

ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AMONG EMPLOYEES OF SELECTED BANKS IN RIVERS STATE – NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study surveyed the influence of organizational trust on workplace incivility. In carrying out the research, a sample of one hundred and forty-seven respondents from twenty one deposit money banks was utilized. The questionnaire was the major instrument for collecting data which was analyzed by the statistical tool of Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The study revealed an inverse relationship between the dimensions of organizational trust i.e. trust in managers, colleagues and clients and the measures of workplace incivility (disrespectful behavior, rude behavior and condescending behavior. It was therefore recommended that firms should put in place policies to minimize destructive behavior and address incivility issues by making sure that justice is practiced and fairness instilled in the workplace.

Keywords: Trust in managers, trust in colleagues, trust in clients, disrespectful behavior, rude behavior, condescending behavior.

Introduction

Workplace incivility which is uncivil behavior mostly connotes verbal and non-verbal abuse and all sorts of disrespectful behavior. It is often regarded as bad behavior characterized by rudeness and disregard towards others and implies a lack of consideration towards others. Workplace incivility has become a significant challenge facing many organizations today. The level of uncivil behavior can be observed in organizations including banks where there are lots of interaction between customer and staff, customer and customer, and other individuals and groups that have transactions with the organization. It manifest in the form of displaying a lack of regard for others, rudeness, being discourteous, ignoring a co-worker, brow-beating, not showing concern to workers opinion, mocking someone's performance in front of others, making demeaning and condescending comments, having someone talk behind your back i.e. gossip, taking credit for other people's achievements, interrupting or even walking away from a conversation, being ignored or excluded and

Condescension. Workplace incivility is distinct from bullying – it is generally less obvious and less common than bullying or harassment.

Lim, Cortina, and Marley (2008) opined that three important features that differentiate incivility from other forms of workplace mistreatment are violation of workplace norm of respect, less intensity and ambiguous intention to do harm. Reoccurring incivility gradually destroys cordial relationship among managers, workers and co-workers which often lead to disaffection in the organization. The level of interaction is hindered as workers do not feel the need for cooperation and unity while at work; thereby encouraging distrust, dissatisfaction and disrespect among them. Thus, the organization can experience a high turnover of employees due to its un-conducive and unfriendly environment.

The banking industry is an important sector in the business world which contributes largely to society. It provides a vast array of financial and non-financial services such as lending to businesses, funds transfer, accepting deposits and financial advisory services amongst others. As employees are exposed to mistreatment by their managers, colleagues, and clients/customers, incivility at work becomes prominent. Employees who are exposed to all forms of maltreatment at work will be reluctant to fulfill routine tasks, their morale and performance will diminish and they are likely to display some negative attitude, such as reduced creativity or lower job satisfaction (Sidle, 2009).

Organizations that are known to be reliable show traits of encouraging and developing their staff. Believing in an organization is the workers conviction that they can rely on the utterances, body language and observed behavior of client's customer's co-workers and their leaders. Thus, a trust-based environment is made up of managers, colleagues and clients and this is in line with the proposition is that absence of organization trust lead to workplace incivility. Firms that cheat and oppress their workers and also disregard their role in the organizational set up will end up with not getting the best from them as they will be disgruntled and may eventually leave (Driscoll, 1978). When an employee trusts his/her managers, colleagues and clients, it increase work performance and enable them to sustain the association and stay. (Colquitt, Scott and Lepine, 2007; Brower et al, 2009) and go the extra mile to contribute to organizational effectiveness (Mayer & Gavin, 2005). Credible organizations create a feeling of future rewards and benefits in their workers and this state of mind is capable of motivating them to be more productive (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). On the other hand, when workers have no faith in their colleagues, managers and customers, there will be no incentive to be committed and perform beyond expectation especially when such firms do not see workers as partners in achieving company goals. (Pierce & Gardner, 2004; Mayer & Gavin, 2005).

Incivility in the workplace such as display of rude attitude, disrespecting managers, colleagues and clients/customers and using derogatory statements to mention a few is considered a more moderate and passive form of deviant behavior, if neglected will cost the organization to lose high performance and team spirit, manpower, customers, finance, time, production inefficiency and organization ineffectiveness.

At first, incivility could be minor because it may be as simple as not returning a smile to purposely hurt ones feelings and leads to more aggressive violent behaviors which causes lack

Of respect and hurts workers morale. In turn, workers may intentionally decreased their work effort, lose work time trying to avoid offender, taking frustration out on customers and even deciding to leave their job.

According to Porath and Pearson (2013), customers have a low percent chance of patronizing an organization when they sense that its workers behave rudely even to one another. Since workplace incivility can be a precursor to more severe and covert workplace, violence, workplace incivility deserves more scholarly attention.

Also, it has been observed that despite the complex nature and competition in the banking business in Nigeria, many banks do not know the extent to which incivility hamper organizational performance. As a result, poor customer service and brand switching is noticeable.

While numerous contributions in area of workplace incivility and organizational justice abound, there is need to also find out the relationship between organizational trust and workplace incivility. So far literature is scanty on the relationship between organizational trust and workplace incivility especially in the Nigerian work environment. On this note this study seeks to investigate the nexus between organizational trust and workplace incivility in Nigerian banks.

Literature Review

The Concept of Organizational Trust

Trust as a concept has been explained in different ways by several authors. Mayer, Davis and Schoolman (1975) describe it as the anticipation by one party in a relationship to be favorably treated by the other party without necessarily taking any action in ensuring his interest. For Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) it is a state of mind involving the willingness in accepting vulnerability arising from positive expectations of the disposition or action of someone else. The assured, wholesome anticipation with respect to the behavior of another person or entity is also known as trust (Lewicki et al., 1998)

Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility is defined as a less intense abnormal behavior with an unclear purpose to cause harm to a target which violates the accepted standard for mutual respect (Anderson & Pearson (1999). It is directed towards others which adversely affect organization norms and employees.

The prevalence of workplace incivility stated by many researches postulates that uncivil behavior can be expensive for organization, employees and customers or both. Although workplace incivility occurs at all level of the organization, it also leads to unfavorable working atmosphere that prevent employees learning and development. Employees who perceived incivility behavior at work may indicate frustration, anger, stress or aggressive behavior (Reio & Ghost 2009; Sidle, 2009). Therefore, workplace incivility is most likely to cause a bad aftermath tampering organizational values such as trust, job commitment and satisfaction, production, commitment, and employee's performance (Miner rubino & Cortina, 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 2004; Spedy, 2006; Thau et al, 2007; and Reio & Ghost, 2009).

According to Gunther (2002), civility is not formal rules of etiquette but an overall concern about treating others in a sensible and understanding manner. Therefore, workplace civility serves to set and preserve standard of interpersonal relationship and preserves them, and learning to identify with colleagues are examples of civil workplace behaviors. Thus, sensitivity is an important component of civility which makes others comfortable as a source of power. In American culture, for example, moral values, love and respect for others are based on civility (Carter, 1998). When members of organizations interact with each other with love and respect and try to sacrifice for others, those behaviors are witness and eventually placed in the members mind as moral standards. Thus civility as a moral standard can be considered a virtue that should be pursued in organizations by the participants (Anderson & Pearson, 1999).

In contrast, incivility is bad behavior characterized by rudeness and disregard towards others and implies a lack of consideration towards others. In respect to the definition of workplace incivility as cited by Anderson and Pearson (1999), the word "less intense abnormal behavior" implies that there are various forms of deviant behavior and depends on the severity of the behavior, such as workplace violence (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Glomb, 2002), bullying in the workplace (Liefoghe & Davey, 2001), dictatorship (Ashforth, 1994) and harassment in the workplace (Spry, 1998; Rospenda, 2002). Anderson and Pearson (1999) conducted an intensive literature review on all the possible forms of mistreatment in organizations and compare them to incivility.

Another important feature of incivility is its low intensity. Incivility is considered to be a lesser form of mistreatment in the workplace stipulated values. Since incivility refers to low intensity, it is not limited to verbal abuse but nonverbal and all sorts of disrespectful behavior which includes ignoring or excluding colleagues, and gossip (Cortina, Lim & Marley; 2008). Although incivility in the workplace represents a less intense abnormal behavior, it should not be ignored or put aside as safe or harmless. Workplace incivility can grow into a more difficult and discomforting situation for a target no matter how low the incivility (Vickers, 2006). Nevertheless, due to its less intense abnormal behavior, it is not easily noticed and ignored on grounds of insecurities which encourage incivility to thrive on and cause greater harm to the organization.

An ambiguous intention to harm is also an important feature of incivility. It is the most important aspect of uncivil behavior in workplaces because incivility brings about potential problems in the workplace. While other workplace mistreatment behaviors include a clear intention to harm others, the intention to harm is ambiguous in uncivil behavior. As long as the intention remains ambiguous, then it can be called uncivil behavior and the intention of workplace incivility is subjected to varying interpretations by instigators, targets or observers (Pearson, Anderson & Wegner, 2001). Therefore, when the instigator perceives that their harmful acts are noticed and stand to be accused, they could easily lay claims on excuses that the acts were simply unintentional and that others are too delicate to misunderstand the act (Vickers, 2006).

Eventually, targets find it difficult to make sense of the situation due to the incivility experienced, thus leading to stress and difficulty in the whole process. They become indecisive

on how to respond to the situation and live in fear of what may happen next (Lim, Cortina & Marley; 2008).

Incivility in the workplace is on the increase and has cost much organization a lot in terms of human capital and all round productivity (Pearson & Anderson, 1999; Brown & Sumner, 2006).

Due to the rising incidents and negative impact of uncivil behavior in the organization, proper attention needs to be paid to all areas of incivility (Anderson, Pearson & Wegner; 2001). When this is done, it will further reduce the risk of incivility occurring in the workplace and proffers necessary solution.

Measures of Workplace Incivility

According to Cortina, Marley, William and Lang out (2001), workplace incivility can be measured from the behavior of supervisors, co-workers and customers on a workplace incivility scale (W.I.S) by determining the frequency of uncivil behaviors such as rude behavior, disrespectful behavior and condescending behavior.

Rude Behavior

One of the major characteristics of incivility in the workplace is rudeness. This occurs when an employee fails to show concern or respect for the rights and feelings of other people. The term rudeness implies going against the accepted social norms and customs guiding a particular culture, by showing a clear disregard to others. These established norms are the generally accepted behavior which serves as an essential guide in a given context. When these norms are deviated from, it is regarded as rudeness which vehemently alters the constitutional social balance (Kasper, 1990). A rude speech directed towards someone is quick to cause conflict and encourage discrimination.

Several ways of speaking rudely to others include intentionally excluding someone to partake in an open discussion by using rude comments such as “be quiet”, “shut up” or shouting at someone which clearly shows lack of respect. Other examples include being stiff, vulgar, ignorant, unlearned, coarse, uncouth, inelegant, uncivilized, or being discourteous. In an environment where respect and professionalism is encouraged, employees get motivated and strive to work wholeheartedly. Employees would like to work in an environment where they are treated with respect and professionalism. However, where the reverse is the case, the organization suffers a great deal by losing workers or even suffer financial setback. According to Fischer-Porter (2003), employee productivity, passion or even morale is all affected by a continual display of rudeness in the organization. Therefore, strategies must be enforced in the organization to manage problems and issues that arise from practices of rudeness and punish offenders.

Disrespectful Behavior

To be disrespectful is to show a lack of disregard for people. It is the act of putting someone down, trying to make them feel low, treating them in a horrible manner, showing them they mean nothing to you and acting rude and ignorant towards their feelings.

Disrespectful behavior has very negative effects in the workplace. Employees who are disrespectful and vulgar can significantly diminish office morale. Although some employers implement code of conduct policies to clearly define disrespectful and inappropriate work place behavior as well as the consequences for engaging in such behavior, others do not, thus creating room for unwanted deviant behaviors which alters the norms of the working environment. Examples of disrespectful behavior include gossip, discrimination, bullying or inappropriate internet usage (Scott, 2016).

Condescending Behavior

This represents a vital component of the concept of incivility in the workplace. It emphasizes how an employee shows and believes he is more important or better than others. Condescending people considers themselves superior to others and intend to make others feel bad about not knowing or having something which very often works.

Effective communication among workers in the workplace is of utmost importance because it directs the flow of work smoothly. However, when a condescending employee belittles another employee, it leads to an atmosphere of destructive conflict which ultimately affects the organization.

Consequences of Workplace Incivility

As employees are exposed to various forms of incivility which exists in the workplace, the following outcomes negatively affect employees and the organization as well as clients.

Low Employee Morale

Low employee's morale is an emotional issue for employees in the workplace. When employees feel unappreciated for their effort on job, they are more likely to exhibit signs of stress and hostility towards others, particularly if those employees are being recognized and they are not. Thus, it is important to maintain an attitude of fairness in the workplace and recognize employee's individual efforts to boost their morale (Vickers, 2006).

Workplace Stress

Looming deadlines, project failures, long work days or long stretches without time off can wear – off employees and as a result, they are over stressed and display rude behavior within the workplace (Reio & Ghost, 2009).

Some stress cannot be avoided as it's naturally a part of a job, however workers can be educated on stress management and managers can offer to keep stress level at its minimal (Hornstein, 2003). Breen (2004) also noted that creativity will suffer in an atmosphere of fear and sadness.

Performance and Team Spirit Deteriorate

Due to the presence of incivility, individuals pay more importance to roles in their life and place less importance on their duty (Cortina, 2001). Employees gradually display symptoms of withdrawal, loss of time on job and absenteeism. Buhler (2003) asserted that quite a number of victims of incivility react by putting less effort on their job. Incivility outcomes greatly affect teamwork negatively and it's on the increase daily altering workplace norms and injecting a bad energy in the working atmosphere (Hornstein, 2003). Besides Porath

& Pearson (2005) observe that workplace incivility is capable of reducing customer patronage if such behavior is extended to them.

Organizational Costs

Organizations incur indirect cost due to the obvious effects of incivility in the workplace. Some of the major effects include increased use of sick leave; negative publicity and poor public image; extra cost of recruiting and training new workers; increased risk of legal action; and lack of employee loyalty (Lau et al, 2003, Reio & Ghost, 2009).

Employee Turnover

Workplace incivility greatly affects the turnover rate of employees within the organization as workers tends to seek comfort and reliability elsewhere. Unplanned employee turnover is generally regarded as bad for business because more cost has to be directed toward replacing the employees who left, thereby affecting the profit margin and customer service of the organization (Ton & Hackman, 2008).

Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses will be tested in this research:

Ho₁ -There is no significant relationship between trust in managers and disrespectful behavior.

Ho₂- There is no significant relationship between trust in colleagues and rude behavior of employee.

Ho₃ – There is no significant relationship between trust in clients and condescending behavior of employee.

Methodology

The adopted research design in this study was survey research design. Survey research design is a very valuable tool for assessing opinions, thoughts and trends, which reflect the views of a genuine cross-section of the population. The target population of this study comprises a total of twenty one (21) commercial banks in Nigeria. However, the accessible population of this study is narrowed down to 21 commercial banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Employees used for the accessible population covers only staff working within the executive operations of the bank such as operations & marketers excluding cleaners, drivers and security. This is so because the executive teams are more knowledgeable on the issues raised in the study. The sample size of one hundred and seventy-three (173) was chosen using Taro Yamane formula for finite population at a 5% level of significance. The non-parametric statistical tool (Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient) was used to analyses the data.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 (Ho₁): Correlation between trust in managers and disrespectful behavior.

Correlations

			Trust in Managers	Disrespectful behavior
Spearman 's rho	Trust in Managers	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.960**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.01
		N	147	147
	Disrespectful behavior	Correlation Coefficient	-0.960**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	.
		N	147	147

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS generated output.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho₁) shows a correlation coefficient $r = -0.960$ which suggest a strong inverse relationship. Also since the p value (0.01) is less than the alpha value for a two tailed test (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the higher the rate of occurrence of disrespectful behavior in the organization, the lower the trust employees have for their managers.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho₂): Correlation between trust in colleagues and rude behavior.

Correlations

			Trust in Colleagues	Rude behavior
Spearman 's rho	Trust in Colleagues	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.981**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.01
		N	147	147
	Rude behavior	Correlation Coefficient	-0.981**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	.
		N	147	147

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS generated output.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho₂) reveals a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.981$ which suggests a strong inverse relationship. Since the P value (0.01) is less than the alpha value of a two tailed test (0.05) the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the higher the rate of occurrence of rude behavior in the organization of study, the lower the trust employees have for their colleagues.

Hypothesis 3 (Ho₃): Correlation between trust in clients and condescending behavior.

Correlations

		Trust in Clients	Condescendingbehaviour
Spearman's rho	Trust in Clients	1.000	-0.981**
	Correlation Coefficient	.	0.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	147	147
Condescending behaviour	Condescending behaviour	-0.981**	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient	0.01	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	147	147

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS generated output.

Table 4.5.3 above shows a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.981$ which shows an inverse relationship. With the P value (0.01) less than the alpha value for a two tailed test (0.05), the null hypothesis is to be rejected and the alternate hypothesis is to be accepted. This implies that the higher the rate of occurrence of condescending behavior from clients, the lower the trust employees will have for them.

Discussion of Findings

On the correlation between trust in managers and disrespectful behavior, the hypothesis test revealed a negative or inverse relationship. This connotes that the higher the level of disrespectful behavior by employees in a firm lowers the trust the workers have for their managers. Trust and respect are reciprocal. When employees have trust in their managers, there are fewer tendencies to engage in disrespectful behavior. The second hypothesis analyzed the nexus concerning trust in colleagues and rude behavior also indicated an inverse relationship between the variables meaning that a preponderance of rude behavior in an organization will result in low level of trust amongst colleagues. Trust amongst colleagues can only thrive in an atmosphere of cordiality, love and respect. As Reio and Ghost (2009) stated, rude behavior is very likely to engender distrust, job satisfaction and poor commitment. The correlation between trust in client and condescending behavior showed a negative relationship. The implication being that the greater the frequency of condescending behavior from clients, the lower the trust that will be elicited from employees. This finding is in agreement with Pierce and Gardner (2004) who noted that workers who do not trust their managers, associates and clients will not be motivated and won't show commitment to their organizations.

Conclusion

The study empirically investigated the correlation relating to organizational trust and workplace incivility in Nigerian banks. The dimensions and measures of the independent and dependent variables indicated a strong and significant inverse relationship thereby showing the importance of trust and the creation of a cordial work environment in promoting job satisfaction, employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

Workplace incivility is a critical phenomenon in the organization which must be understood to reduce negative outcomes. However, practices must be designed to improve long term effectiveness in the organization as well as in the individual, it must also strive to minimize destructive behavior by addressing incivility and taking a systematic approach to make sure justice is practiced and fairness is instilled.

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