adequate working hours, reasonable work output expectations, and set work tasks, are likely to promote positive actions amongst employees. This results in increased productivity, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and stable mental and physical health that improves performance (Jex & Britt, 2008). It is then reasonable to argue that unhealthy working conditions are likely to promote negative responses amongst employees. Clerc (1985) defined poor working conditions as comprising of irregular work hours, variations in workload, increased workload, understaffing, and unreasonable speed requirement. Clerc (1985) proceeded to say that such conditions negatively impact employees' health and well-being, which in turn affect their attitude and feelings towards work and the organization.

Participants of this study stated that they faced poor working conditions primarily due to long working hours, and varied jobs tasks due to lack of a well-structured and clearly defined job description. GRAs described their working conditions as, *tiring demanding, long work hours, too many tasks that were outside the realm of a GRA's work duties, and stressful*. GRAs described their situation and the difficulties they faced in-depth, which will be discussed below.

Increased work hours. When asked about the number of hours they worked each week in their GRA role, the participants either thought hard with a puzzled look on their face, or laughed and said phrases as such, *“Oh my god, I don't even want to put a number to it”, “Hmmm, don't even ask”, “A lot”, “I'd rather not count, it's pretty*

depressing". However, when asked if they worked more than the contractually stated twenty hours per week, all of them confidently confirmed that they worked more than twenty hours regularly or frequently during the total period of their employment. It was evident that participants did not appreciate having to work additional hours due to the fact that they were not paid extra for doing so, and it impacted other areas of their life and well-being. But, they did so for various reasons.

One of the participants, Sara, stated that it was demanded that she work overtime in spite of prevailing circumstances in her personal and academic life. Sara indicated that being asked poorly to work more was bothersome and inappropriate treatment. Sara proceeded to say that if the project was interesting to her the long hours were fun compared to a project she was not interested in.

She mentioned:

Officially it should be 20 hours, but I work more than that, maybe 40 hours a week. But, it's really important how I am treated, how I'm asked to do that. And if they say you have to do this without respecting you that you are doing . . . if you are not recognized that you are doing more, it bothers me. But when I'm asked in a very good behavior, in a good way, I don't mind. (Sara, 4)

Sara also did not appreciate that her advisor/boss did not offer flexibility when she had exams and required that she work on her GRA tasks even under exam pressure. He expected her to fit her studying around her work schedule. Sara found that to be very hurtful.

Similarly, Isabella, Olivia, Bill, Neil, and Ronnie, also worked a lot on their GRA duties. Isabella complained about working so much that she felt like she was pursuing two degrees simultaneously. Olivia felt that she was doing the job of three people due to the fact that she had to do research and teach three classes. Olivia mentioned having a very busy schedule and survived on very few hours of sleep. She expressed, “I have to teach, grade, write proposals, complete IRB application and reports, re-grade resubmitted projects, research, and write papers plus do my own doctoral work for my dissertation. I am overworked in this position” (Olivia, 5). Like Olivia, Neil taught too, and stated that he worked for thirty plus hours as well as on weekends when they tested the models students built. Ronnie did not put a number on how many hours he worked but was certain that it was more than twenty hours; however, he said that he did not mind so much if he was working on projects that he would get fair credit for (e.g., authorship on a publication). Nevertheless, while working on publications or tasks that were not going to include his name, Ronnie, resented working longer than 20 hours even though he was required to do so.

In slight contrast to the above participants, Patty and John declared that they worked more than 20 hours in most weeks while there were some weeks in which they had less work. Patty stated, “I’ve decided not to keep track of it, because I don’t wanna know when it’s more” (Patty, 2). Patty liked to think that her work hours averaged out and did not want to give it more thought than that especially because she was assigned work from three people and that resulted in longer work hours. Accordingly, John stated that he worked more than twenty hours most of the time but when he needed time to work on

his school projects he could easily request his boss/advisor for time off without hesitation as she was aware that he had worked more for her on many occasions. John exclaimed, “I scratch her back and she scratches mine” (John, 4).

Overall, participants worked long hours for several reasons. One of the primary reasons was that they were required and expected to do so. Specifically, those participants who worked for their doctoral committee chair expressed that they were not in a position to refuse to do something they were asked. As John bluntly stated, “I have to suck up to her [my advisor/boss] and get the hell outta here” (John, 5). Some other reasons why GRAs worked longer on research tasks was because they were likely to have their name included in the paper, and getting published is crucial for those who choose to go into academia after graduating. Further, some projects were interesting, which made working more less of an issue. A majority of the participants stated that they were given additional tasks such as teaching which resulted in longer working hours because students contacted them seven days a week, in addition to grading and teaching. Nevertheless, GRAs realized that they were being treated unfairly by working so much for very little compensation and appreciation.

Unclear job description. All participants confirmed that their job title was Graduate Research Assistant. But when asked about what their tasks were, some of them mentioned doing tasks that were outside the realm of research which should have been the only focus of their job as a GRA. However, they were required to teach, perform service tasks, and/or immediate tasks given by their boss (e.g., photocopying, printing posters, making PowerPoints, and proctoring exams). The lack of clear boundaries in

their work duties led me inquire what their job description stated. Some participants mentioned that their job description was vague and not clearly defined. Two participants, Olivia and Patty noted that they did not have a job description. Isabella pointed out that she was doing something completely different than what she was hired to do.

Olivia, Neil, and Patty were three participants who were asked to teach classes in spite of the fact that they were classified as GRAs. Olivia felt that she was delegated too many tasks and her boss/advisor dumped too much on her. She taught three classes and was the professor of record for a fourth class at the time she was interviewed. According to Olivia, it was a departmental expectation that they had to teach and research regardless of what their job classification was. In fact, Olivia emphasized:

I think the way they classify us in the system is whatever works to their benefit for payment. But our expectations in general are just to teach and research, research and teach, no matter who we are working for. We don't have a job description – it's your expectation to do what your bosses or the professors say. So then no wonder they think that we're second-class citizens, because we're essentially at their beck-and-call. (Olivia, 26)

Similarly, as a GRA Neil was also required to teach. He was responsible for a class that was offered to seniors and except for grading, Neil did all the rest of the work in addition to working on research projects. However, in spite of all these responsibilities, Neil's mentioned that his "role is neither clearly defined on paper or to the students whom he is responsible for" (Neil, 19).

Patty, too, worked as a teaching assistant in addition to her regular duties as a GRA. Her advisor, who was the director of the lab in which she worked as a GRA, required her to TA for five hours per week without any financial compensation. However, he did not tell her to restrict her GRA role to only 15 hours per week rather than 20 hours per week because she had to put in five hours as a TA. Therefore, Patty had to perform her daily GRA duties for 20 hours or more, and also TA for her advisor for five hours or more. This resulted in Patty working two jobs while being paid for only one role, that is, her GRA role. Patty's TA role took approximately ten hours because she had to grade and sit in class during instruction. In addition, Patty was given work on projects that she was not assigned to work on. She was overwhelmed just like the others. Given her situation, Patty exclaimed, "I don't think I have a job description; my three supervisors and my advisor, all of whom I am not officially assigned to work with tell me what to do and I just do that" (Patty, 7). However, Patty, Neil, and Olivia continued with this pressure and uncertainty due to the fear of losing their employment and jeopardizing their graduation.

In contrast, Isabella pointed out that her job description read "You're going to be doing literature searches" (Isabella, 22). However, she was responsible for preparing emergency preparedness curricula which required more than just conducting literature searches. Alternatively, there were some participants who worked on secretarial tasks that their boss/advisor gave to them. For example, Bill was asked to proctor tests, and be a student representative who was a go-between between graduate students and the faculty. Bill declared that there was an informal requirement that they had to do these additional tasks that were assigned to them. Similarly, Neil was asked to volunteer in the

community by his advisor. Isabella was required to work on developing a PowerPoint because her boss did not want to work on it. Ronnie was asked to print posters and deliver them to conferences.

Essentially, not having a rigid or well developed job description provided advisors/bosses of the participants to delegate GRAs with tasks as they deemed fit. Some tasks were secretarial/menial which participants found to be below their status. That is, someone with their experience and education should not be assigned such tasks. Olivia stated, “I have a master’s degree and plenty of managerial work experience, to be treated as a menial servant” (Olivia, 18). The lack of set boundaries that made task assignment broad eventually resulted in participants working longer hours. Regardless, their position prevented them from taking action for being overworked and assigned varied work tasks.

Conduct of Those in Power

Power is held by those individuals who are in a higher position than an individual or a group of individuals. With higher position comes higher status that allows individuals to exert power on those who are in a lower position than them. Participants of this study interacted with higher level individuals almost on a regular basis as a part of their GRA role. Individuals who fell into the higher level group were administrators, faculty, supervisors, and staff. A majority of the participants of this study indicated that they were poorly treated by their bosses (who in some cases were their doctoral committee chair) or in general by those in power. They stated that individuals in power instigated uncivil behaviors towards GRAs such as abusing their power, belittling them, lacking

professional demeanor, and making unreasonable expectations. These areas will be discussed below in detail.

Abuse of power. GRAs experienced power abuse from superiors in many forms. Those in higher positions misused their power in various ways that were deemed as inappropriate behaviors by GRAs. The types of such power misuse ranged from cancelling or not showing up for meetings without notifying the GRA to asking for personal information when not needed (e.g., inquiring about relationship status). Isabella summed up power abuse well by stating, “Power dynamics definitely exists in the way we’re treated. Those faculty and staff that have a Ph.D. have more weight than those who do not. And, those who are full-time have more weight than those who are part-time” (Isabella, 14).

Patty and John regularly experienced cancellation of meetings. One of three Patty’s supervisors frequently cancelled meetings and/or did not show up for meetings. He not only did not inform her that he would be unable to make it to the meeting or maybe be running late but also expected that she walk across campus again to meet with him after having returned to her office. Patty elaborated:

My office wasn’t where my advisor and my supervisor were. It was the furthest away from the main building. But I was working with one of my supervisors that I have now, and he’s really bad on time – he still is – so if we have a meeting scheduled for 3:00 p.m., nine out of ten times he’s not there. I was walking ten minutes to the building where he’s supposed to be, and I get there, and he’s not there, and I don’t know where he is. And then I’m like, “okay, should I just wait

here where I am, where I can't do anything, because I don't have my computer.” I mean it got to the point where I would take something to read or something like that because I knew that he was liable to be late, or just not be there, or whatever ... that was definitely bothersome, because it's bad enough to walk across campus to class, but to go back-and-forth? And so I would go and stay for a while, and he wouldn't show up, and then I'd go back to my office, I'd send him an email, and he'd say, “Well, can you come back at this time,” and I'm like “really?” And so I go back. And usually when he rescheduled, he would be there. But that happened so often. It was frustrating. (Patty, 24)

Similarly, John's boss, also his advisor, cancelled a third of their lab meetings and one in four of their advising meetings. John stated that she would email or text us fifteen minutes prior to the meeting that she would be unable to come to the meeting. John described:

Well, I mean there's been lots of days, lots of Fridays when this happens, you know, and you get up at like 6am, and like you're getting stuff all finished and ready for your meeting. And then it's like ten minutes before, like “oh, I'm not gonna be able to be there.” Does it bother me? Sure, it is annoying but I am not going to tell her that. I just send her my stuff and move on. (John, 5)

It is important to note that GRAs would not be able to cancel meetings in the similar fashion especially at a short notice in case of an emergency. Their position in the hierarchy prevents them from doing so.

Patty encountered another incident of power abuse where she was asked to turn in assigned tasks immediately. Having three supervisors and working as a teaching assistant for her advisor, Patty already had a heavy workload. All her supervisors wanted their work done. One supervisor in particular expected that Patty submit work that was assigned to her in the morning by early afternoon. The assigned tasks were related to data analysis which required time. In spite of that, Patty completed the tasks and submitted them because she did not want to cause any issues.

Unlike Patty's boss who demanded work done urgently, Sara's boss/advisor demanded unnecessary information from her. For example, he wanted to know if she had a boyfriend, if she went to bars, and whom she spent time with after school/work. In addition to that, he asked her to give her daily schedule to him in writing. Sara explained, "I didn't like to tell him personal stuff. And one thing I remember – it was so hard to me – he told me to give him my schedule, that during the day what I'm doing. Like 9 and 10" (Sara, 7). He then put this schedule up on his office wall. This was an inappropriate act which violated Sara's privacy. Sara was very disturbed by this behavior.

Demands from those in power can occur in social settings, too. Sometimes, GRAs interacted with superiors outside the formal work and educational setting where they were continued being treated as an "assistant". Olivia explained:

If we're just hanging out, and they need a box out of the back of someone's pickup or something, "Olivia, go get the box." Or I may be going inside to use the restroom, and we're all sitting out on the porch, and they'll be like "Olivia,

grab this and this while you're in there." So I still kinda get that servant mentality when I'm out with them. Yeah, or you know if we're at the house, and I'm running inside, "grab me a beer out of the fridge" or "change the music station." And again, it's little stuff, and you're like "okay, I'd be happy to do it otherwise." But it was more of the tone, I guess, where it was, "hey, could you please do this" – it was, they expected me to. (Olivia, 27)

Olivia stated that she had developed a thicker skin and tried not taking it personally. She took it as she had to pay her dues to get a spot in their social circle. Nevertheless, it was obvious from Olivia's tone that this treatment was a result of their power over her. Her position dictated how she would be treated in a social setting.

Powerful individuals also dictated the course of events, that is, they made sudden changes without consulting or even merely informing GRAs. For example, John had received funding during summer since he began the program a year ago, and his advisor/boss had informed him that he would receive funding next summer, too. However, all of a sudden his advisor/boss informed him that he would not be funded in the summer and did so via email when she assigned him some GRA work. John further articulated:

You wanna talk about like abuse? You know, this is systemic abuse of graduate students making \$11,000 a year. So I thought I was gonna be funded like I was last summer, and life is okay. I mentioned to Pam several times throughout the semester to check to make sure – "okay, I'll check." I kept asking her to check, but she would cancel meetings, I reminded her "you need to check." Never

happened. Please check. Cancel meeting. Please check. Cancel meetings.

Happened constantly. And then like the Friday at the end of the spring break, she emailed me asking me to do some work, and at the end of the email she writes, “P.S. - Also, I will not be able to fund you on the grant this summer ☹️”. So basically I went from basically having a way to support myself over the summer, to not having a way to support myself in the summer. So I thought that was uncivil – I thought that was a poor way to communicate that I was not gonna have a check like in a month. On top of that she suggested I wait tables to survive. This was total abuse! (John, 14)

Isabella faced the similar treatment; however, it was not from her supervisor, rather it was from Jenna, a woman who was in a higher position in the department where Isabella worked. One morning when Isabella came to work her desk was assigned to Jenna’s newly hired GRA. Isabella was not informed where her new desk was located and neither was she informed that she was going to lose her desk. Upon inquiry she realized that this happened because Jenna was more powerful than Isabella’s boss and that she could have her way at her convenience. Isabella stated:

When I asked the staff and my boss, nobody would say anything directly but their responses or reactions meant, “Well, Jenna wants her person here, so she gets to do it.” I was unhappy because nobody informed me. It’s like my spot was just taken overnight because somebody had the power to do that. (Isabella, 45)

It is evident that higher positions bring power and pride in an individual which can result in them abusing those who work below them such as the participants in this study.

Power abuse is a highly prevalent component of incivility experienced by GRAs.

Undervaluing based on position. Bill, Olivia, and Sara conveyed that they were often belittled due to their position in the hierarchy. They were quickly reminded that they were “just” GRAs and their position in the organization was not one where they could be treated with respect or as an equal. Sara was constantly ordered by her advisor/boss to do things for him even though she had exams or had already worked her 20 hours that week. Sara mentioned, “He treated me very, very bad, And one of his sentences was, “You get paid to obey me.”” (Sara, 12). In addition, Sara’s boss/advisor also mocked her for her English language ability rather than helping her improve her English. He often interrupted her while she spoke and sometimes even got upset with her for sharing her thoughts even though he was the one who solicited her opinion.

Bill’s boss/advisor was also quick in reminding him what position was during meetings. Bill recalled an incident where his boss/advisor laughed at him when he had forgotten something. Bill stated, “So then I asked him the question again, and he’s like (laughs) . . . he’s basically like, “We already discussed this. You should’ve already had this figured out.” You know it just leaves you feeling foolish.” (Bill, 13).

Similarly, Olivia was frequently reminded by professors and staff members in her department that she was merely a GRA. People in higher positions have humiliated Olivia for various reasons. She stated, “well, you know, since you’re just” – they use that “just” word, “since you’re just a GA, since you’re just a grad student” (Olivia, 22). One

professor told Olivia that getting a book review published was not a big deal. A staff member asked Olivia to shred papers because she was a GRA of the department even though she was neither her boss nor was that her responsibility; rather it was a task that should have been assigned to a student worker. Olivia expressed her frustration. “It could be at the coffee machine, I mean it can be just in passing – “well, we’ll get them to do it because they’re just a GA. We need to get that done – we’ll get them to do it because they’re just . . .” they have this mentality that we are a subclass” (Olivia, 22).

Unprofessional demeanor. People in higher power often have a tendency of demonstrating unprofessionalism. The participants shared a number of unprofessional incidences and deemed unprofessional behaviors as incivility. This unprofessional demeanor was manifested in poor communication, creating an uncomfortable environment, failure to provide resources needed, not giving credit for GRAs’ work, and demonstrating manipulative behavior.

Communication. Isabella, Bill, Patty, and John mentioned poor communication from the individuals they work for. John also indicated that staff and administrators were equally bad at communicating information. Lack of communication is pervasive and can cause great turmoil.

Isabella assumed far more responsibilities than listed on her job description. To her, this was the first stage of poor communication and can be attributed to those who create the job descriptions and to her supervisor. Further, while doing the work, Isabella seldom received deadlines to turn in work or clear instructions on how to complete the tasks. In addition, she did not receive any feedback on submitting the work she

submitted to her supervisor. As a result, Isabella often ended up having to redo work and work overtime to complete those and other tasks whose deadlines she was not informed of.

Isabella, Bill, Patty, and John all complained about their supervisors not responding to emails. And, if they did reply, it took them days to respond or “their reply is not clear enough so you ask for clarification and you never hear back from them” (Bill, 28). In fact, John’s supervisor told him to “keep badgering him if he absolutely needed something, “email me, call me, text me, just keep at it and I will get back to you”” (John, 9). It is uncivil to ask GRAs to do so because it can make them feel uncomfortable and feel like they could be a nuisance. Patty stated that she never received acknowledgement from two of her three supervisors upon turning in a work task. In fact, she had to chase them to find out they needed anything else or if the material she sent was sufficient and what they expected.

John further stated that even administrators and staff failed to communicate information to them. The department head may or may not communicate information about funding or grant opportunities. Staff was equally bad at communicating stated John. When John did not receive his paycheck on time, he was not informed by staff members that this had happened, and when he inquired they told him they would look into it and get back to him which they did not. So, John asked again and discovered that the payment was only made once a month and that he would have to wait till next month. There was no remorse or apology from staff for this mishap. John’s reaction to this was, “You know, it’s like “sorry, person who makes \$11,000 a year, we’re not

gonna give you a check for a month and let you just deal with it.” And that’s the kinda shit that goes on” (John, 29). Lack of communication is unprofessional and a type of incivility that was regularly experienced by the GRAs in this study.

Creating an uncomfortable environment. Sara and Patty felt uncomfortable around their supervisors because they created an environment that was unpleasant. Although they did not label it as sexual harassment, Sara and Patty expressed discomfort towards certain behaviors of their supervisors. Sara stated that her boss/advisor “threw a fit and screamed” (Sara, 16) at her when she had visited with a professor who was the co-investigator on a project that Sara and her boss were also associated with. Bursting into tears that very moment in front of her boss/advisor, Sara was taken aback and said she wished she could disappear. Another behavior of her boss/advisor that made Sara uncomfortable was that during each meeting he would open and shut the door even though there was nothing confidential to discuss. It was a spontaneous behavior and Sara was unsure of why he did that. This made her feel uneasy and uncertain of what might happen.

Patty had two male supervisors and one female supervisor. The two male supervisors made her feel uncomfortable. One of them joked a lot and expected Patty to laugh at each joke and if she did not laugh her supervisor would be offended. Patty stated that his immediate reaction would be, “Are you having a bad day?” (Patty, 10). The other supervisor commented on Patty’s appearance each time he ran into her. He complimented her each time he met her during the day. So, if she met him five times a day he complimented her five times. Patty described:

One of them makes comments about how I look, so “you’re looking really young, what are you doing? That’s a real nice skirt.” He’s always complimenting me on how I’m dressed or how I look. And he’s older and he’s married, and he has children. When I don’t feel offended but it makes me uncomfortable. But there have been times where I was like, is this more than just him giving me a compliment. I just kind of say thank you and keep it moving, get back on task, what we’re meeting about or whatever. Or if, you know, he says that, you know, asks me what I’m doing, “drinking a lot of water” – I just try to move the conversation back to what I feel is appropriate, which is work. (Patty, 57)

It is difficult for GRAs to take action against such behavior because often it is unclear as to what the true intentions of their bosses might be. Patty and Sara were also unsure of the purpose of their bosses’ out of the ordinary behavior.

Failure to provide resources needed. GRAs often require some resources or information from staff members and until they receive it they are unable to progress with their tasks. For example, Ronnie required experimental equipment to proceed with the work assigned to him. The lab technician was in charge of providing these parts for everybody in the lab; however, she refused to order those parts for Ronnie. Eventually, Ronnie had to order the equipment himself in order to proceed with the experiment. It was costly and a hassle for Ronnie which he believed he should not have had to go through. Also, the lab technician did not give a reason as to why she would not place the order for him.

Similarly, John needed a key to a new office that he was supposed to move in order to set up and carry on with his work. When asking the staff members for a key, they advised him not to come in to ask them and that they would inform him once the keys were ready. John stated, “It was their job to give us a key on time and not our job to chase after them. It slows down work and is frustrating that we have to beg them to get shit done that is their duty” (John, 34). Like John, Isabella, was not given a key to her new office for approximately two months. Each day she had to ask someone in the department’s office to let her into her own office. “I received sighs and rolling of eyes when I asked them to let me in but it was their fault for not providing me with a key. So annoying!” (Isabella, 33).

No credit given for their work. Isabella, Olivia, and Patty mentioned that they did not receive credit for the work they had done. Isabella developed emergency preparedness curricula on her own without the help and support from her supervisor yet she did not receive credit for it. Her name did not appear on the manual, rather her boss’s name appeared on it. Similarly, Patty did not receive credit for the data analysis work she had completed rather they listed the data analysis team in the acknowledgement sections. So, Patty decided to avoid work where she did not receive credit for. Similarly, Olivia did not receive credit for a class she taught either. Olivia took over the class of a professor who retired but another faculty member was listed as the professor of record. However, Olivia did all the work and the listed professor did not do anything. According to Olivia:

He didn't change any content, he didn't change anything. The class had over 100 students – I did all the grading. There were resubmittals allowed, so if you looked at 100 people, and all of them could resubmit if they wanted to . . . so let's just say half did – that's 150 papers to grade in a summer session every week, you know. And then “well let's just leave it in my name because you know it's just gonna be easier,” so I didn't even get credit for teaching the class.

You know, I get thrown under the bus. (Olivia, 20)

Fair practices in giving credit is a critical issue in academia. Often students or those in less power receive short end of the stick. Olivia shared the example of one of the undergraduate student projects in which she was involved and was entitled to receive credit for it as she was the teaching assistant for the course. However, Olivia decided that she did not want credit because it was the students who put in all the work and she was only guiding them as and when needed because that was her job. Nevertheless, the instructor of the course not only put Olivia's name on the paper, but also put her own name and the names of three other individuals who had not done a single thing on the project. It is disappointing to see such instances take place stated the participants mentioned above.

Demonstrating manipulative behavior. Ronnie stated that the lab technician was often manipulative and vindictive. In order to make a good impression before the lab-manager and the director of the lab, she often made other people look bad especially Ronnie. If there was spill in the lab or something did not go right she blamed Ronnie and complained to the superiors that Ronnie was the one who created the mess. Such

incidences occurred frequently. She also gossiped about Ronnie to make him look bad. Ronnie stated, “My only problem with that particular lady – she makes life hell sometimes” (Ronnie, 29). According to Ronnie, the lab technician took advantage of the fact that she had worked there for a long time and that the lab director was never there.

Strategies employed to meet unreasonable demands. Given the fact that GRAs are perceived as “assistants” by those in power, they expected GRAs to meet their demands while they were preoccupied doing other assigned work given to them by their boss/advisor. Those in higher power were aware that the tasks they wanted GRAs to accomplish were not a part of their work responsibility and that they were not in a position to assign work to GRAs because they were not their boss/advisor. Hence, these individuals “sweet-talked” GRAs or were extremely polite in order to have their task accomplished. However, once the task was accomplished these individuals would not speak to GRAs until they needed something again.

Ronnie and Olivia both mentioned that other faculty and staff asked them to do things even though they were not working for them. Olivia mentioned an incident where she was walking past a faculty member who was teaching when she heard the professor yelling at her asking her to bring some paper clips. Olivia was on her way to do some work for her own boss/advisor, but she had to make a detour to assist this faculty member. It was not pleasant for Olivia to be treated like this, especially because that professor neither was thankful to her nor did she acknowledge Olivia upon running into her.

Similarly, the lab technician in Ronnie's department who in charge of the lab was a warm and friendly when she needed help from Ronnie. However, Ronnie stated, "If she did not need anything then she would be rude and grouchy, and complain about me to my boss/advisor for no reason" (Ronnie, 28). Ronnie eventually just ignored her "temperamental behavior" (Ronnie, 28) and decided to move on with his work.

Isabella had a few people in her work department who would stop by her office and ask her to do stuff. In fact, she stated that one faculty member would stop by her door and ask, "Are you just killing time over here? I need you to do something" (Isabella, 27). Isabella did not appreciate the tone and connotation of that question because she was always busy with a lot of work from her supervisor. Further, Isabella was also asked by certain faculty to do filing, decorating rooms for baby showers, and sorting papers. She did not mind doing these jobs but was unhappy about how she was treated before and after completing the job. Isabella stated, "People did not talk or greet unless they needed something, and once they got what they wanted they never spoke to me" (Isabella, 27).

It is evident that those who hold superior positions than GRAs would often take advantage of their power and position, which they used to abuse GRAs.

Conduct of Those in Similar or Lower Positions

Apart from experiencing incivility from those who were in higher position, participants also experienced uncivil behaviors from those who worked in same positions as them and from those in lower positions. For example, participants experienced incivility from other graduate assistants and graduate students. Also, they experienced incivility from undergraduate students whom they taught as a part of their

teaching assistantship duty. Undergraduates can be considered as being in a lower position than graduate assistants and students as they do not hold the same seniority and level of education. However, undergraduate students can be uncivil toward GRAs. Some uncivil behaviors participants experienced from other GRAs are cattiness, exclusion, and disrespect for personal space and diverse views. Undergraduate students on the other hand, crossed boundaries set by GRAs which was not only disrespectful but also led GRAs in jeopardy with their supervisor.

Cattiness. Some participants experienced mean and rude treatment from other GRAs within their department. Bill, Olivia, and John mentioned experiencing cattiness. Bill stated, “I’ve experienced is just a little bit of like cattiness from some of the females in my program. There’s kind of a little bit of a clique with 4-5 of the females in our program, and they can be a little bit rude sometimes” (Bill, 5). Specifically, one female who is also a GRA within Bill’s department and works in the same office space as Bill was rude to him on several occasions. One example Bill shared of her was:

She just doesn’t have much of a filter when it comes to saying things that are just kinda rude. She grew up in the wine country of California, so she comes here, and says things like “oh, I hate this town and blah, blah, blah.” You’re here for grad school for a temporary amount of time – why do you have to complain about it? It’s just general complaints – it’s as if nothing is good enough for her. You know, everybody likes their hometown – so I’m like my hometown is great, that’s my hometown. She’s like, “I went to there – it sucks – it’s a crappy town.” It’s like why would you say that? I don’t say bad things about your hometown

for no reason at all. Like if that's your opinion, that's fine, keep it to yourself. I can give you 100 reasons why I like my hometown. And you've been there once, and you're telling me it sucks, and you obviously haven't seen the entire city. So it's just little things like that, she goes out of her way and says something extremely offensive. It's always this low effect, ambiguous types of things that are rude, but not like overtly. (Bill, 8)

Bill shared another example of the same lady who was uncivil not only to Bill but also to two undergraduate students while they were taking a make-up exam in their office. Bill described that they often let students take make-up exams in their office which was an open space and there were several other GRAs working in there. The office was designed similar to offices where people worked in cubicles. Bill claimed that it was an established rule that if students were taking a make-up exam or were in the office everybody was to behave appropriately and keep the noise level down. However, the lady, Bill's colleague, came into the office making a loud noise with three of her friends. Bill asked them to keep the noise down because students were taking an exam, however, they continued being loud. When asked again to reduce the noise, the lady responded rudely to Bill. Bill described:

And the one female that I said is the worst with that, she looks at me and she's like . . . I guess I don't know if they didn't realize, but they only saw the one student taking the exam outside of this office – maybe they didn't know we had another student inside of here. So she looks at me, and she goes, “Well, can't you just move her into your office and close the door so we can talk?” and said it

with a lot of attitude. And it's almost beyond incivility and straight-up rude. It's not only rude to speak to me that way, but these students are in here taking an exam, and to be interrupted like that, and to be made to feel uncomfortable. So I just looked at her and very calmly said, "I already have a student in here – you need to keep it down."

After this incident Bill indicated that he did not speak with her again. Bill shared that the excuse she gave him for behaving inappropriately was inexcusable. She told him that the reason for her behavior was that she broke her favorite cup and was upset about it. It was shocking for Bill to hear this excuse.

Olivia faced cattiness from a faculty member. Olivia was helping her teach her class one day and she told students that she wanted to set up Olivia's husband with her sister. Olivia described the situation as:

When I came in, and I was TA-ing, one of the first things she told the entire class was that, "Well, yeah, I'm on Facebook, but the only reason I'm on Facebook is because Olivia's husband set up my account. But I wanted him to set it up so that I could hook him up with my sister." (Olivia, 33)

She said that in front of 200 kids. Olivia was upset but she decided to keep it to herself. In Olivia's words, "I just felt like she's always been kinda catty towards me, and so I just watch myself around her. And I don't say anything about anybody – I keep to myself" (Olivia, 33).

Similarly, John faced cattiness from a few women who were doctoral students of his boss/advisor. When they did not hear from John's advisor/boss via email they got upset

with John. They were rude to him and took out their anger on him. John remained calm as he knew it was not his fault.

Exclusion. Participants experienced exclusion from their social circle for various reasons, such as, fear, and jealousy. Sara received poor treatment from her boss/advisor, and most of Sara's friends were aware of how he treated her. They did not want to be associated with her as her advisor/boss was also on their committee. Sara stated:

I remember one time,. . . my friend was afraid to come to my office because she was saying that "I don't want your advisor see you with me because if you get in trouble with him, he is in my committee member. I don't want to get affected from your problem." And when she wanted to ask me a question, she asked me to go to the library that my advisor cannot understand, that we have relationship.

It was so rude to me. (Sara, 18)

Another friend of Sara's was afraid to be caught sitting next to her in a class taught by her boss/advisor. "I have Iranian friends, and I sit beside another student. And he begged me, "please change your seat. If he looks at us, he will understand that we are friends." I could not have friends" (Sara, 18). Other graduate students were afraid to be caught socializing or studying with Sara because they feared that if Sara's boss/advisor found out that they were friends he would treat them with vengeance.

John and Isabella felt excluded from their social circle. John's supervisor allowed him to work from home whereas other GRAs did not have that same accommodation with their boss, hence they were jealous of John. John stated:

It's really more that I'm not following this social norm that they've established, that you know, you come and be around and talk to us and all that kind of stuff. I don't get information a lot of times, like about what's going on, or like "we're going out tonight," or there's this deadline for this grant, travel money, whatever coming up. This is definitely related to me working alone and not in the office with them. (John, 38)

John did not know for a long time that there was a kickball team in the department.

Another reason John attributed to not receiving this information was to the fact that he is an Ivy League graduate and the others feel threatened by him. Nevertheless, he definitely viewed the aforementioned behavior as uncivil because neither were significant reasons exclude him from the social milieu. Isabella, too, was excluded from the GRA clique who would eat lunch together. Isabella stated, "They would always have lunch together, and I never was invited to have lunch with them" (Isabella, 23). Isabella was not sure why she was excluded especially when a majority of them were her colleagues from the school she pursued her undergraduate degree.

Disrespect for personal space and diverse views. Isabella and Ronnie experienced disrespect for personal space. Ronnie's desk was located besides the coffee machine, and often people who came to get coffee peeped into his screen. Then they proceeded to ask him what he was working on or stop by and chat with him while he was trying to work. This was viewed as inappropriate behavior by Ronnie. Similarly, Isabella's officemate watched movies without headphones on and talked loudly on the phone. She found it

very inconsiderate especially when Isabella was trying to work and not waste time watching movies. Ronnie and Isabella's privacy and personal space was not respected.

On the other hand, Bill experienced disrespect towards his thoughts. Some Bill's officemates insulted him for having different political views than them. Bill described the incident where he was humiliated for having conservative beliefs.

They're all strongly liberal, which is a common theme with academics, and it's a common theme with psychologists, especially like most of us are, you know, politically heavily on the liberal side. But there's a few of us, myself included, that I'm not a Republican, per se, but I lean conservative on some issues. If there's just people talking about whatever in the office, kind of an informal conversation, then you know, one of these major issues – abortion or gay marriage or something comes up. If I say something that exposes my conservative leanings, you know, I kinda get reactions like I'm ignorant, like “how can you think that way” type of thing. That's the impression I get – I'll get looked at like I'm thinking backwards. They get upset at someone disagreeing with them – I think that's what it is. They have their way of thinking, and they don't like even thinking about someone else believing something differently than they do. It makes them worked. (Bill, 33)

Therefore, incivility with some of the participants took shape in the form of violation of their personal beliefs and disrespect towards their personal space. It was definitely viewed as deviant behavior by Bill, Isabella, and Ronnie.

Crossing set boundaries. Neil was responsible for an upper-level undergraduate design class. While teaching this class he had to help students in various ways. He was responsible for ordering parts they needed, for lecturing them on the technical aspects of the course, and assisting them in putting their models together. Neil had advised students that if they required a part they needed to inform him ten days in advance because it took a while to order the parts and have them delivered. However, students often failed to place their order, and then bypassed him and asked others in the department for parts. Neil stated, “They shouldn’t make a habit to bypass me and go and do something over there with other projects and go and get parts without informing me, it is not inappropriate to bypass me like this” (Neil, 10).

This bothered Neil because students were supposed to ask Neil prior to asking others; and because the course had funds for them so they did not need to ask others. Also, it created a bad impression of Neil when others informed him that his students were asking them for parts that he should have been providing. Further, during exit interviews students complained about Neil to his boss/advisor who was the professor of record for the class. Neil elaborated:

There’s exit interviews of these students, which means they get to say their mind after they finish the course as a feedback. I’m so involved with the students, and I’m so responsible for the class, that every single thing that went wrong with students, chances are it’ll come to me, because I’m basically doing 95% of the real work, which is not the paperwork or anything. So one student team said, two days before the flight, they ordered a part, and it came one day after the flight,

and they needed it for the flight. And they blamed me because I was the one ordering it. Now ordering doesn't always happen on the same day, right, so there are certain delays sometime, and then there's some shipping delay or whatever. I make it very clear that they should order about 10 days before flying, but they just brought it two days before flying. I did all I could, but it did not work out. So there are some frustrating points when students do not understand or cooperate. (Neil, 9).

Poor communication from the students and their inability to remember their responsibility affected Neil and his reputation. However, Neil attributed it to the fact that they did not pay attention while he was lecturing them. If they listened, they would not have run into problems with ordering parts and in turn it would not delay or affect their project and their grades. Thus, failure on the students' part was not only perceived as uncivil by Neil but it also affected his reputation amongst others within the department and especially his boss/advisor.

Diversity Issues

Out of eight participants, five were minority due to their race, culture, and gender. Neil and Ronnie were from Indian decent and were culturally different from the mainstream Caucasians. Similarly, Patty and Isabella were African American and women, which determined their minority status. Sara, too, was a minority being a woman from Iran. Such diversity resulted in them experiencing incivility from individuals they interacted with during their role as a GRA. These experiences will be discussed below.

Culture. Culture is defined as a set of values, conventions, beliefs, attitudes of a group of people (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Participants such as Neil and Ronnie experienced incivility because they belonged to a different culture due to their Indian origin. Neil stated that being an Indian he had been raised to work hard and always please people especially one's boss. Therefore, Neil never refused a task assigned to him by his boss/advisor. In fact, Neil politely agreed to do anything he was asked to do and put his advisor/boss's work above his own doctoral work even though it meant he would have to work overtime. Neil explained:

Culture has a huge impact. I feel very pressured to say "no, it's not possible", to anything. I over-promise, in my culture we never say "no, this is not possible", because we think that it's gonna taint our reputation, or it's going to make us lose our job. We never say it's not possible – we promise this can be done. (Neil, 19)

Neil worked extremely hard to accomplish his work goals. He tried his best to never disappoint his boss/advisor. In spite of that his boss did not show appreciation. In fact he told Neil that not being able to complete a task would result in him getting penalized. This made Neil feel insignificant because he worked very hard to accomplish his goals. "It would have been appreciated to get some leeway sometimes", Neil stated (Neil, 20).

Ronnie also faced incivility from his advisor/boss due to his culture. Prior to being hired, Ronnie had an interview with his boss/advisor in Thailand. His boss asked Ronnie, "Can you take orders well and do you mind taking orders from women?" Because an Indian guy we had working with us could not handle taking orders from others, specifically women" (Ronnie, 18). Ronnie did not retaliate or show that he was

offended, but when spoken about one's culture and assuming that everybody from the same culture is alike can be offensive. Ronnie did not like being judged. However, Ronnie stated, "I never say "no" to anything I am asked to do. I go out of my way and make sure it gets done even if I have to stay up all night" (Ronnie, 15). It could be said that as influenced by their culture their inability to say "no" caused others to take advantage of Neil and Ronnie. Their bosses used their kindness and fear of losing a job to their advantage.

Race. Isabella, Patty, Sara, and Ronnie faced incivility due to their race. Isabella was inconvenienced along with her officemates due to being black. Patty's appearance was mocked. Sara and Ronnie's bosses humiliated them due to their accents and English language proficiency. Ronnie was insulted and called a liar because he was Asian. Due to these examples, the above mentioned participants attributed race as a factor that caused them to be treated uncivilly.

All of a sudden Isabella's office space was assigned to another GRA and she did not find out about it until she came to the office one morning. Upon inquiring as to where she should work, she was advised to share the desk with the new GRA and her old officemate. Essentially, she could use the desk of either of the girl with permission from them or if they were not working. Isabella stated that it was very inconvenient for all of them especially because they all needed a computer to get work done. Three African American girls were assigned to work in an office that could only accommodate two people. Isabella stated:

Me and the new GRA and my old officemate are all black, and we're pretty much the only black people in the office. And so I don't know if they really just didn't care that we were all stuffed in an office, or if they were just gonna . . . let us deal with it. But me and my friend who was the old officemate, we both this is weird. And we never really connected it back to the fact that all of us were black. But it is kind of a coincidence that we were all kind of put out and inconvenienced and nobody else was. (Isabella, 27)

Isabella realized that the fact that all three girls were the only black people in the department they were all made to be inconvenienced; however, people from another race specifically white, would not have been inconvenienced in a similar fashion. Isabella stated that in case of a white person, provisions would have been made immediately.

Patty was also an African American female like Isabella. However, she was the only African American female in her office for a long period of time, which was not unusual in Engineering. Patty discussed an offensive experience where her hair (as she said "afro") was mocked. Patty shared:

We were out in the field one day, when I was like early on in my assistantship – something spilled, and at the time I had my hair in like an afro puff, and one of the technicians was like, "We could just use your hair to mop it up." And I think, you know, he was trying to be funny, but it wasn't funny to me, and I was like, "No, we're not using my hair for anything."(Patty, 9)

This was a highly offensive experience. Patty added that she experienced some other instances where "the comments were off color" (Patty, 9).

Sara and Ronnie were both international students. Their English language proficiency was intermediate. Sara and Ronnie's boss/advisor frequently corrected their accents, and English pronunciations and grammar in front of others. They felt humiliated. While seeing Ronnie's boss do this, the lab technician also began correcting Ronnie, which was further demeaning to him. Sara stated that her boss/advisor was also a non-native English speaker and had an accent so she found it ironic that he was making fun of her accent. Sara did not mind having her English corrected as much as she did the mockery of her accent. Sara pointed:

Another special feature that I didn't like that his behavior to international students was different to the American ones. The American students [non-international students] know that they're right, that they have this right to go and complain. But the international students are scared, and they don't know how to deal with. Others, the Chinese guys were also so unhappy about this guy. (Sara, 10)

Similarly, Ronnie was also insulted for being an international student. The lab technician in his office frequently told him, "Asian students are liars. They never admit to anything they have done wrong" (Ronnie, 16). However, she did not say that to other students rather she only said that to Ronnie because Ronnie refused to take responsibility for something he did not do. Ronnie claimed that if he was wrong he immediately took blame but the lab technician always wanted to blame Ronnie for everything which he was not willing to compromise with. However, Ronnie stated that he had learned to ignore her.

Gender. Isabella and Patty reported being treated unfairly due to their gender; however, John described that his gender was a bonus for him. Isabella stated that people would stop by her office and ask, “Can somebody help with women work that I have to do?” (Isabella, 14). It was very offensive to hear that, stated Isabella. When she first started working, she had volunteered but stopped doing so because of the derogatory treatment. Patty encountered a similar experience. Being the only female for a long time she was asked to complete tasks such as remodeling the office, and redeveloping reports rather than going out in the field with the men. Patty had requested to gain field experience from her advisor who was the lab director where she worked. However, she still did not get sufficient field experienced because the technicians only took men while leaving Patty to do “womanly duties”. Upon confronting the lab technician, he stated, “Well, I just assumed that you didn’t wanna go to the field” (Patty, 13). Patty found it frustrating that the lab technician had automatically assumed that she did not want to go in the field. Patty stated, “I can carry a ladder and a tool bag.” (Patty, 14). However, up until the time Patty was interviewed she had had limited field experienced.

In opposition to the discrimination that Patty and Isabella faced as women, John took advantage of being a man. John stated that the staff members were rude to him too but it was significantly less compared to others especially female GRAs and graduate students within the department. When asked about how he avoided uncivil treatment from staff, John responded:

Because I’m a boy, I’m attractive, and I flirt with them, and that’s how I avoid it. I’m extremely nice to the staff, and I do my utmost to make them like me. The

girls have a terrible time with the staff – constant problems. And they seem to perceive that as sort of a sexist thing, and I believe it.

While Patty and Isabella faced difficulty due to their gender, John faced less due to his gender. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that incivility can take many different forms and various aspects can influence how GRAs are treated.

Impact

The second research question of this study was, *What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?* The impact of workplace incivility that participants shared fell in three broad categories: personal, professional, and academic. These are reported below in detail.

Personal Impact

Participants reported that workplace incivility had a significant impact on them personally. A few examples include feeling tired, emotionally drained, feeling anxious, and having mental breakdown. In addition, some mentioned becoming less social and trusting of work colleagues. Also, some stated their personal relationships were affected. While some participants mentioned that incivility lowered their self-esteem and self-confidence, others pointed that incivility caused them to alter their personality to develop a barrier against incivility. Essentially, incivility altered their personality and negatively affected their body and life.

Olivia, Sara, Ronnie, and Patty stated that incivility had affected them emotionally and physically. Olivia described:

I'm a wreck pretty much, I mean just to sum it up. I was fainting, I was passing out, I was doing things and didn't remember I did them. And then to deal with stress, I started working out a lot, and so I basically ruined my body working out, as hard as I was, training for marathons and sprints and I mean I was just pushing . . . I was working out to try to control anxiety. So then there's the other side of that, to where if I wasn't doing that, I was stress-eating. Emotionally, I can usually keep it bottled up for about 3-4 months, and then I just cry, you know, I'll cry for like a week, and then I'm usually pretty good for another 3-4 months.

Similarly, Sara stated that she had to take counselling once a week and lived in fear of her advisor. The thoughts of how she was treated by her boss/advisor still haunts her. Sara also mentioned developing health problems such as chronic stomach pain due to anxiety and stress. Like Olivia, Patty, too, had frequent breakdowns. She stated, "I'll end up sleeping in, and I can sleep like the whole day" (Patty, 30). Accordingly, Ronnie mentioned that he spent the whole day thinking about the uncivil incident and that affected him mentally. He would get physically tired by constantly thinking about the negative experiences he had. Isabella, too, mentioned being physically tired and drained all the time due to being overworked.

Instead of being emotionally and physically affected, some participants' personality altered. Bill confessed that he became less friendly and did not go out of the way to help people. He lost faith in people, and was less trusting of others' behavior. Bill shared:

I just limit my interactions with them basically. I don't go out of my way to talk to them anymore. I don't go out of my way to do nice things for them or

anything like that. Whereas I'm generally a pretty nice guy, like I'll do nice things for people sometimes. And they've just gotten me to the point that I don't care to do nice, you know. (Bill, 24)

Isabella also acknowledged becoming less friendly, more specifically because she believed that her race would always influence how she would be treated. She firmly believed that being black and being a female she would always have to face discrimination. Likewise, Patty reduced all commitments that were not related to work and school due to being tired all the time. Olivia claimed to have developed a "thick skin" over a period of time to protect herself against incivility.

In contrast, Sara was disturbed because nobody especially people from her own race were not willing to socialize with her because they were afraid to face the same harsh treatment from Sara's advisor/boss for being associated to her. Neil complained about his personal relationship being affected and lack of self-confidence and self-esteem which was resulted by of incivility. Thus, participants' personal and emotional wellbeing were impacted as a result of incivility.

Professional Impact

Professional impact on participants had varied. Participants mentioned having either positive or negative impacts while stating that negative impacts were greater. The positive impacts encouraged participants to be vigilant and better professionals and humans. However, the negative impact led to decreased motivation and commitment towards their organization.

Bill, Olivia, Patty, and Isabella described some positive professional impacts they had due to their uncivil experiences. Bill mentioned that he had become more aware of organizations' functions and would carefully navigate the system through his experiences of poor treatment. Isabella realized the importance of education, specifically the importance of having a Ph.D. She stated, "I feel like I need to have a doctorate, if I want to get to the level that I want to be at. I don't wanna deal with the BS. I feel like the older I get, the less tolerance that I have for dealing with people" (Isabella, 19). Isabella believed obtaining further education is her key to a brighter, better, and safer future she believed. On the other hand, Patty decided that based upon the poor treatment she experienced as a black woman in engineering she wanted to improve conditions for other black women who desired to enter in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Olivia stated, "Comfort at work was a progression. I was timid at first and felt the boundaries but now I have developed a thick skin" (Olivia, 12).

In contrast, other participants shared the negative professional impact they experienced as a result of the incivility. Patty questioned why she was working there frequently and went to the office only when needed and choose to work from home to limit interactions with her supervisors. Similarly, Ronnie recognized the change in his attitude towards the department he worked for. Ronnie stated, "Such experiences lowered my productivity and commitment, and trust in leadership because they failed to take corrective action towards bad behavior" (Ronnie, 34). Alternatively, Sara, had to continue going to work because she was afraid to lose her funding. Isabella realized that she was powerless and would not be able to take any action due to her position in the

hierarchy. She lost faith in the system. Isabella commented, “I guess, reminded me or educated me about how this whole system works, I guess. Like it lets me know where my place is on the totem pole” (Isabella, 26). This proves that incivility some inflicted positive and negative impact amongst participants. Nevertheless, they had to continue working till they graduated.

Academic Impact

Sara, Isabella, Patty, and Neil stated that incivility influenced their academic performance and also delayed their graduation. Incivility increased stress, affected the participants’ physical and mental health, also robbed their personal study time due to the heavy workload. Many such incidences of incivility mentioned in the previous section (experiences of incivility) affected their academic performance.

Sara shared that she enjoyed her coursework but it was hard for her to focus and she had to work extremely hard to maintain her grades. Isabella, however, stated that, “it did affect my grades last semester, because I wanted to get stuff done, but I wasn’t making enough time for myself to get on my own homework” (Isabella, 30). Patty and Neil both indicated that their graduation had been delayed and work on their dissertation was slow due to the amount of work they put into their work responsibilities. Patty pointed that she was done with coursework in three years but she is still here because of the workload she had to carry. Similarly, Neil commented:

I think just the fact that I’m giving it so much time, and that I shouldn’t, and everything else is suffering, is kind of making me feel like I’m gonna graduate later than I should, and that’s never good for any mental emotional reasons, or

financial reasons or anything else, right? And also it's kind of . . . since I'm not making much progress on my research. It's kind of making me lose self-confidence that I can be finishing a PhD in X amount of time. So that's hurting a little bit. (Neil, 27)

Neil sought support from his advisor and wanted to be guided towards graduation; however, Neil's boss focused primarily on Neil's work responsibilities rather than his school work. Neil's boss/advisor was unable to manage the two roles he had efficiently. Therefore, participants' academic performance suffered due to uncivil treatment.

Additional Emerging Theme: Coping Strategies

Participants of this study experienced workplace incivility which impacted various aspects of their life. They dealt with incivility in various ways. In spite of the fact that they were in a vulnerable position in that their graduation mostly depended upon those from whom they experienced incivility, they still took measures to cope with incivility. Although not a research question of this study, participants identified some coping strategies which enriches our understanding of the topic under study; thus they are included in this report.

Confrontation/Uncivil in Return

Some participants responded to experiences of incivility through actions that were uncivil and/or by confronting the perpetrator. Similar to most participants, Isabella worked more than the official 20 hours per week while being a full-time master's student. Her coping mechanism was that she worked on her homework while she was at work and expected to accomplish her job tasks. Isabella stated, "Yeah, but like some of

us do sneak our homework in (laughs), like I do my homework sometimes in the office and stuff” (Isabella, 13). In opposition, when Olivia got treated as a GRA or an “assistant” during social events, she made impolite comments in a jocular fashion to those faculty members who asked her to grab beer or cut onions. Olivia explained:

Now that I’m older, and I’ve got thicker skin, and I’ve been around them more, I’ll be like, “get it yourself.” Or I tell them. I bark back at them now, whereas used to, I didn’t feel that I could. I’d say something like, “You got this. Your hands are not broken.” (Olivia, 30)

Similarly, Ronnie, who experienced multiple incidences of incivility from the lab associate was rude to her upon finding himself frustrated by her behavior and attitude.

Ronnie indicated:

And you subjugate yourself basically to all the crap for a long time. One particular day, I remember I was like “sorry, screw you, you can’t handle this.” I did raise my voice once, and then she just ignored me and kinda walked away. (Ronnie, 29)

Other participants who experienced incivility took similar actions. Participants confronted the instigator/s and conveyed their feelings about the uncivil instance/s. Some were uncivil during this confrontation, others were standing up for their rights. For instance, when Sara did not like that her boss/advisor had her personal and professional schedule on his office wall, she asked him to take it down because it made her feel uncomfortable and she felt that her privacy was violated. Accordingly, John told his boss that he was unhappy that his funding was being discontinued during the summer and that

he was being informed a couple weeks before the summer started. On the other hand, Bill conveyed to one of the GRAs (who was in the clique of the girls that were often rude and impolite to Bill) that her behavior was not acceptable. Bill shared:

Like one time, one of them said . . . I think it was the same one – I think she said something rude to me one time, and it was a long time ago, and I can't even remember what it was she said. And I called her out on it, and after that I was kind of like ignored by them a little bit in the office for a little while. I just remember that she said something that was a little bit rude, and I said, you know, "hey," but just pretty much called her out, like "Hey, why would you say that. That's ridiculous. Don't talk to me like that." And she just kind of, you know, was taken aback by the fact that she got called out for it. And then I guess she, you know, it was the talk of the office because nothing else goes on, because we're always just working. So if something like that happens, it's kind of like "whoa." (Bill, 10)

Further, Bill emailed the GRA who was uncivil to him for having different political views. In his email Bill conveyed that he wanted nothing more than a professional relationship. Thereafter, Bill blocked him on all social networking sites and maintained only a professional relationship with the GRA.

It is important to note that some participants were uncivil and confrontational; however, only two out of the eight participants confronted their boss/advisor, while others did not do so in spite of having experienced incivility from their boss/advisor. Also, the two participants who were confrontational/uncivil to their boss/advisor only

did so because the incivility incidences were dire. They shared that in spite of experiencing other incidences of incivility, they did not take any action even though the uncivil behaviors were troublesome. This reinforces the power dynamics and the role of GRAs in the hierarchy.

Worked for a Different Professor

Out of all the eight participants, Sara was the only one who left her graduate research assistantship with her boss/advisor and moved to work as a GRA for another faculty member in her department. However, Sara did not have the courage to facilitate or initiate this change. Rather the department head discovered the treatment she had been experiencing and suggested that she meet with him to discuss a few options. Upon meeting with him Sara was assigned to work with another faculty and her previous boss/advisor was fired after an investigation. Sara mentioned that she was very scared to discuss her situation with the department head. Sara described:

The department head found out that there is something wrong with my advisor, so he asked me to give him details because he said that he's in tenure track – “If you don't tell me the details, I cannot do anything. You have to talk to me.” And at that time I told him some of the stuff that was bothering me – not clearly as here, but I told him some of them. And he asked my advisor to sign – he did without telling anything. But he was so angry, my advisor was so angry at me. And he told me, “You made my job insecure, what if I lose my job just because of you. You complained not because of my behavior, but because you want you want an American professor.” (Sara, 15)

Despite that Sara did not herself decide to complain to the department head, she was afraid to talk about her boss/advisor to anybody because she did not want to experience any additional issues. Further, she encountered incivility from her boss/advisor even after the formal complaint was filed against him. Sara, was pleased that the department head had taken the stance and steps up to help her.

Ignored the Perpetrator/s

One of the strategies participants mentioned was ignoring the perpetrator/s, that is, they avoided the people who inflicted incivility towards them with an aim to prevent further experiences of incivility. Bill mentioned that he ignored the clique of girls in his office because they were often rude and uncivil not only to each other but others in the office, too. Bill also mentioned blocking them on Facebook and other social media. Similarly, Patty limited interactions with both her supervisors who made her feel uncomfortable because one constantly complimented her and the other was always joking which Patty did not find funny. Patty mentioned:

In dealing with individuals who my interaction with them has been awkward, I try to limit my interaction with them. And so that might mean, you know, I might have a question about something, but I'll take longer to try to figure it out myself, instead of just go ask them, which could take about 5 minutes, and I could move on. (Patty, 28)

Olivia also mentioned that she has learned to ignore those who were uncivil to her. It helped make her day easier by staying away from those who caused trouble.

Developed or Possessed a Strong Personality

Bill and John mentioned that they did not let things bother them due to their personal disposition. They both were aware that what they experienced was uncivil; however, they chose to prevent such incidences from affecting them significantly. Bill stated, “I have a thick skin, and stuff like that doesn’t bother me. I don’t hold grudges” (Bill, 12). Similarly, John stated, “I know that this is uncivil but it does not bother me, I don’t let it bother me. I just think that shit happens and focus on my shit” (John, 12). On the contrary, Olivia described that she developed a thick skin along the way. Her ability to deal with incivility was a gradual process where at first she was always affected by it; however, eventually she became tougher. Olivia stated:

At first I took things too personally. But you know, I feel like at this point, that my skin has become thick enough that I don’t take things just willy-nilly, you know. So if I feel like I’m being belittled, then I am being belittled, I don’t stew upon it. (Olivia, 13)

Therefore, having or developing a thick skin and a positive outlook towards life in general helped participants cope with incivility.

Sought Professional Help

Olivia was the only participant who actively consulted an ombudsman when she realized that false authorship was given by a professor for whom she was a teaching assistant. Olivia was unhappy that the professor gave authorship to those who did not put in any work on the student’s project. Therefore, Olivia sought help from an ombudsman. Olivia described:

And I was so irate, and luckily another professor talked me off the cliff, because I was ready to confront her about it. And he's like, "bad move," because she's one of those that you kind of avoid because she's a little vindictive. And so I went to our ombudsman and spoke to him about it and wrote a letter, so it's just in the file, whatever "file" that is, you know, it goes in the file. Well, and like the ombudsman said, "I wish you could go to the department head and say something, but you can't. Because you know that nothing would be done." And I said I know. Again, pardon the language, she has her head so far up our department head's bottom, that if I went to him with a concern, I'll be in trouble – she wouldn't be. (Olivia, 17)

It is interesting to note that in spite of the fact that Olivia took action her complain went to no avail. Rather she was told that nothing will be done with her complaint. Olivia expressed her disappointment but graduating was her priority so she decided to give up pursuing her complaint.

Focused on the Goal of Graduating

Most of the participants focused on only one goal: graduating. They wanted to graduate and get their degree no matter what. This goal and the importance of achieving it was a priority for the participants. They felt the need and extreme pressure to complete their degree rather than focusing on dealing with incivility even though it caused great turmoil.

John shared that he gave his boss/advisor a pass for the things she did because he wanted to get his degree and move on rather than being caught up in the midst of

incivility. Similarly, Isabella mentioned that she was also doing an internship with her supervisor which was a requirement of her program. In order to achieve success she ignored the incivility and worked hard to complete her program with a successful internship experience. Isabella further stated, “I’m also hoping for a good recommendation letter, that is all I expect but really the other stuff I have to let go” (Isabella, 26). Olivia also mentioned that although she had developed a thick skin there were certain people with whom she would not cross boundaries because they had the power to jeopardize her graduation. Accordingly, Ronnie stated that “You don’t want to make a scene because . . . it’s not only me – I wish it was only me, then it would be a personal problem, but it’s a lot of other Asian populations feel that brunt, and some Germans do, too. To me it is important that I graduate” (Ronnie, 6). This proved that participants were affected by incivility but they decided to put it on the back burner in order to keep their goal of graduating insight.

Talked to Friends and Family

Some participants mentioned that they shared incivility experiences with their support group who comprised of their friends and family. Bill mentioned that he talked to his colleague and friend when he was rudely spoken to by one of the girls in the clique while he was proctoring exams. Similarly, Patty had spoken to several of her friends and family members about the racial incivility she had experienced from lab technicians. Patty indicated, “I have repeated this story about how I was asked to use my afro as mop to my friends and family so many times because it is something that deeply affected me” (Patty, 15). Olivia also shared that “But the people that I’ve chosen to surround myself

with are an amazing support group. You know, yeah, we kinda had to work through some growing pains, just setting boundaries and that type thing” (Olivia, 27). Thus, having a support system helped some participants overcome their incivility experiences.

Figure 4 presents an overview of findings. It graphically demonstrates GRAs’ experiences of workplace incivility. The figure shows the sources from and due to which GRAs experienced workplace incivility. It summarizes the incidences of incivility reported by GRAs of this study and how they coped with those. The figure encompasses the impact incivility had upon GRAs.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the lived experiences that eight graduate research assistants had with workplace incivility. GRAs mentioned experiencing incivility in various forms from many individuals they interacted with in their GRA role. The key experiences described were: 1) poor working conditions, 2) undervalued and treated with disrespect by those in power, 3) rude and demeaning behavior by those in similar or lower positions, and 4) mistreatment based upon culture, race, and gender. Participants also reported severe personal, professional, and academic impact due to incivility, especially due to their inability to take action against those in power. A majority of the participants worked with their doctoral committee chair and who in most cases had direct impact on their graduation.

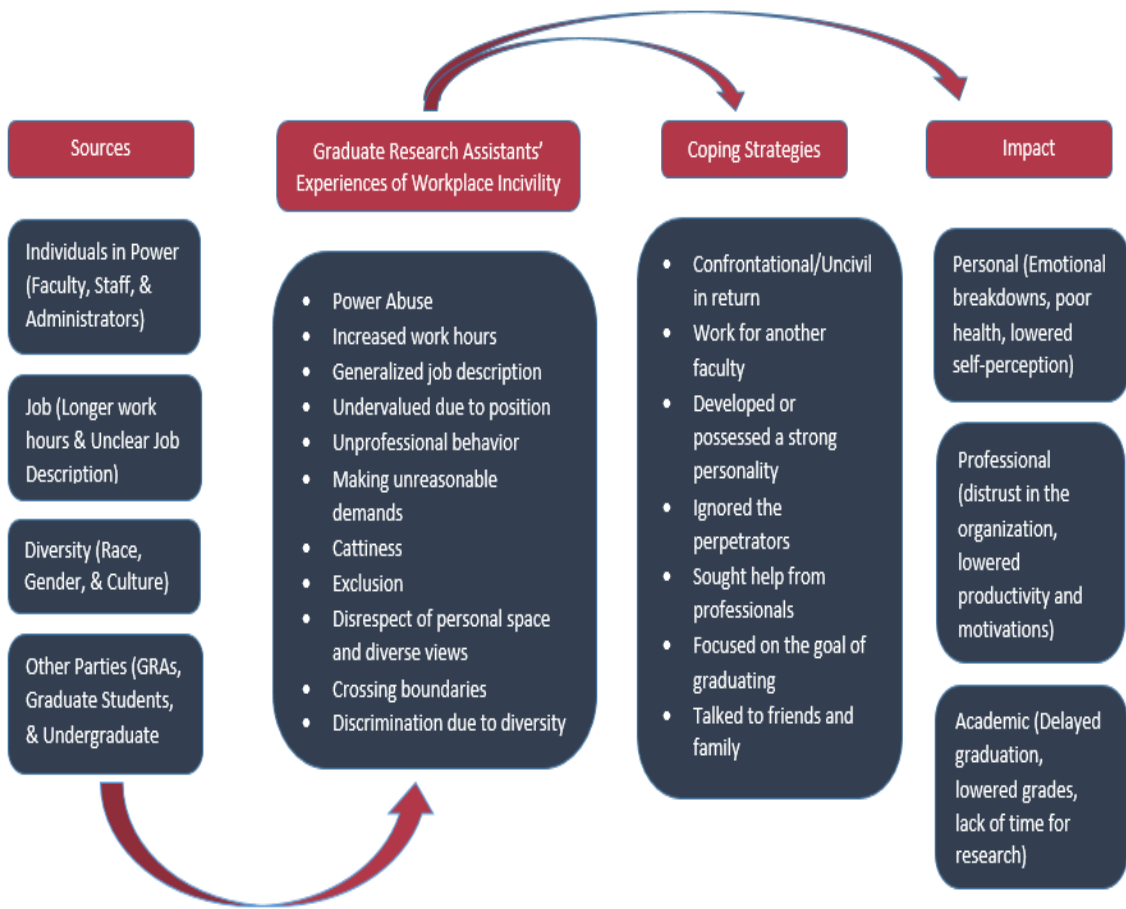


Figure 4. Overview of the Findings

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand graduate research assistants' (GRAs) experiences of workplace incivility. Eight students who were currently employed as GRAs in a large public university were interviewed. A phenomenological approach within qualitative research was used to explore the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The study aimed to answer two research questions:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

Findings from this study are discussed below in relation to the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter I and relevant literature. A new conceptual framework that presents workplace incivility experiences of GRAs will also be presented in this chapter. The chapter concludes with recommendations and implications for HRD research and practice.

Discussion

In essence, the experiences of the study participants with workplace incivility can be characterized as challenging and transcending. Participants faced many challenges due to their experiences of top-down incivility (from those in power), lateral incivility (from those in similar positions), and bottom-up incivility (from those in lower positions). However, in spite of the challenges, participants learned to cope with varied uncivil experiences, and continued their academic pursuit and employment as a GRA.

They did so by acknowledging and understanding power and status differentials, being resilient, developing a new identity, and remaining goal-oriented.

In subsequent paragraphs, I will discuss the essence of GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility which highlights their challenges and ability to transcend despite of the challenges and negative outcomes. Specifically, I will discuss the following four points:

- GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility were shaped by power.
- GRAs' experience of workplace incivility were influenced by multiple sources.
- GRAs coped with workplace incivility through resilience.
- GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility led to new identity development.

GRAs Experiences of Workplace Incivility Were Shaped by Power

According to Caza and Cortina (2007), the role of power and incivility has been examined in corporate/business setting; however, it has received little attention outside of those settings such as, educational institutions. Incivility and the role of power in a corporate/business context (i.e., for-profit organizations) has either focused on abuse from individuals in higher-status or have ignored the issue of power (Caza & Cortina, 2007). For example, Caza and Cortina (2007) pointed out Andersson and Pearson (1999) overlooked the issue of power while describing incivility and its antecedents. Callahan (2011) examines how power influences incivility, and perceptions of and reactions to incivility. Nevertheless, it has been established that power does play a crucial role in the execution of incivility. Callahan (2011) pointed out that top-management have the "power of" making decisions on what constitutes as civility and incivility, which are

then implemented and adhered to by those who have “power over” lower status individuals. Upon perceiving incivility and injustice, those in lower positions reciprocate incivility as a means of demonstrating their “power to” resist acts of incivility from those in power (Callahan, 2011). Accordingly, those in power are likely to instigate incivility frequently with ease because those with a lower status are less likely to take action. Power relations dictate how uncivil experiences occur in institutions and organizations (Callahan, 2011; Caza & Cortina, 2007). Aquino and Douglas (2003), and Aquino, Tripp, and Bies (2006), affirmed that status influences how people respond to mistreatment. It is due to this status differentiation that people in power can take advantage of those positions with little or no power.

The findings of this study suggested that GRAs are a group of lower-status individuals who are disadvantaged by those in power. Through this study, I found that GRAs experienced incivility from faculty, staff, and administrators who are higher-status individuals. GRAs in this study were treated disrespectfully and unprofessionally. They were undervalued due to their position, unappreciated, asked to work for longer than their contractually stated hours, expected to perform tasks that they should not have been required to do, and were expected to meet unreasonable demands at the needs and convenience of those in power. Many of the above listed uncivil experiences were caused because GRAs were provided a vague job description which instigators or those in power could use to their advantage in exploiting GRAs. This findings are consistent with arguments made by Estes and Wang (2008) and Pearson and Porath (2005) who stated that instigators on the top or closer to the top of the organization have the power to

be uncivil at their will; thus, debasing those who are less powerful. Caza and Cortina (2007) labelled this type of incivility as “top-down incivility” because hierarchical differences affected employees’ willingness to respond to mistreatment. Subsequently, employees in lower positions/status perceived higher-status individuals as unjust and unfair while also feeling ostracized.

Although there are few studies that have explored the phenomenon of top-down incivility in educational settings apart from nursing, there have been studies that have investigated abusive supervision in corporate/business settings. These studies have typically described the nature and negative outcome of supervisor abuse. For example, Tepper (2007) shared that abusive supervision caused employee deviance. In Cortina and Magley’s (2009) study, employees who experienced frequent and varied incivility from powerful instigators reported their uncivil experiences more negatively. More recently, Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) found that 78% of 272 participants in their survey faced supervisor incivility which affected their workplace engagement. Other researchers noted that unfair practices from managers and supervisors promote uncivil behaviors amongst employees (Everton, Jolton, & Masterangelo, 2005) and also the desire to reciprocate negative behaviors (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

GRAs are less likely to reciprocate power abuse due to their dual roles of graduate research assistant and graduate student. The dual roles meant that graduation and financial stability depended upon those in power. The unique position of GRAs caused them to interact with those in power as both a student and an employee. Therefore, ruining relationship with those in power in one role could have a negative effect on the

other role. Also, people in power are closely connected; retaliating with one individual in power could potentially harm relations with another powerful individual/s. Hence, this dual relationship that GRAs have is a major contributor to their experience with incivility. Those in higher level positions are fully aware of the power they hold on GRAs as employers and advisors. Accordingly, participants of this study felt that their dual roles caused frequent and varied incidents of incivility from those in power towards whom they cautiously and tactful reciprocated incivility. Specifically, if participants were uncivil, they typically did so inconspicuously (such as, doing homework during work hours). Prominent forms of incivility reciprocation were extremely infrequent as reported by participants.

Kitchener (1988) defined dual relationship as one in which “one person simultaneously or sequentially plays two or more roles with another person” (p. 217). Hayden (2001) stated that graduate students and graduate employees assume these two roles which are not mutually exclusive. In other words, there is an evident and unavoidable overlap. Obligations and incompatibility in one role is likely to affect the other role (Kitchener, 1988). GRAs of this study were concerned that if they disclosed having issues with their boss who was also their doctoral committee chair, it would likely to affect their advisor-advisee relationship. Therefore, GRAs continued to tolerate workplace incivility in order to protect their roles as a student and employee.

Dual roles in the academic context have been scarcely explored. So far, research has primarily focused on faculty-student relationship of sexual exploitation of students rather than general workplace incivility (e.g., Biaggio, Paget, & Chenoweth, 1997;

Bowman & Hatley, 1995; Gottlieb, 1993; Kolbert, Morgan, Brendel, 2002; Sullivan & Ogloff, 1998). Essentially, researchers have disclosed that faculty-student dual role relationships led to sexual relationships, romantic involvement with student, and sexual harassment of the student (Biaggio et al., 1997; Kitchener, 1988). As Kitchener (1988) indicated, dual role relationships are not only sexually problematic for students but also ethically problematic due to power and prestige held by faculty. Biaggio et al. (1997) mentioned that faculty exert different types of power over students such as approval or grading power, disapproving or devaluing actions, referent power to serve as a role model, information and expert power, and legitimate power to provide service as an advisor. These overlapping powers can become problematic for students who are also employees and rather powerless (Kitchener, 1998), such as a GRAs of this study.

Biaggio et al. (1997) further pointed that apart from sexual harassment of students, and ill use of research assistants, there are many gray areas between faculty-student relationships that are subtle and less-discussed everyday which account for majority of the problematic faculty-student relationships that have not been explored. Accordingly, workplace incivility that is characterized as subtle, low intensity, and ambiguous intent is one of the gray areas that occurs on a day-to-day basis which has not been explored in terms of faculty-student dual role relationship. Therefore, this study has shed some light on everyday subtle incidences (e.g., workplace incivility – rude, belittling, and demeaning behaviors) of faculty-students who are in a dual role relationship.

Further, Biaggio et al. (1997) affirmed that such dual relationships are very stressful and harmful for students which was true in the case of GRAs of this study; however,

their impact has been less explored. This study was a start in exploring dual role relationships in higher education with regards to workplace incivility which requires further exploration.

Further, participants of this study belonged to the Generation Y/Millennial Generation (1981-2000) group, whereas, their employers and advisors, and staff members with whom they interacted regularly belonged to the Baby Boomer (1946-1964) or Generation X (1965-1980) groups (Suplee, Lachman, Siebert, & Anselmi, 2008). This generational difference may have contributed to GRAs' perceptions of incivility and caused further adrift in how they viewed themselves to be undervalued. Suplee et al. (2008) informed that different generational characteristics cause misunderstandings between both faculty and students. Students from Generation Y are technology driven, known to challenge authority, and actively seek challenges (Walker, Martin, White, Elliot, Norwood, Mangum, & Haynie, 2006). These characteristics are in direct contrast to individuals hailing from Generation X and Baby Boomers who have more traditional values (e.g., they live to work versus Millennials who work to live) and are less technology driven (Walker et al., 2006). As a result, faculty who are mainly from Generation X and Baby Boomers face a difficult time dealing with students who are from the millennial generation (Generation Y) (Suplee et al., 2008) due to the difference in their work ethics. The fact that faculty and staff from senior generations conducted themselves in direct contrast to the GRAs who were millennials may have been a factor that also led to GRAs belief that their experiences of incivility were shaped by those in power.

Overall, faculty, administrators, and staff who are of a different generation than the GRAs are in power which makes them higher-status individuals who not only conduct themselves differently to GRAs directly instigate incivility on GRAs who are lower status individuals with little or no power due to their position in the organization. Being a student and an employee whose academic success, and finances depend on those who are in power GRAs had to mainly be tolerant to incivility. Therefore, GRAs seldom reciprocate incivility and if they do it is mainly inconspicuously conducted. More frequently, GRAs live with incivility exerted from those in power in order to achieve academic success with funding.

GRAs' Experiences of Workplace Incivility Were Influenced by Multiple Sources

In addition to those in power, GRAs of this study experienced incivility from and due to other sources. Specifically, GRAs experienced incivility due to their job, diversity (race, gender, and culture), and from those in similar or lower positions than their own. These sources will be discussed below.

Job. Rau-Foster (2004) stated that one of the primary causes of workplace incivility is working conditions. Two major drawbacks with regards to working conditions that the participants of this study mentioned were: (1) they worked more than the contractually required 20 hours per week, and (2) they either had an unclear job description, were not given one, or worked on things they were not hired to do. Due to the lack of a well-defined job description, most participants were given tasks which were outside the realm of a GRA. Although the two aforementioned drawbacks are forms of incivility they can also be considered as causes of incivility. The fact that GRAs did not have a clear and

specific job description, it allowed their boss(es)/supervisors/advisors to take advantage of them. An increase in the number of work hours made GRAs susceptible to instigators which in turn increased the instigation of uncivil behaviors towards GRAs and allocated them more workload.

Literature on incivility has mainly presented that an increased workload causes employee deviance in the forms of slowing down work, unexplained absences, and tardiness (Estes & Wang; 2008; Johnson& Indvik, 2001; Pearson, 2010; Pearson & Porath, 2005; Porath & Pearson, 2010). Callahan's (2011) framework of incivility indicated several researchers and organizations have failed to take into consideration that incivility is a top-down approach, that is, incivility begins from those in power (top-management) and those who are in control of the organization. Cortina (2008) pointed that an organization's environment plays a strong role in inhibiting or allowing incivility. Estes and Wang (2008) further mentioned that an organization's management philosophy and organizational culture played an important role in the incivility that takes place in an organization. That is, if top-management ignores or deliberately engages in the uncivil treatment of an employee, it is likely to spread throughout the organization (Lim & Cortina, 2005) causing incivility spirals as described by Andersson and Pearson (1999). In contrast, embracing a norm where employees are treated with respect and fairly, it is likely to prevent incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008). Therefore, the fact that GRAs are overworked is a management flaw that allows and enforces it. And, a primary reason for GRAs working overtime is their poorly constructed job description that allows their exploitation.

If top-management develop a clearly outlined job description for GRAs, it will likely limit their tasks to only those that are listed in the job description, rather than any and all tasks that their boss/advisors deem fit. This in turn is likely to regulate their work hours to only those that are required per week. So far, researchers have not discussed job descriptions as a cause of incivility that is experienced by workers. This study adds to the literature by demonstrating that vague job descriptions give supervisors leverage to abuse employees by assigning them tasks that do not fall into their realm of expertise; thus, overloading them with work.

Further, literature supports workplace incivility is caused workplace stress, disrespectful employee treatment, and poor working conditions (Rau-Foster, 2004). However, at a deeper level, employee deviance is a result of management norms and organizational culture that encourages employees to work overtime thereby causing stress which in turn gives rise to incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008; Lim & Cortina, 2005). This further proves the trickle-down effect of workplace incivility as a result of employees working overtime. Therefore, GRAs who are asked to work long hours themselves face incivility by being expected to work longer and on more tasks such as the participants of this study. Hence, it is not surprising that participants engaged in inconspicuous incivility; thus, causing an incivility spiral as described by Andersson and Pearson (1999).

An aspect that remains unexplored by literature is that while working for longer number of hours employees are susceptible to greater incivility because it increases chances of individuals to interact with perpetrators. This finding was revealed by my

study participants. For example, Isabella shared that some faculty members would walk to her office and ask her if she was sitting around without any tasks and if she could work on some feminine tasks. Similarly, Olivia was required to be at work every day from at least 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. during which she was assigned tasks by those who were not her boss (E.g., grabbing a box of paperclips for a professor who was teaching a class while Olivia was passing by her classroom). Therefore, increased work hours and a vague job description are causes of incivility amongst GRAs.

Diversity. Some participants of this study experienced workplace incivility as a result of their race, gender, and culture. According to Foucault (1978), individuals who instigate acts of incivility against minority groups are not those who commit a temporary act of deviation, rather it is viewed as a deeply rooted problem that should be labelled as racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. Cortina (2008) labelled this as “selective incivility” through which racial and gender inequality exist in American organizations. “Selective incivility” is a form of modern discrimination (Cortina 2008). Therefore, it is evident that diversity is a cause of incivility that is inflicted upon minority groups. This will be discussed further in relation to the experiences of the study participants and literature.

Race. Four out of the eight participants experienced incivility due to their race. Two of the four participants were African-American, one was Iranian, and the other was Indian. Specifically, the types of discrimination participants mentioned were: mockery of their accents, suggesting unruly use of afro, unexplained and sudden eviction from office desk, three people of the same race sharing an office space equipped for two people, and being called a liar. Although I was unable to locate a study on incivility due

to race in an academic context from student or graduate assistants' perspective, I was able to locate studies conducted in non-academic settings that supported this finding of the study. For example, Khabat-Farr and Cortina (2012) conducted a literature review on selective incivility in which they shared that uncivil conducts usually are not overtly in reference to gender and race; however, women and people of color are selectively targeted where incivility is covertly manifested. A quantitative study conducted by Cortina, Khabat-Farr, Leskinen, and Magley (2011) also concluded that target's gender and race affected vulnerability to uncivil treatment at job. Findings of my study are consistent with those of the Cortina and Khabat-Farr (2012) and Cortina et al. (2011), while emphasizing a need for further exploration.

Gender. Two African American female participants in this study mentioned that they experienced incivility due to their gender. They were asked to do feminine tasks in their GA role such as remodeling the office, filing, and developing reports. There are researchers such as Reio (2011) who have stated that women experienced less incivility from supervisors than men, and Stainback, Ratliff, and Roscigno (2011) who noted that sex discrimination has reduced for both men and women. Alternatively, there are studies that have found that women do face incivility and it is greater than what is faced by men. In fact, a male participant in this study claimed that his gender worked in his favor.

Researchers such as Anwar et al., (2011), Cortina et al., (2001), Lim and Cortina (2005), and Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, and Brady (2012) found that women experienced greater incivility than men. However, these studies were quantitatively conducted unlike my study which was qualitative. These studies focused on gendered incivilities such as

subtle or overt sexual harassment, derogatory remarks, doubting of their judgment, inattentiveness, and demonstrating condescending behavior. Neither of these studies obtained information on women being assigned tasks based upon their gender. For example, as per the socially constructed norm secretarial tasks are usually performed by women; hence, they are assigned to women. This study brings forth this type of incivility.

Culture. Two Indian participants of this study, Ronnie and Neil, experienced incivility due to their cultural difference. While Neil was given additional tasks due to his cultural habit of being polite and not declining a task upon being occupied with his other GRA related tasks, Ronnie faced a stereotype that Indian men cannot take orders well especially from women. Researchers argued that ethnicity separates one group of individuals from another based upon their language, culture, beliefs, nationality and ancestry which causes them to experience incivility from the ethnic group that makes up majority of the organization (Githens , 2011; & King, Dawson, West, Gilrane, & Bastin, 2011). Studies exploring the effect of culture as a cause of incivility have been extant; however, most have focused on Western samples that make up for only 27% of the human kind while failing to incorporate a broader range of cultural orientations (Lui et al., 2009). Followed by which Liu et al. (2009) conducted a study to incorporate Easterners along with Westerners in order to investigate the role culture plays in regulating and causing incivility. They found that individuals from Taiwan were more likely to recognize the needs of others and were better at self-regulation than those from U.S.A. Thus, by being more individualistic, people from U.S.A. were more likely to

engage in incivility than those from Taiwan who believed in collectivism. Bergeron and Schneider (2005) pointed out that there is a huge difference between individuals from the East and the West in how they regulate themselves and how they express their emotions. For instance, people from the East focused on group collectivism ideal and people from the West focused on personal gratification. Therefore, the finding of this study that culture is a cause of incivility is supported by the above researchers. In addition, my study adds to the literature by bringing forth the incivility experienced by individuals from Indian descent in a higher education context and in the context of Eastern employees in the West. According to Milner (1994), the Indian society reflects and reinforces hierarchy and power of those who are privileged. This causes Indians to seldom or never say no to those who are in power in order to please and secure themselves from the negative behavior of those in power. A trait that supports the behavior exhibited by Neil and also explains how he was taken advantage of by his boss/advisor who kept giving him more work. Additionally, Milner (1994), stated that India is still a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, this stereotype should not have been held against Ronnie and his boss/advisory should not have assumed that Ronnie, as an Indian man would have been unable to handle women in an authoritative role. This study shows how individuals from an Indian culture lend themselves to incivility by those from the West; thereby, attempting to fill the gap in the literature.

Those in similar and lower positions. GRAs of this study experienced incivility from other GRAs who are in the similar positions as them. Specifically, GRAs mentioned experiencing exclusion, cattiness, and disrespect of personal space and

diverse views. Caza and Cortina's (2007) study conducted in a higher education context revealed that incivility occurred amongst those who are in similar positions which can have adverse effects on individuals. Specifically, they found that students experienced incivility from higher-status individuals as well as from peers who are in similar positions as them. Caza and Cortina (2007) labelled incivility experienced from individuals in similar positions as "lateral incivility" (p. 336). Similarly, GRAs experienced incivility from GRAs and graduate students who were of the same status.

One participant Neil mentioned experiencing incivility from students he taught during his teaching assistant role. Specifically, Neil mentioned that students would not pay attention to him when he instructed students on how to develop their model, asked him to come to campus and help them when they needed something (including weekends), and they crossed boundaries by asking others for parts they required rather than asking Neil who was officially the person they should have gone to. In a non-academic setting, Estes and Wang (2008) stated that overriding decisions without providing reasons is considered as uncivil. Clark (2007), Clark and Springer (2007), Gilroy (2008), and Luparell (2011) conducted research in the nursing context on student and faculty perspective on incivility they both inflicted upon each other. Their findings suggested that although not equally uncivil, students were uncivil towards faculty, for instance, they were disruptive and inattentive during class, they cancelled meetings without informing faculty, and they came to class unprepared. Similarly, DeSouza (2011) found that 72% of 257 faculty surveyed faced academic contrapower harassment from students. More consistent to the finding of my study, Nilson and Jackson (2004)

claimed that students are often more uncivil to graduate teaching assistants than to a full-time faculty due varied reasons such as status, gender, age, race, and ethnicity. Nilson and Jackson (2004) revealed that graduate teaching assistants face incivility from students, and it was the only study I found that was conducted specifically on GTAs experiences of incivility from students. Most other studies were in a nursing context and focused on student to faculty incivility.

GRAs Built Resilience to Overcome Workplace Incivility

Resilience is defined as “the ability of individuals to bounce back or to cope successfully despite adverse circumstances” (Hart, Brannan, & Chesnay, 2012, p. 1). Resilience is a personality trait which is developed or altered through a dynamic process (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006; Luthar, 2006). Essentially, when people meticulously recover from setbacks that occur in life, it can be stated that they are resilient.

Incivility had noticeably negative impacts on various aspects of GRAs’ lives. Participants of this study developed certain strategies to deal with incivility because not only did they have to graduate but they also had to fund their education. Hence, they had to be strategic and cautious in their actions against incivility in order to prevent potential threats to either of their two roles—student and employee. The strategies used by participants were: (1) confrontation/uncivil in return, (2) changing jobs, (3) ignoring the perpetrator/s, (4) developing or possessing a strong personality, (5) seeking professional help, (6) focusing on the goal of graduating, and (7) talking to friends and family. The

development of these coping mechanisms shows that participants built resilience to overcome workplace incivility to progress in their academic life.

Literature directly pertaining to workplace incivility and resilience is extremely scarce. However, though limited and underexplored, studies that have explored the relationship between resilience and workplace bullying do exist (Heugten, 2012). Studies on workplace bullying and aggression have focused primarily on teaching resilience during organizational training (e.g., Branch & Murray, 2008), and on how participants have gradually developed resilience to combat aggression and bullying (e.g., Heugten, 2012; Jackson et al., 2010). Accordingly, researchers have explored psychological capital that comprises of resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy, and claimed that psychological capital moderated occurrences and effects of counterproductive work-behaviors (CWBs) and thereby promoting positive work-behaviors (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008; Norman, Avey, Nimnicht, & Graber Pigeon, 2010; & Seligman & Pawelski, 2003).

Similarly, Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, (2011), surveyed 390 adults from varied industries to investigate the relationship between job stress, psychological capital, and the extent to which they displayed uncivil behaviors. Their findings showed that stressed individuals displayed greater incivility and especially, when their psychological capital (of which resilience is a component) level was lower. Therefore, although this study shed light on the relationship between job stress, incivility, and resilience, it failed to address reveal that participants built resilience towards incivility; a finding which

participants of my study demonstrated. Further, I was unable to locate a study on incivility that revealed participants' resiliency or resiliency development towards the negative outcomes of the phenomenon (incivility). On the other hand, the fact that participants of this study rarely instigated incivility due to being resilient was supported by Roberts et al.'s (2011) study which suggested that resilient individuals are less likely to engage in incivility. Therefore, this study adds to the literature by demonstrating that GRAs built resilience towards incivility in order to achieve their goals.

Coping is a key and virtually inevitable phase after one experiences incivility. Resilience cannot be successfully achieved without coping. Some studies on workplace incivility have investigated and discussed how participants cope with incivility in the workplace (e.g., Cortina & Magley, 2003; Cortina & Magley, 2008; Estes & Wang, 2008; Rau-Foster, 2004; Pearson & Porath, 2010). However, although some studies have been conducted in the higher education setting, specifically, nursing education neither have focused on how GRAs or graduate assistants (e.g., Clark, 2008; Luparell, 2004; McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas 2008; & Reybold, 2009), a vulnerable population due to their dual roles, cope with incivility.

Participants of this study were uncivil in return, and confrontational on occasions, too, but only when the situation was out of control and the circumstances were pressing. For example, Isabella was uncivil in return by doing their homework during work hours, or Olivia who was impolite as a means of resisting being treated as an assistant during social events. These behavior of the participants supports Callahan's (2011) argument for consideration about power, that is, employees responded to incivility by being

uncivil in return as a means of making top management aware of the mistreatment and raising voice against it to bring about a positive change. Similarly, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2008) found that participants react to mistreatment in negative ways known as “behavioral revenge” which is carried out for the sole purpose of taking revenge. Sakurai and Jex (2012) noted that employees engaged in reducing work efforts and increased counterproductive work behaviors to cope with incivility. Although it is a fact that the participants of this study engaged in some form of incivility in response to the mistreatment they experienced, they did so discreetly to avoid damage especially because they were often in a lower position than the instigators. The finding is consistent with Cortina and Magley’s (2009) point that coping strategies depended upon “the target’s appraisal of the situation, the situation’s duration, and the organizational position and power of both target and instigator” (p. 272).

Some of the coping strategies that researchers have found targets of incivility using are: supporting seeking, avoidance, forgiveness, confronting (Cortina & Magley, 2009), resigning, ignoring the incident/s (Pearson & Porath, 2010), seeking professional help, and filing a formal complaint (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2008). These strategies were adopted by participants of this study as a means to coping with workplace incivility, except for resigning and filing a formal complaint. The findings of this study highlight the fact that those who are in lower positions and in dual roles where one role has a direct/indirect impact on the other are highly unlikely to resign their job or file a formal complaint due to fear of risking their academic and professional success, and financial source. For example, even though Olivia sought help from an ombudsman she did not

have the courage to complain to the Dean or anybody in a similar position. Similarly, Sara did not discuss the uncivil treatment of her boss/advisor with the Dean until she was approached by him, and thereafter, she only shared some things not all due to fear of the consequences she might face. Sara would have likely continued with her previous boss/advisor had the dean not assigned her as a GRA to another faculty. It is important to note that Sara did not leave or resign the job she was moved at the discretion of someone in power. Basically, participants mentioned that they focused on the goal of graduating; thereby, trying to set aside the uncivil acts experienced. While they discuss the impact of workplace incivility, I was unable to find articles in the higher education context (nursing and non-nursing) that identified students focused on graduation as a means to cope with incivility (e.g., Caza & Cortina, 2007; Clark, 2007; Del Prato, 2012; Gilroy, 2008; Luparell, 2011).

On the other hand, Milam et al. (2009) found that individuals with the personality traits such as, agreeableness (positive, good-natured, warm, sympathetic, generous), and extraversion (sociable, assertive, active, ambitious) were less likely to experience and perceive incidences as uncivil compared to those individuals whose personality trait was neuroticism (nervousness, worrying, insecurities). Accordingly, participants of this study who possessed a strong personality did not let incidences of incivility bother them too much or for too long. However, this study found a new coping mechanism mentioned by some participants which was developing a strong personality/thick skin that let them overcome or set aside incidences of incivility.

Overall, from the above discussion it is clear that participants of this study did not discontinue assuming either of their roles (student and employee) due to varied uncivil experiences and their negative outcomes. They were determined to complete their studies due to which they continued their employment as a GRA in order to financially support their education. Participants of this study demonstrated “strength and [ability] to persist in overcoming challenging obstacles” which proves that they built resilience to overcome negative effects of workplace incivility (Hart et al, 2012, p. 1).

GRA’s Experiences Workplace Incivility Led to New Identity Development

The impact of workplace incivility on employees has been under scrutiny for approximately a decade now (e.g., Bunk & Magley, 2013; Cortina & Magley, 2003; Estes & Wang, 2008; Ferguson, 2012; Lim & Lee, 2011; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2008; Porath & Erez, 2007; & Sakurai & Jex, 2012). Comparatively, although explored in the higher education setting the impact of workplace incivility has received less research attention. While studies in the higher education context have focused on the impact of faculty-to-student classroom and outside of classroom incivilities (e.g., Bjorklund & Rehling, 2011; Caza & Cortina, 2007; Del Prato, 2012; Lasiter, Marchiondo, & Marchiondo, 2012; Schnee & VanOra; 2012), they failed to capture the impact of incivilities on GRAs or graduate assistants who experience uncivil behaviors from various sources.

This study investigated the impact of workplace incivility on GRAs. The impact of workplace incivility in their life was categorized in three areas: personal, professional, and academic. Most of the impact of incivility can be categorized negatively. However,

participants experienced some positive transformations as a result of incivility. Essentially, the negative and positive impact led to development of a new identity. Merriam-Webster (2013) defined identity as “distinguishing characteristics, qualities, beliefs, or personality that make an individual or a group of individuals different from others” (p. 1). Accordingly, participants of this study altered their personal and social identity in ways that would help them become resilient towards incivility and enable them to attain their educational goals. Personal identity encompasses an individual’s goals, emotions, values, ideas, and so on; whereas, social identity comprises of one’s self in relation to interpersonal domains (Luthanen & Croker, 1992). However, developing a new identity would have been virtually impossible without comprehending the impacts of various forms of incivility experienced by participants.

Cortina and Magley (2003) found that participants who experienced regular mistreatment displayed lower psychological, physiological, and professional well-being. With regards to personal impact, participants mentioned feeling anxious, distressed, tired, emotionally drained, experiencing mental breakdowns, and tension in their personal relationship/s. Researchers such as Estes and Wang (2008), Lim and Lee (2011), Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2008), found that incivility experiences at the workplace had adverse psychological and physical affects including depression, emotional distress, experiencing fear and anger, anxiety, and mood swings. Further similar to the participants of this study, other researchers (Ferguson, 2012; & Lim & Lee, 2011) also found that workplace incivility impacted participants’ relationships with their family/significant other. Lim and Lee (2011) indicated that participants of their

study brought work stress home, that is, there was a work-to-family conflict.

Additionally, Ferguson's (2012) findings suggested partners of those who experienced workplace incivility confirmed that their significant other brought stress home which affected their relationships. Participants in the study such as, Neil, echoed that stress from uncivil behaviors at work affected his relationship with his wife.

On the professional level, similar to the findings from other studies, participants in my study identified impacts such as, reduced productivity (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), lower job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001; Miner et al., 2012), reduced creativity and performance (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Porath & Erez, 2007), increased perceptions of unfairness (Estes & Wang, 2008), and lack of trust in the organization and management, and reduced commitment towards the organization (Pearson and Porath, 2010). On the other hand, participants also mentioned positive professional impacts of workplace incivility which have not been highlighted or explored by other researchers so far. For example, Patty and Isabella revealed that poor treatment made them determined to become successful professionally. Specifically, Isabella wanted to pursue her Ph.D. so that she would be less likely to face poor treatment that she faced at a lower position of a GRA. Similarly, Patty wanted to pursue her Ph.D. in order to work towards improving the conditions of other African-American women in the STEM field.

With regards to academic impact, participants primarily indicated that their grades were lowered, they had limited time to focus on coursework/homework, less time to work on dissertation research, and their graduation was delayed, leading to lowered self-esteem and self-confidence. This finding is consistent with that of Caza and Cortina

(2007) who shared that top-down and lateral incivility resulted in academic disengagement and lowered academic performance. However, researchers have not explored the incivility experienced by GRAs and the complications that arise due to their overlapping dual roles. This study highlights that incivility has a direct impact upon participants' progression in their doctoral studies thereby causing them to stay in the program longer than anticipated.

In sum, as revealed by this study, the impact of workplace incivility was far reaching. Not only did participants develop resilience but they also developed qualities that would protect them from uncivil experiences. For instance, participants shared that they became less friendly, less helpful, and less trusting of people and the organization they worked at (social identity). Further, participants shared that they developed a "thick-skin" which would shield them from uncivil experiences. Participants also established a positive outlook and focused on their goals (personal identity). While researchers on incivility have somewhat suggested that perceived identity threats can cause or escalate incivility (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994) and diminish a person's professional identity (e.g., Zauderer, 2001), it appears that they have failed to explore identity alterations or development that occur as a result of incivility. This study demonstrates that workplace incivility can lead to a new identity.

A New Conceptual Framework

Based upon the findings of this study, I propose a new conceptual framework that captures the essence of the lived experiences of the participants along with my

interpretation of their experiences. The developed conceptual framework is a hermeneutic circle adapted from Bontekoe (1996) and Gadamer (1983) (see Figure 5).

A hermeneutic circle is a process of interpreting the text (participant data) by moving back and forth between the parts of the experience and the whole experience in order to increase the depth of engagement with and understanding of the texts (Annells, 1996; Gadamer, 1983, & Polkinghorne, 1983). According to Kvale (1996), this interpretive process continues until one has temporarily acquired sensible meanings that are free from contradictions. Thus, as Gadamer (1983) and van Manen (1997) explained, a hermeneutic circle is continuous and repetitive until the emergence of the essence of the phenomenon being studied.

Further, Gadamer (1998) pointed out that a hermeneutic circle is co-created between the researcher, participants, literature, and reflective writing. By maintaining a reflexive journal, engaging with participants followed by interview data, and literature on workplace incivility, I was able to “converse about the experience [of incivility] while simultaneously living in the moment and actively constructing interpretations of the experience and questioning how they came about (Lavery, 2003, p. 10). Thus, creating a dynamic process of moving between parts (data) and the whole (embryonic understanding of the phenomenon) where the researcher, participant, and the reader co-construct meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Smith, 1998). A hermeneutic circle can also be viewed as a metaphoric representation of the interpretation of the data/phenomenon.

Figure 5, consists of five boxes. Box 1 presents the theoretical context of the study and related core constructs. Box 2 outlined the personal attributes of the participants which developed during their uncivil experiences. Box 3 summarizes the major themes of the study. Box 4 identified the unique characteristics of the participants. Box 5, which is at the core of the circle, highlights the essence of the phenomenon under study. The interaction of these boxes shape and represent the experiences and realities of the participants of this study.

The circle (Figure 5) represents the essence that was captured by continuous and repetitive interpretation of the parts (data) and the whole (developing understanding of the phenomenon). The two large arrows on the sides highlights the continuous reflection and interpretation of the dialogue between the researcher and the participants. The consistently flowing arrows around the central circle indicate the evolving essence of the phenomenon and the participants who experienced the phenomenon. It signifies participants' lived experiences of workplace incivility, while incorporating the challenges they faced (poor working conditions, power dynamics, status differential, discrimination due to diversity, and lateral and bottom-up incivility) and steps they took to transcended beyond those (building resilience, developing a new identity, and being goal-oriented).

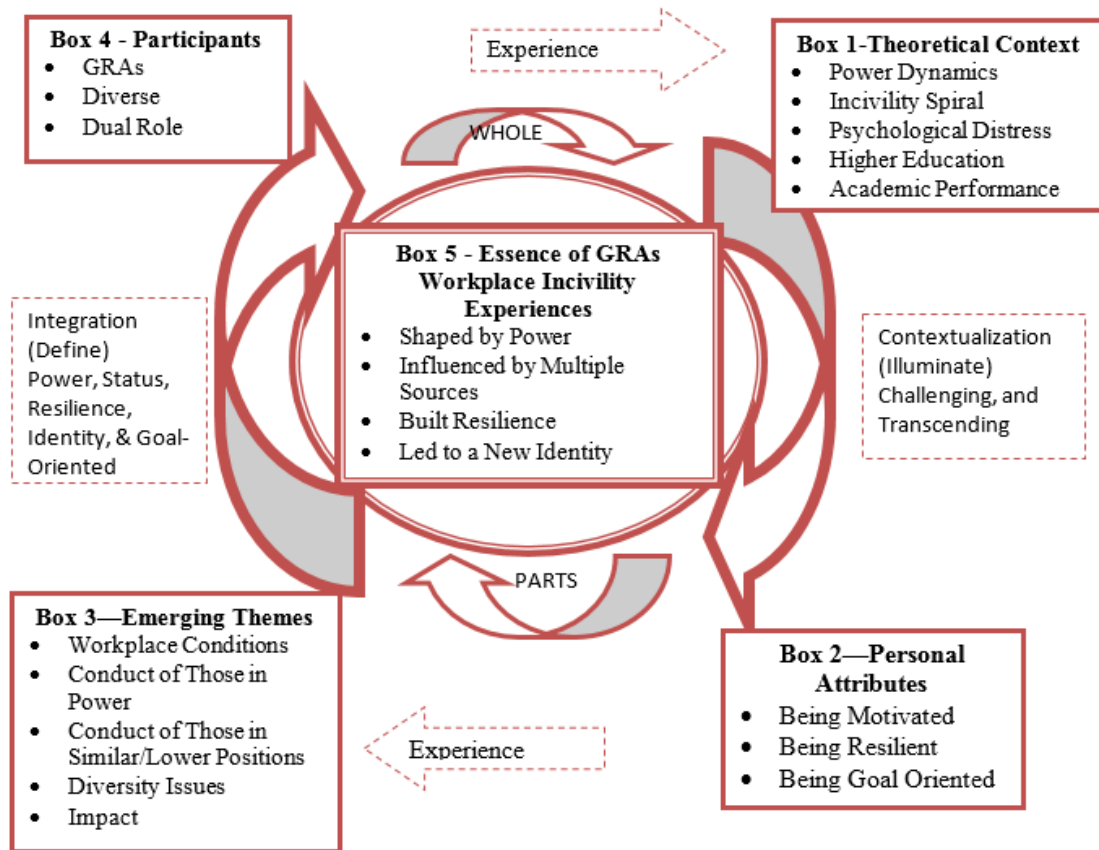


Figure 5. Hermeneutic Circle of GRAs' Workplace Incivility Experiences. Adapted from Bontekoe (1996) & Gadamer (1983)

Broadly speaking, this study added to the literature by demonstrating that participants built resilience toward various types of incivility rather than resigning or quitting their job and/or graduate school. This finding is different to those from previous studies that emphasized participants resorting to discontinuing employment due to incivility experiences (e.g., Cortina & Magley, 2009; Cortina et al., 2011; Estes & Wang, 2008; Pearson et al., 2001; & Pearson & Porath, 2005;). Additionally, participants created a new identity that fueled the acquisition of their goals, desire to

achieve high career aspirations, and limited the negative impacts experiences of incivility (i.e., by developing a “thick skin”). So, unlike previous studies on incivility which stated that participants engage in deviant behavior/incivility due to a perceived threat to their identity (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999), this study revealed that incivility can give rise to positive outcomes such as desire to pursue higher education. Most importantly, participants were driven and determined to graduate rather than feeling discouraged and surrounding themselves with thoughts of quitting their studies. These factors allowed the participants to transcend the challenges they faced as a result of incivility.

Overall, the new conceptual framework is viewed as a whole in the context of the study. It was derived through rigorous and continuous interpretation of and reflection on the parts (interview data), pertinent literature, and participants’ attributes that were observed. Therefore, from understanding the parts that fit into a whole, one can understand the entirety of the lived experiences.

Implications for HRD

This section discusses implications of this study for HRD practice and research.

Practical Implications

Based upon the findings of this study and prevalent literature mentioned throughout this dissertation, it is evident that there are no policies for workplace incivility in organizations. Callahan (2011) reminded us that workplace incivility is largely a problem at the top-management level because they model uncivil behaviors and reinforce it through their unfair and unjust policies and practices. Therefore, HRD

professionals must take a leading role in creating policies that address workplace incivility related issues. As Reio and Ghosh (2009) contented it is critical that organizations develop and implement programs and policies that prevent/reduce uncivil behavior and minimize its impact.

Gedro and Wang (2013) and Porath and Pearson (2013) reiterated the importance of designing programs to educate employees on incivility. In the context of GRAs, it is essential to train faculty, staff, and administrators to create an awareness of the overlap in GRAs roles as well as their own roles. Often those in power are uncivil due to their busy schedules; their work demands leave them less time to assess and monitor their behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). HRD professionals can help develop and deliver appropriate training to higher-status individuals which will make them cognizant of the power differentials between them and GRAs, and the implications of those on the future and status of GRAs. Training will also help powerful individuals to understand the impact their uncivil behaviors have on GRAs.

Further, while faculty and staff are provided compliance training and other subject matter training they are often not provided training on how to manage or supervise students (Kitchener, 1988). This leads to uncivil experiences of GRAs and possibly other student employees. Developing and implementing training programs that teach faculty and staff effective strategies to manage student employees will help alleviate uncivil experiences of GRAs, other students, and possibly instigators, too, given the spiraling nature of incivility.

Also, as Suplee et al. (2008) and Walker et al. (2006) identified that faculty who are Baby Boomers or Generation X differ in their characteristics and work ethics from GRAs who mainly belong to the Millennial Generation, which can be challenging for all three generational groups. Therefore, providing training on understanding generational difference to everybody on campus will help bring awareness of how people from different generations operate and how they can work amicably, and minimize challenges of working together.

In addition to this, HRD practitioners can help teach civility to all individuals on campus because the findings of this study suggested that GRAs also experience incivility from those in lower or similar positions. Training everybody on campus will allow reduce instances of incivility while fostering a civil environment on campus. In fact, Gedro and Wang (2013) presented a real-life case to demonstrate how a college campus included workplace civility training in their strategic plan; and, developed and delivered workplace civility training workshops to over 800 employees throughout the campus. Such a holistic plan of action will help alleviate incivility experiences of not only GRAs but other individuals on campus, too.

Further, today's workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. As found by this study, diversity (race, gender, and culture) can be a trigger for uncivil behaviors; coined as selective discrimination as a form modern incivility by Cortina (2008). Pearson and Porath (2005) and Reio and Ghosh (2009), urged HRD practitioners to develop and implement diversity awareness and appreciation training programs that will not only make individuals aware of each other's differences but also learn to appreciate them.

Further, diversity training will teach employees how to communicate and manage conflicts effectively.

Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest that it is now time to revisit the definition of incivility. The most popular definition of incivility throughout the literature is that of Andersson and Pearson (1999). This definition conveys incivility to be characterized as “low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457). While the findings of my study revealed the low intensity and deviant behavior characteristics, it challenges the notion of “ambiguous intent”, that is, instigators’ intentions to inflict incivility are unidentified. Most participants articulately pointed the reasons for instigators incivility towards them. Some of the common reasons were, their lower status, cultural difference, gender, race, and jealousy. Thus, it could be stated that on most occasions instigators are aware of the motive for incivility. Researchers should conduct further studies on the phenomenon to examine the intentional nature of incivility and provide a new definition for this complex but rapidly growing phenomenon.

Given the significant impact of uncivil instances, as revealed by this study, further research is needed to examine this phenomenon in various educational contexts. Specifically, there is a need for studies on workplace incivility experienced by GRAs/GAs in their dual roles (student and employee) because most previous research has focused primarily on only their sexual exploitation, while failing to identify the types

and impact of subtle uncivil behaviors (e.g., Biaggio, Paget, & Chenoweth, 1997; Bowman & Hatley, 1995; Gottlieb, 1993; Kolbert, Morgan, Brendel, 2002; Sullivan & Ogloff, 1998).

Further, in this study the overlapping dual roles of GRAs not only made them vulnerable but also restricted them from taking action against those who are of a higher-status and have direct/indirect influence on their graduation. Findings from this study demonstrated that GRAs use cautious measures to cope with top-down incivility. Therefore, HRD researchers should investigate coping strategies used by GRAs/GAs and other employees who are in dual role relationships in order to highlight new coping strategies and support the coping strategies found in this study. In contrast, it is also essential to acknowledge that this study only brings forth incivility perceptions of GRAs while failing to capture the perceptions of instigators who were also in a dual-role relationship, that is, faculty/administrators who were both an advisor and boss. Therefore, this relays the need for studies on the examining workplace incivility experiences of those who are in a dyadic dual relationship (i.e., two individuals who work together with each other in more than one capacity). Further, although difficult, it would also be effective to capture the perceptions of those who are identified instigators of incivility. This will provide insight on the instigators' motive to engage in incivility, if there is any.

As revealed by this study, participants developed a resilience (thick skin/strong personality) as a means to protect themselves from uncivil behaviors. By doing so they formed a new identity by being resilient. However, further empirical studies should be conducted to expand the findings from this study. Also, researchers should examine the

duration for which participants' new identity lasts given the temporary nature of their role as a GRA. A longitudinal study will be valuable and will help shed light on how long participants sustain their coping mechanisms and why.

Additionally, further studies are needed to examine the relationship between individual personalities and their approach to dealing with incivility. More specifically, it would be effective to study how generational difference

Next, it is also important to note that four participants of this study had full-time employment in the mainstream workforce prior to beginning employment as a GRA upon returning full-time to graduate school. However, in spite of their previous work experiences, and assuming that they experienced hardships and incivility in that/those employment/s, participants' reported incivility as detailed in the findings of this study. This suggests that prior work experiences (including previously experienced workplace incivility, learning and development, and hardships faced) participants' perceived incivility as detrimental. In fact, most participants viewed GRA position as a demotion. Hence, based on the findings of this study, it appears that prior work experiences further deteriorated how participants viewed incivility. It would be valuable to conduct study that explores how prior work experiences shape incivility perceptions of targets and their approaches to handle uncivil experiences. This would provide an outlook on how hardships, learning and development, and uncivil experiences of previous jobs altered or reinforced incivility perceptions of the victims.

In addition, much of research on workplace incivility both in and out of higher education context have been conducted using the quantitative methodology. This study

demonstrated one example of different research approaches. There is a need for HRD researchers to embrace multiple methods to research workplace incivility (Reio and Ghosh, 2009).

Next, diversity has been one trigger for instigating incivility. Specifically, researchers have looked at racial and gender related incivility (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2011; Miner et al, 2013; Reio, 2011) while scantily exploring of culture related incivilities. I encourage HRD researchers to conduct further research to investigate how GRAs/GAs as well as other minority groups in a higher education setting experience incivility due to their culture and cultural differences. In fact, this topic should be explored by HRD researchers in a non-academic setting, too.

Unlike other studies that have found and shared negative impacts of workplace incivility, this study found that the impacts of incivility can also be positive in that they motivated GRAs in a low-position to attain academic success and rise to greater career aspirations so that they can improve and/or alleviate uncivil conditions for others in similar situations as well as help them achieve their academic and career goals. Johnson and Indvik (2001) stated that students who experience incivility instigate the similar or more intense uncivil behaviors on their subordinate; thus continuing the incivility spiral as described by Andersson and Pearson (1999). However, since a few GRAs of this study were positively influenced by incivility, HRD researchers should investigate the positive outcomes of incivility. Specifically, HRD researchers can qualitatively and quantitatively explore how this negative phenomenon (workplace incivility) can influence intrinsic motivation of students, and employees.

Conclusion

Workplace incivility amongst GRAs seems to be unexplored. While this study explored uncivil experiences of GRAs and its impact, it attempted to fill the gap that existed in the literature on uncivil experiences of GRAs who have dual roles (student and employee). The study used the phenomenological approach of naturalistic inquiry. I interviewed eight GRAs for this study. Participants were diverse in race, age, gender, culture, and discipline of study. All participants were doctoral students except for one who was a master's student. Most participants worked as a GRA for their doctoral chair. Participants were interviewed twice. Data was analyzed using techniques unique to phenomenological research such as, horizontalization.

The study highlighted significant influence of power dynamics on the instances of workplace incivility of the participants in spite of the fact that they faced incivility from those in similar and lower positions. Further, participants faced incivility due to their race, gender, and culture, in addition to their job and job description. Participants developed coping strategies in order to combat incivility. They shared that they did confront perpetrators and were uncivil in return but they did so very cautiously when the instigator was of a higher-status in order to prevent jeopardizing their GRA position that funded their graduate studies and their graduation which was directly/indirectly influenced by those in power that is, their advisor or boss. Needless to say, incivility impacted participants' personal, professional, and academic life. However, some mentioned being positively impacted and motivated by incivility. More importantly, participants built resilience towards incivility and developed a new identity in order to

remain goal oriented and achieve academic success. The study shared a model (see Figure 4) that described the uncivil experiences of GRAs. Finally, implications for HRD research and practice were drawn with an aim to suggest ways on how incivility can be eradicated and/or alleviated. “Combating it (incivility) is something everyone needs to participate in if there is to be any hope for changing this trend” (Fox Business, 2013, p. 1).

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER FROM TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety



APPROVAL DATE: 03/20/2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jia Wang
TAMU - College Of Education - Educational Adm & Human
Resource Develop

FROM: Dr. James
Fluckey Chair
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Submission Response for Initial Review Submission Form
Approval

Protocol Number: IRB2013-0006

Title: Understanding Graduate Research Assistants' Experiences of Workplace Incivility

Review Type: Expedite

Approved: **03/20/2013**

Continuing Review Due: 02/15/2014

Expiration Date: 03/15/2014

Review Categories and Regulatory Determinations: Category 6: Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes
Category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance

methodologies.

Documents Reviewed and Approved:	IRB Application; Consent Form Version 3; Email Scripts (Participants; Student Organizations; Admin Assistants); Interview Guide; Recruitment script; CITI Training Certificates;
Document of Consent:	Written consent in accordance with 45 CF 46.116/ 21 CFR 50.27

Provisions:

Comments:

This research project has been approved. As principal investigator, you assume the following responsibilities

1. **Continuing Review:** The protocol must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research project. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study termination, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research project (including data analysis and final written papers), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, you must use the IRB stamped approved version. Please log into iRIS to download your stamped approved version of the consenting instruments.

If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the office.

7. **Audit:** Your protocol may be subject to audit by the Human Subjects Post Approval Monitor. During the life of the study please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential audit. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for inspection. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HSPP staff and available for download from iRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from iRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Protocol number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XXXXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: *Understanding Graduate Research Assistants' Experiences of Workplace Incivility* (IRB NUMBER: IRB2013-0006F IRB APPROVAL DATE: 03/20/2013 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 03/15/2014)

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Priyanka Doshi, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to understand workplace incivility experiences of graduate research assistants (non-teaching) who are currently employed at a large public university in the United States of America (USA). The following questions will guide this study:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you: (a) are currently employed as a graduate research assistant (non-teaching capacity) at the selected large public university in USA, (b) have experienced the phenomenon of workplace incivility as a GRA, and (c) have worked as a GRA for at least one semester.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

10-15 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative is that the participant/individual will not be in the study.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to: (1) engage in at least two in-depth face-to-face interviews and a possible third interview for follow-up if needed; and (2) review the interview transcripts to verify accuracy. Sending and receiving of transcripts and responses will take place using Filex to ensure confidentiality and security. A week after the interview you will be provided with your interview transcript and will be given two weeks to review it and verify its accuracy. Your participation in this study will last up to 12-months and includes at least two visits with a possibility of a third follow-up interview. The estimated time between interviews will be two-to-three months which includes the time to receive and review the transcripts.

Visit 1 –Interview 1

This visit will last about 60-90 minutes. During this visit I will get to know you, establish a rapport, and discuss a few of you incivility experiences.

Visit 2 – Interview 2

This visit will last about 30-45 minutes. During this visit we will go further into your workplace incivility experiences and its impact on the various aspects of your life.

Visit 3 – Follow-up Interview (If needed)

This visit will last 15-30 minutes. This visit is purely for clarification purposes and to articulate aspects of previous interviews that might not be clear and require further information.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

The researcher will conduct audio recordings during the study so that interview transcripts can be created which will allow for effective data analysis to take place. If you do not give permission for audio recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study.

I agree to the audio-taping of interviews.

I do not agree to the audio-taping of the interviews, and understand that I cannot participate in this study due to this reason.

Participant’s Signature

Date

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are no greater than risks than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researcher has tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. This study will require you to identify and reflect upon your experiences of or related to workplace incivility. Given the nature of the topic of the study (workplace incivility), there are likely some risks associated with participating in this study. As a researcher, I am highly aware that sharing the unpleasant or even disturbing experience at work may cause some psychological/emotional discomfort and social risks, (e.g., sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, frustration, and fear). Therefore, it is my obligation as the researcher to protect you in any capacity I can. I will follow strictly, the IRB guidelines and use the following strategies to minimize the discomfort or risks you may experience: (a) request you to take breaks and suggest you to ask for breaks as and when needed, (b) stop the interview if necessary, (c) give you the option to: reschedule the interview or withdraw at any point without penalty, and (d) recommend student health facilities on campus which you may or may not choose to use. Please know that, you do not have to answer anything you do not want to. And, most importantly, information about individuals

and/or organizations that you provide will be kept confidential including your own identity and affiliation.

Are There Any Benefits To Me?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, this study will allow you to reflect upon your experiences related to workplace incivility as a graduate research assistant (non-teaching), which is likely to help with the development of better and more effective strategies to cope with uncivil behaviors you may encounter in the future. It will also allow you to examine how the organization you currently work for deals with workplace incivility, and perhaps encourage you to offer suggestions to the organization for developing effective measures of dealing with incivility. Furthermore, this study will assist Human Resource Development professionals in better understanding the manifestation of workplace incivility, and then help organizations develop policies and practices necessary for reducing and/or eliminating workplace incivility. The study will also motivate and give direction to other researchers for conducting further research on this crucial topic.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked cabinet which only Priyanka Doshy will have access to. Dr. Jia Wang, the PI of this study will have access to interview transcripts after all identifiers (all real names, departments, and other affiliations) are removed.

Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Principal Investigator, Dr. Jia Wang, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-862-7808 or

jiawang@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Priyanka Doshy at 512-850-1686 or priyankadoshy@gmail.com.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your student status, medical care, employment, evaluation, relationship with Texas A&M University, etc. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature Date

Printed Name Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter Date

Printed Name Date

APPENDIX C

EMAIL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Understanding Graduate Research Assistants' Experiences of Workplace Incivility

Dear XX,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study exploring workplace incivility experiences of graduate research assistants (non-teaching) (GRAs). Workplace incivility is defined as “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” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457). Some examples of workplace incivility are: speaking in a demeaning manner, belittling, bullying people, demonstrating a temper, interrupting individuals, and spreading rumors or gossip.

This study will be conducted by Priyanka Doshy (Protocol Director) and Dr. Jia Wang (Associate Professor in the Dept. of Educational Administration & Human Resource Development; and Principal Investigator of this study). The goal of this study is to understand workplace incivility experiences of graduate research assistants (non-teaching) who are currently employed at a large public university in the United States of America (USA). The following questions will guide this study:

1. What are GRAs' experiences of workplace incivility?
2. What impact does workplace incivility have on GRAs?

You have been selected to be a potential participant because you may meet the following criteria: (a) currently employed as a graduate research assistant (non-teaching capacity) at the selected large public university in USA, (b) have experienced the phenomenon of workplace incivility as a GRA, and (c) have worked as a GRA for at least one semester.

If you meet the above criteria and agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to: (1) engage in at least two face-to-face interviews (1st Interview: 60-90 minutes and 2nd Interview: 30-45 minutes) and a follow-up interview (if needed) which will be audio recorded; and (2) review the interview transcript to verify accuracy. Sending and receiving of transcripts and responses will take place using Filex to ensure confidentiality and security. A week after the interview you will be provided with your interview transcript and will be given one week to review it and verify its accuracy. The estimated time between interviews will be two-to-three months which includes the time to receive and review transcripts. As the Protocol Director of the study, I shall be interviewing you at a time and public location (E.g., coffee shop) within Bryan/College Station that is convenient and comfortable for you, if you choose to participate in the study.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University being affected.

The things that you will be doing are no greater than risks than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researcher has tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. This study will require you to identify and reflect upon your experiences of or related to workplace incivility. Given the nature of the topic of the study (workplace incivility), there are likely some risks associated with participating in this study. As a researcher, I am highly aware that sharing the unpleasant or even disturbing experience at work may cause some psychological/emotional discomfort and social risks, (e.g., sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, frustration, and fear). Therefore, it is my obligation as the researcher to protect you in any capacity I have. I will follow strictly, the IRB guidelines and use the following strategies to minimize the discomfort or risks you may experience: (a) request you to take breaks and suggest you to ask for breaks as and when needed, (b) stop the interview if necessary, (c) give you the option to: reschedule the interview or withdraw at any point without penalty, and (d) recommend student health facilities on campus which you may or may not choose to use. Please know that, you do not have to answer anything you do not want to. And, most importantly, information about individuals and/or organizations that you provide will be kept confidential including your own identity and affiliation.

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, this study will allow you to reflect upon your experiences related to workplace incivility as a graduate research assistant (non-teaching), which is likely help with the development of better and more effective strategies to cope with uncivil behavior you may encounter in the future. It will also allow you to examine how the organization you currently work for deals with workplace incivility, and perhaps encourage you to offer suggestions to the organization for developing effective measures of dealing with incivility.

You will receive no monetary compensation for your participation. Alternatively, aside from time, there will be no costs to you for taking part in this study.

This is a confidential study; hence, your identity will not be disclosed in any fashion. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked cabinet and only the researcher (Priyanka Doshy) will have access to the records. Dr. Jia Wang will have access to interview transcripts after all identifiers (all real names, departments, and affiliations) have been removed.

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

If you would like to participate in this study and/or require any further information please contact me on [REDACTED] or on priyankadoshy@gmail.com. Although, I am the primary contact person for this study, Dr. Jia Wang (PI) can be reached on jiawang@tamu.edu or [REDACTED].

Thank you for your consideration and support. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Priyanka Doshy

APPENDIX D

FIRST-ROUND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic: Understanding Graduate Assistants' Experiences of Workplace Incivility

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewee: _____

Part 1: Demographic information

a) Age: _____

b) Gender: _____

c) Race: _____

d) Graduate program classification (Master's/Doctoral): _____

e) Number of semesters/years employed as a GRA: _____

f) Discipline: _____

Part 2: Interview Questions

1. Describe your role as a GRA.
2. Recall a time when you experienced incivility as a GRA. Describe the instance in detail.
3. How did uncivil experiences impact you?
4. How did/do you deal with incivility?
5. Is there anything you want to share with me?

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE SECOND-ROUND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Each participant's second round interview guide differed as it was generated based on the data gathered in the first interview.

Bill's Second-Round Interview Guide

1. Which testing center do you go to in order grade the exams?
2. What meetings do you take/attend?
3. The clique that you were talking about, what and how have they been rude to you?
4. So, are your labmates different from you officemates?
5. You mentioned your boss/advisor can be demanding. How is he demanding? Can you please share specific examples?
6. Do you think that your boss/advisor's expectations are unreasonable?
7. What else does your boss/advisor do that lowers your morale/self-esteem?
8. You mentioned hidden work expectation, what are they?
9. When the politics issues happened, were others present? If so, what were their reactions?
10. Are there any other uncivil incidences that you would like to share?
11. Would you like to share anything else that I may have not asked you?

APPENDIX F

DATA REDUCTION/HORIZONTALIZATION SAMPLE

Sara's Experiences of Incivility

Incident	Solution/Coping	Impact
<p>Working hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Generally have to work more than 20 hours even though we are supposed to work only 20 hours as per contract. (4)- Asked to stay longer in a poor manner that is bothersome (4)- Poor treatment by boss/advisor who did not know how much time it takes for work to get done. Would want her to work unreasonable hours and amounts per day and was insensitive of the fact that she had just moved from another country. (5)- He would not even be flexible when she had exams and demanded that she work even then regardless of deadlines (9)		<p>If she does not like the project she will only do what is needed, if she likes it will dig deeper. It also depends on how she is asked to work that she will be motivated to work. If asked poorly she will not prefer working more but will still do it because of her advisor/boss. It is hard and tough to work more, very demanding with going to school fulltime (4)</p> <p>Was hurt by the poor treatment and inconsiderate attitude of her boss/supervisor. (5)</p>
<p>Interfered with Personal life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Asked whom she spent time with- Asked if she had a boyfriend- Asked if she went to bars- Asked about why she wears a scarf- And asked others about her personal life, too. (6)	<p>She gave him her schedule but was not pleased that he displayed it. She asked him to take down her schedule because it is embarrassing when other students see it (7). Especially because he did not put anybody else's schedule up there, just</p>	<p>Perceived it as rude!</p> <p>Made her feel scared and extremely uncomfortable (6)</p> <p>She felt that he wanted to cross the line between student and</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He said to her that if he was to get closer to her the work would get done better and faster (6) - He asked her to give him her schedule from 9am till 10pm in the night and displayed it in his office (7) 		<p>supervisor/professor (6)</p> <p>She did not believe that he needs to come closer to her in order to get work done (6)</p>
<p>Made her feel uncomfortable when in his office alone for meetings. He would open to door then shut it again, open it again and shut it again for no specific reason (6)</p>		
<p>Interrupting her while talking (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When she would try to speak her mind he would rudely say hold on hold on hold on. - So she stopped talking and agreed with him. Then he got upset that she was not talking and arguing with him. (2:9) 	<p>She started crying due to his poor treatment</p>	<p>Did not like working with him at all</p>
<p>He told her that she gets paid to obey him (2:9)</p>	<p>She decided to leave then and transfer to another prof.</p>	<p>Tried her best to cope with him for six months but it was too toxic for her to be with him(2:9)</p>
<p>He behaved differently with international students than American students (2:12)</p>	<p>International students like me, we can all feel that this is different and we are treated poorly compared to other students but we are too scared to do anything (12)</p>	<p>Could not focus on school and exams (2:9)</p> <p>Shows that we have no rights and we will get in trouble and always have to be feared (2:12)</p>
<p>Compared her to other students and made fun of her English (2: 13/14)</p>	<p>She knows she is not a native speaker and does her best to improve her English and has to work twice as hard in order to improve her English (14)</p>	<p>Affects self-confidence and self-esteem.</p>

He threw a fit when she went to another professor for help. He was afraid and insecure that she would complain about him (2: 16)

Other friends were afraid to be caught hanging out with her because her advisor/boss was on their committee (22)

Friends did not sit with her in classes because they were afraid to get caught as being associated with her (2: 23)

She felt it was really rude and it really led her to not having much of a social life (22)

Overall Impact:

- Remembering those days is really hard (11)
- The dean found out about him and they fired him because he was tenure track and after they get tenured they do not care much (11)
- She had to take counseling (18)9
- Was afraid she would loose funding if she complained about his mistreatment (17, 18)
- Affected health (18)
- Had to take counseling once a week (18)
- Could not talk to friends because they were afraid to be seen with her (20)
- Still scared of seeing him at a conference (21)

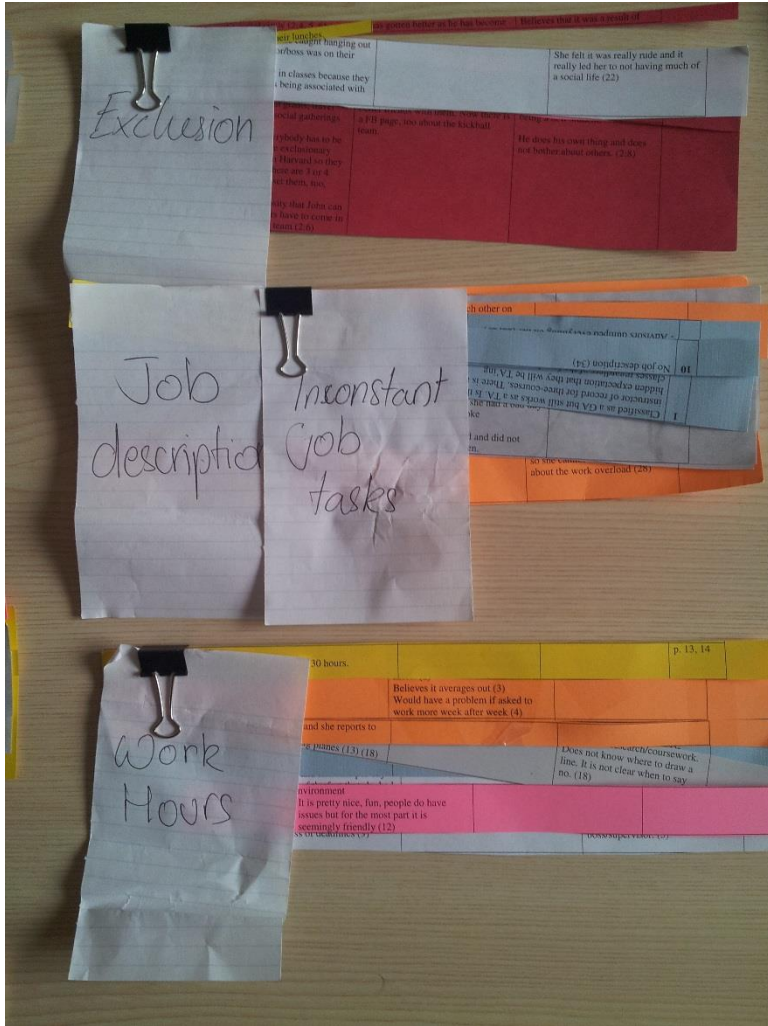
APPENDIX G

DATA ANALYSIS EXAMPLES

Isabella - yellow
 Ronnie - pink
 Olivia - blue
 Sara - white
 John - red
 Patty - orange
 Neil - grey
 Bill - marble paper

Work Hours

4	Work hours - Sometimes has to work up to 30 hours - Poor pay for the workload		p. 15, 14
2	Works more than 20 hours a week most of the times (2) people who assign her work and she reports to them (7)	Does not keep track of hours because she does not want to know when it is more. (2) Believes it averages out (3) Would have a problem if asked to work more week after week (4)	
3	Is available for them all times of the day. On a Saturday students called him to come open the lab. He ended up spending 3 hours with them and helping them. (13) Has to work weekends when they are flying planes (13) (18)	It is required with the course so does # (13)	Affects his research/coursework. Does not know where to draw a line. It is not clear when to say no. (18)
2	Working hours/Workload classified as 20, however, ends up working about 40 hours altogether. (13, 16)	Has a set schedule. Works from 8 to 5 plus every day. Also wakes up at 3:30 or 4am.	Feels that she can use a little more help sometimes even though they are trying to make her better (16) Was going to have a mental breakdown so, started lying to them that she has work and cannot do this right now. Or already has too much to do and cannot do it right now. (32)
1	Incident Working hours: - Generally have to work more than 20 hours even though we are supposed to work only 20 hours as per contract. (4) - Asked to stay longer in a poor manner that is bothersome (4) - Poor treatment by boss/supervisor who did not know how much time it takes for work to get done. Would want her to work unreasonable hours and amounts per day and was insensitive of the fact that she had just moved from another country. (5) - He would not even be flexible when she had exams and demanded that she work even then regardless of deadlines (9)	Incident Depends upon deadlines and does work more if needed. Varies as to how many hours a week she works. Most weeks it is more than 20 hours. (4)	Incident If she does not like the project she will only do what is needed, if she likes it will dig deeper. It also depends on how she is asked to work that she will be motivated to work. If asked poorly she will not prefer working more but will still do it because of her advisor/boss. It is hard and tough to work more, very demanding with going to school fulltime (4) Was hurt by the poor treatment and inconsiderate attitude of her boss/supervisor. (5)
4	Work environment - It is pretty nice, fun, people do have issues but for the most part it is seemingly friendly (12)		



APPENDIX H

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL SAMPLE

This is a sample from the reflective journal maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process.

