



WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND FIRMS' PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM GOVERNMENTAL ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined workplace incivility and firms' productivity in Nigeria with evidence from governmental tertiary institutions. The specific objectives were to find out the effects of discrimination and sexual harassment on firms' productivity as well as if organizational culture is a moderating factor affecting the relationship between workplace incivility and firms' productivity. Survey research design was adopted and the study population comprised 306 employees of selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. Taro-Yemane formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 176 respondents and the data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The results indicated that discrimination and sexual harassment has significant effects on firms' productivity. It was also revealed that organizational culture served as a moderating factor affecting firms' productivity. Based on the findings, the study concluded that workplace incivility affects firms' productivity. It was recommended among others that the management of governmental tertiary institutions need to protect workers against discrimination and encourage them to respect each other's differences in order to reduce labour turnover and increase employees' retention in the organization. They should also ensure that policies against discrimination are enacted and enforced; allegations of discrimination need to be fully investigated and handed over to employees' disciplinary committee if any exist for appropriate actions.*

KEYWORDS: Workplace incivility, Firms productivity, Nigeria, Governmental enterprises; Government institutions

JEL Classifications: J24; M10.



INTRODUCTION

Workplace incivility is a low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Workplace incivility is an act of being characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others. Workplace incivility is evident in behaviors that demonstrate lack of regard for others in the workplace, behaviors that are described as rude or discourteous. According to Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2015), workplace is a location where people work for their employer or themselves. A workplace is one where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do and enjoy the people they work with. A workplace is a place (such as an office, shop, or factory) where people work. A workplace or place of employment is a location where people perform tasks, jobs and projects for their employer. Incivility on the other hand refers to lack of civility or courtesy or rudeness. Incivility also refers to the quality or condition of being uncivil, a discourteous behavior or treatment, or an uncivil act. Incivility is rudeness or disrespect. Incivility refers to a rude or impolite attitude or behavior—lack of civility (Shernoff, 2013).

According to Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2015), the act of workplace incivility refers to disruptive behaviors like outbursts, explosive anger, biting or sarcastic comments, and harsh criticism; these are extremely damaging workplace incivility examples. Generally, employees know they cannot get away with this kind of behavior in the office. A firm's productivity is the value each team brings to the success of the overall business. It measures the output of individuals or teams to better understand how an organization can optimize its workflow. A firm's productivity, sometimes referred to as workforce productivity, is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. Workplace productivity is the efficiency with which tasks and goals are completed for the company. In a nutshell, workplace productivity is a combination of time management, focus on the task at hand, motivation to achieve success, and more.

Workplace incivility starts with an interpersonal interaction that some employees distinguish as unfair or unjust, violating the universal norm of respect in the workplace. This perception creates a negative effect and stimulates the desire to retaliate with an uncivil act, commencing a cycle of uncivil behaviours. The tipping point occurs when the last small injustice suddenly evokes a stronger response. Uncivil behaviours escalate into more coercive and aggressive acts, increasing the intensity and the potential for harm. Workplace aggression is not a spontaneous act but a culmination of escalating patterns of negative interactions between individuals. Workplace incivility is a precursor to more intense, overtly aggressive acts in the workplace as the affective responses to accumulating events increase in intensity (Wilson & Holmuall, 2013).

The examination of uncivil behaviours at work is especially relevant to health care work environments. Health care professionals operate at a diminished capacity to perform safe and effective clinical practices when workplace stressors (e.g., verbal abuse) divert their emotional resources away from patient care. Health care workers perform duties that can have life or death consequences for their patients. An emotionally safe working environment should be the minimum standard, yet health care workers often face hostile conditions with very little support. This has broad-reaching consequences for the effectiveness of health care organizations as well as for patient and employee health. More specifically, conflict in nursing work environments is harmful on individual and interpersonal levels (Shernoff, 2013).



According to Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2015), the effects of conflicts on interpersonal relationships include hostility, avoidance, and a negative perception of others. Organizational effects include reduced productivity and team coordination and collaboration. Employees are more likely to experience low job satisfaction, contemplate quitting, and have mental and physical health complaints when working in environments characterized by incivility (Almost, 2006). The combination of negative effects evident in this review provides a convincing argument that incivility is costly to nursing work environments in terms of decreased job satisfaction, productivity, performance, creativity, and helping behaviours (Vigoda, 2012).

Behaviours directed at individuals also vary in severity with personal aggression as serious (e.g., sexual harassment) and political deviance considered as minor (e.g., gossiping about coworkers). Workplace incivility falls under the classification of minor interpersonal deviance. They named this quadrant “political deviance” and defined it as “engagement in social interaction that puts other individuals at a personal or political disadvantage” (p.566). The authors suggest further examination of each quadrant to develop solid theoretical models for distinct forms of employee deviance. The study of workplace incivility responds to this call for rich investigation into the area of political deviance (Shernoff, 2013). Thus, the negative social context in the workplace continues to decrease the quality of work life. Incivility includes subtle negative interactions between employees that often go unnoticed by organizational leaders. Acts of incivility can reach far beyond negative verbal discourse (e.g., belittling, insulting) to include disrespectful nonverbal behaviours (e.g., glaring, ignoring, excluding), yet it may remain unclear whether there is an intention to harm. A literature review by Estes and Wang (2008) revealed that workplace incivility is frequent and that it is harmful to employee health and organizational performance. The authors concluded that workplace incivility is not a well-understood concept, neither is it recognized as an important organizational issue (Shernoff, 2013).

A firm’s productivity is the efficiency with which tasks and goals are accomplished at an organization. A firm’s productivity refers simply to how much “work” is done over a specific period of time. Productivity is a measure of how efficiently a job task is being completed or a company is performing. Much of the research on workplace incivility discusses the spiraling effect. The spiraling effect describes how incivility can potentially spiral into increasingly intense behaviors with a starting point and tipping points. In this regard, some outcomes can become antecedents to continue the cycle of incivility. For example, stress can cause an individual to be uncivil; consequences of being uncivil can elicit more stress, which then can trigger further uncivil behaviors.

According to Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2015), incivility is being toward the bottom of the continuum of abuse and displaying low intensity counterproductive work behavior (CWB); however, low intensity should not be confused with being a “minor” problem. Less research attention has been paid to minor incivility behavior; however, preliminary studies have shown that minor incivility affects workers. Some researchers have found that incivility includes a wide range of behaviors from as simple as not returning a smile to purposely hurting one’s feelings; however, workplace incivility has also been found to be a precursor that can lead to more aggressive violent behaviors.



One of the critical challenges for organizations in today's dynamic and turbulent environment is retaining capable workforce for the maintenance and improvement of firms' competitive edge. Staff turnover is a serious issue in the field of human resource management. Its impact has received considerable attention by senior management, human resources professionals, and industrial psychologists. It has proven to be one of the most costly and seemingly intractable human resource challenges confronting organizations. Reducing employee turnover through retention practices is an area of great interest to organizational psychologists, organizations and employers who depend on a highly skilled workforce (Blau & Andersson, 2015).

More so, in an organisation, politics has been shown by some researchers to have inhibited maximum productivity, reduced job satisfaction and as a result increased the intention to quit. General political behaviour includes acting in a self-serving manner to achieve their individual goals. Thus, the perception of politics was always influencing individual reward structure and when employees work in a political environment, they may not have the confidence that their behaviour will contribute to organisational reward structure. Organisational politics is a general term that indicates power relations and influences tactics in the workplace. Due to this political nature, the concept of organisational politics has received increasing attention in management literature (Hina, 2019). Besides its practical implications, one of the reasons that consider politics and political behaviour in organisations as a promising field for theoretical inquiry is the general belief that views this phenomenon as one of the existing obstacles to the optimum performance of organisations (Muhammad, Arifa & Muhammad, 2017).

Problem Statement

As incivility in the workplace becomes an increasing problem, more research is being conducted on this subject. The increase in workplace incivility has cost organizations by negatively impacting human capital and organizations' bottom line. Unresolved workplace conflicts represent the largest costs to an organization that are reducible. With this increasing interest in researching workplace incivility, detrimental effect on human capital, and the negative impacts on organizations cost, a thorough analysis of the literature is needed. Workplace incivility merits serious research and organizational attention because of its theoretically harmful effect on organizations and individuals alike. With workplace incivility incidents rising and the negative impact of incivility on organizations, many more areas within incivility need to be researched. For example, in order to more effectively address potential solutions for workplace incivility, it is crucial to understand the causes and outcomes. This integrative review focuses on antecedents and outcomes of workplace incivility in order to develop a list of antecedents (variables that enable, motivate and/or trigger incivility) and outcome variables (descriptors of the impact of incivility) with the intention of understanding possible causes and impacts of workplace civility.

Workplace incivility is described as a low-intensity deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm an employee. It is an uncivil behavior that is characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others. The retention and development of highly skilled employees is often important to an organization's human resource management. A "perfect" system is a system made up of human interactions where incivility or uncivil behaviours are never found, but the phenomenon workplace incivility is generally not well understood and accordingly not acknowledged as an issue that needs attention. Empirical evidence has shown that incivility exists in organizations and uncivil behaviours have continued to be on the rise, and tertiary institutions are not left out. Some managers have failed to pay attention to these



uncivil behaviours and come to terms with the fact that there are benefits in curtailing workplace incivility in their organizations if not put under check. In tertiary institutions, employees have experienced uncivil discrimination as a result of their tribe, religion, sex and political opinion?

A lot have been denied promotion, training or performance pay as a result of not rearing into employers or superiors sexual advances. Some have also experienced incivility from customers as a result of the enchanting myth of customers' sovereignty, where customers are encouraged to believe that they have elevated social status and control over service transactions because of their financial power. When this happens consistently, it leads to an increase in employees' stress level, turnover, decrease in retention, performance, de-motivation and apathy which in the long run will have a negative effect on the organization and the economy at large. It is against this background that this study is set to evaluate Workplace Incivility and Firms' Productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from Governmental Enterprises.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility is a global occurrence prevalent in most organizations. It has continued to receive increased attention as a result of its regular occurrence in the workplace (Wilson & Holmvall, 2020). The trend also appears to be difficult to eliminate and there is also no evidence that such behaviours are to the benefit of any staff or organization. Pearson and Porath (2019) posit that there are a phenomenal amount of cost and types of cost that are attributable to incivility. Several other researchers and management scholars have also identified the negative impact of incivility as well as the need for organizational managers to put functional structures in place to curtail widespread workplace incivility. In the view of Rae and Good (2018), workplace incivility is a 'subtle rude or disrespectful behaviour that demonstrates lack of respect for others.'

According to Pearson and Porath (2015), workplace incivility has also been defined as a low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, showing a lack of respect for others. This definition of workplace incivility as low-intensity deviant behaviour should not be misconstrued to mean that incivility in the workplace is a minor problem, because uncivil behaviours are sometimes referred to as counterproductive workplace behaviour. Counterproductive workplace behaviours are behaviours that are intended to have a detrimental effect on an organization and its members (Sharma, Naman, Singh, Vinod & Kumar, 2018).



Dimensions of Workplace Incivility

Workplace Discrimination

According to Shim (2010), workplace discrimination is the illegal or unfair treatment of an employee based on their race, sex, national origin, religion, colour, age or disability. When an employee is treated differently from other employees on grounds that are not supported by contract or that are indeed conflicting with the law, such employee is said to have been discriminated against. There are different forms of discrimination in the workplace, but all involve treating people differently because of certain characteristics, such as color, sex or race which results in the impairment of equality of treatment and opportunity.

Sias and Perry (2014) maintained that The International Labor Organization—the United Nation Agency concerned with the world of work—defines discrimination as any exclusion, distinction or preference made on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of annulling or improving inequality of opportunity, occupation or treatment. The standard approach used in identifying employment discrimination is to isolate group productivity differences (work experience, education). They opined that differences in results (such as earning, job placement) that cannot be attributed to workers' qualification are attributed to discriminatory treatment (Sias & Perry, 2014).

Sharma et al. (2018) stated that in Nigeria, some of the status prohibiting discrimination or having anti-discriminatory elements include: Section 42 (2) of the Nigerian Constitution which provides that no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth. Also, Section 47 of the Nigerian Constitution stipulates that the state shall ensure that all citizens, without discriminating on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity to secure adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment and that there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex or any other ground whatsoever (Shim, 2010).

Sexual Harassment

According to Salin (2021), sexual harassment is a silent epidemic that has eaten deep into the Nigerian workplace. It has always been one of the workplace pollutants that have the capacity to cause humongous devastating effects on the confidence, morale and performance of employees which in most cases result in decreased productivity. Sexual harassment is the directing of unwelcome sexual attention by one member of an organization towards another. According to Tiberius and Flak (2019), the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defined sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, request of sexual favors and other verbal or physical conducts of sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals, submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly on a term or condition of an individual's employment, or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment (Sias & Perry, 2014).

According to Tiberius and Flak (2019), the federal law recognizes two types of sexual harassment under title vii: *Quid pro quo* comes from a Latin word which literally means "this for that." It refers to the abuse of authority by a person with such authority, who demands sexual favors, forcing the recipient to choose between acceding to these or losing certain job



benefits (such as salary increase, promotion or even the job itself). This type of sexual harassment is also referred to as 'sexual blackmail.' The other type of sexual harassment refers to conduct that 'creates a hostile,' intimidating or offensive working environment for the recipient, interfering with his or her work environment where an individual is subject to unwelcome comments or statements about his or her body parts by fellow employees, resulting in the individual/employee feeling distressed, embarrassed and unable to work properly (Wilson & Holmuall, 2013).

According to Vickers (2016), one of the famous opinion polling organizations in the United States, Harris and Associates, in a telephone poll on 72 U.S. workers in 2013 revealed that 31% of the female workers reported that they had been harassed at work, 7% of the male workers reported they had been harassed at work, 62% of targets took no action, 100% of women reported the harasser was a man, 59% of men reported the harasser was a woman and 41% of men reported the harasser was another man. From the statistics above, it is amazing that a whopping sum of 41% of men reported to have been harassed by a fellow male colleague. It will be expected that in the Nigerian context, if this happens, the percentage will drop drastically as a result of the newly promulgated anti-gay law (Sias & Perry, 2014).

Workplace Bullying

In introducing the concept of workplace bullying as a research topic amongst other organisational deviant behaviours in Nigeria, Owoyemi (2010) described it as 'an undiagnosed social problem' depicting the level of ignorance existing on the subject in Nigeria. The challenge with undiagnosed problems is that they eventually become endemic. Leymann (1996) established from clinical studies that when workplace bullying is incorrectly diagnosed, targets are labelled as difficult and unjustly expelled from organisations. Namie (2003) projected a 70% likelihood that bullied targets would either voluntarily lose their jobs or be relieved of their duties. Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland and Einarsen (2014), in a more recent study, showed that exposure to workplace bullying could pose a threat to employees as it elevates their feelings of job insecurity.

Fajana, Owoyemi, Shadare, Elegbede and Gbajumo-Sheriff (2011), in their pioneer study on workplace bullying in Nigeria, examined differences in bullying experience among 313 human resource practitioners in Nigeria. Gender emerged as an antecedent of bullying with Nigerian women targeted the most at work through verbal abuse, administrative bullying and social exclusion. Oghojafor, Muo and Olufayo (2012) examined the subject of bullying amongst 300 employees in public and private service employment and warned that lack of organizational policies on workplace bullying could lead to increased incidents of bullying, adjudged low at the time of the research studies. Emerging research data appear to confirm those fears. Ogbonnaya, Ukegbu, Aguwa and Emma-Ukaegbu (2012) reported amongst health workers in a tertiary hospital high psychological violence perpetrated by senior officials and physical assaults perpetrated by patients and their relatives.

Darius and Aondover (2013), in another Federal hospital, established a negative relationship between workplace bullying and job performance, and between job satisfaction and workplace bullying. Ojedokun, Oteri and Ogungbamila (2014), using the 'Big Five' traits model, identified among four hundred and seventy-five academics in seven tertiary institutions, personality traits that tend towards bullying. The interest that is being generated on the subject of workplace bullying among researchers in Nigeria indicates a growing problem area. The



implications, if not addressed, are dire: brain drain, premature termination of careers and potentials, low work morale and reprisal attacks from aggrieved parties who may not be able to afford legal redress. Nigeria needs to establish credibility in protecting the dignity of employees in the workplace so as to strategically position its market as a global competitor in the evolving world of business.

Effects of Workplace Incivility on Firms' Productivity

According to Blau and Andersson (2015), firms' productivity, according to workforce planning for Wisconsin state government (2019), is defined as a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain in the employment of an organization by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs. Firms' productivity refers to the ability of an organization to keep its employees. In the light of the above, retention becomes a strategy rather than an outcome. Firms' productivity can be represented by simple statistics (for example, a retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization kept 80% of its employees in a given period). Literature works on firms' productivity clearly explain that employees who are satisfied and happy with their jobs have a stronger loyalty to do a good job and look forward to improving the organizations' customer satisfaction and expectation.

According to Cortina, Magley, Williams and Langhout (2001), employees who are satisfied have higher intentions of sticking with their organization, which results in a reduced turnover rate while employees who feel that co-workers' behaviours are off-putting or rude often consider taking a job elsewhere. Anderson and Pearson (2019) posit that John Hopkins University Professor and co-founder of the schools' civility project explains that small indignities and minor cruelties take a toll "good etiquette" not only retains your employees, it attracts new ones as well. In terms of the workplace, the inputs for the system include the antecedents (causes or triggers). From the organizational perspective, inputs for the system include structural, environmental, and outlying variables such as media and technology. In terms of the individual perspective, antecedents include variables such as influence (power of job/boss), lack of assertiveness, personality, and response to anger. The processes include acts of workplace incivility including interpersonal relationships (Alexander-Snow, 2014).

Mostellar, Nave and Miech (2016) stated that outcomes of workplace incivility that impact individuals include productivity, health, relationships, and attitudes toward work and the outcomes to the organization include financial, administrative, and environmental impacts. Antecedents for Workers Antecedents are variables that facilitate workplace incivility. These variables can be categorized as enablers, motivators, and triggers. According to Salin (2021), enablers are "...factors that provide fertile soil..." for behavior that is not civil. Motivators are "...circumstances that can actually make it rewarding to harass others in the workplace." Triggers are sometimes referred to as precipitating processes and are "...typically related to changes of the status quo..." (p. 1224). These have been classified as enablers, motivators, and triggers. Enablers can be actions and roles of the instigator. Actions can include response to rage, fear, and anger (Gardner & Johnson, 2019).

Miles, Dagley and Yau (2019) stated that roles can include status, role requirements, workload, and pressures for productivity. Triggers and motivating factors provide fuel to enable incivility. Both actions and roles can directly enable acts of workplace incivility. The two major categories of motivators include beliefs and personality. Beliefs include expected benefits,



perceived job insecurity, dissatisfaction, attitudes about aggression, and low perceived cost for inappropriate behaviors. Personality is also a motivator for incivility. Type A personality, trait aggression, hostility, power, ego, and internal competition are all personality traits that can motivate uncivil behavior.

Additionally, lack of assertiveness of leaders has been shown to be a motivator of uncivil behaviors. While actions impact enabling, they also are triggers of uncivil behaviors. Response to rage, fear, and anger are all actions that can be viewed as triggers. In contrast, lack of communication is another action that triggers uncivil behavior. Other triggers identified in the literature include the ability, environment, and demographics. Leaders who are less competent or lack knowledge can be triggered to enable uncivil behavior. Additionally, when an individual is viewed as less competent, incivility increases (i.e., they are more likely to be picked on) (Denton, 2010).

Miles, Dagley and Yau (2019) also stated that Outcomes for Workers Outcomes of incivility on workers can be viewed in terms of the individual, interpersonal relationships, and productivity. In terms of the individual, attitudes toward work, effort, and health will be presented. Interpersonal relationships will present a discussion of subordinates, peers, supervisors, and overall employee engagement. Productivity will include the constructs of job performance, innovation/creativity, and learning. Finally, job loss and income loss will be presented as a consequence of lowered productivity. These have been classified as attitudes toward work, health, interpersonal outcomes, and productivity. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career salience, motivation, poor attitude, morale, lower confidence, and lower self-efficacy are all attitudes that have been shown to relate to work and impact incivility.

One of the most widely cited constructs was job satisfaction. As incivility rose, job satisfaction declined. Career salience is “the importance that an individual places on the role of work and career, compared to that of other life roles” (Maranzano, Raskin, Orlando, & Omya, 2019). As a result of incivility, individuals placed less importance on the role of work and more importance on other roles in their lives. The effort the employees put forth, or the lack thereof, can be viewed in terms of job withdrawal, willingness to work, absenteeism, and loss of time on the job. Withdrawal is specifically cited in numerous articles as an outcome of incivility in the workplace. Buhler (2020) stated that “half of the victims of workplace incivility responded by decreasing their efforts on the job” (p.6). The workers’ mental and physical health have been shown to be impacted by incivility (Denton, 2010).

The menace of workplace bullying has attracted significant attention in the modernised economies of the world resulting in decisive legislations being enacted to combat it. The first legislation against workplace bullying, “Victimisation at Work” (1993), was passed in Sweden, after Leymann (Workplace Bullying Institute, n.d.), a psychiatrist, established a correlation between work and trauma amongst clinical patients. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the foremost international agency in the establishment of universal standard work practices does not expressly mention workplace bullying under the declaration of fundamental principles and rights at work (1998). However, in 2003, a tripartite body of 36 experts from the government, employers and workers of member countries convened to review a draft and develop a code of practice on what it termed “Violence and Stress at Work in Service: A Threat to Productivity and Decent Work” (ILO, 2003).



The meeting established proactive guidelines which member countries could reproduce and adopt in measuring and tackling violence in their local establishments using Occupational Safety and Health Management systems. Under this code, ILO (2003) defined violence as “any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of his or her work” (p. 4). The code emphasised the need for collation and assessment of national data from various stakeholders in different countries on identified cases of violence. On her part, Nigeria has the Factory Act (1990) which safeguards employees from occupational hazards of a physical nature in factory-designated premises.

The Employee Compensation Act (2010) goes further to specify compensation due to employees physically disabled in the course of employment and to the families of those fatally injured. Compensation also exists for mental stress that may arise out of and in the course of an employee’s employment. Namie (2003) argued that workplace bullying is three times more widespread compared to more recognised illegal acts such as sexual harassment, illegal discrimination and harassment but the fact that it is not illegal under the American labour statute makes it easy to ignore.

Theoretical Framework

Organisational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2016) holds that in order to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived organisational support would increase employees’ felt obligation to help the organisation reach its objectives, their affective commitment to the organisation and their expectation that improved performance would be rewarded. Behavioural outcomes of perceived organisational support would include increases in in-role and extra-role performance and decreases in stress and withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover.

Blau (1964), in his social exchange theory, held that individuals consider potential reward and risks of social relationships and that all human relationships are shaped by using a subjective reward-cost analysis and the comparison of alternatives. He maintained that someone who gives much will expect to get at least the same amount back from others and in return, persons that receive a lot from others will be under pressure to give much back to them.

Anderson and Pearson (1999) propounded spiral theory of incivility which reveals that workplace incivility has the potential to spiral with a straight point to a tipping point. The spiral begins at the starting point where an uncivil act is perceived and recognized as uncivil by an individual due to violated norms or unacceptable conduct. Anderson and Pearson noted that it is not the intent of the instigator that matters, but the perceptions of the target. The victim’s reaction is either desire for revenge triggered by a negative effect or a decision to depart from the organization which could take place at any point throughout the spiral. The desire to revenge is likely to result in an act of incivility in response to the incivility experienced. As the spiral continues, a tipping point due to loss of face or insult, anger which could trigger intentional intense behaviours such as violence and aggression. The incivility spiral is an epidemic that could continue until forgiveness is asked, given, justice restored or one of the parties resigns.



Moreover, incivility corrodes organisational culture—employees who are on the receiving end will respond in ways that are costly to their organisations. Workplace incivility is a low intensity deviant behaviour that violates workplace norms for mutual respect and may or may not be intended to harm the target. Low intensity connotes verbal rather than physical, passive rather than active, and indirect rather than direct actions. Increasing numbers of researchers are paying attention to the causes and consequences of workplace incivility. Due to both the current interest and the practical limitations of conducting field research in the area of management, the majority of works related to workplace incivility are theoretical. Workplace incivility on its own has been a pervasive construct that has kept decreasing the moral and motivation of employees. Similarly, Shim and Chang (2016) found positive relationships between workplace incivility of supervisors and intent to quit the organization. Gardner and Johnson (2017) argued that an individual who perceives greater support from their employing organisation would be more likely to feel obligated to “repay” the organisation irrespective of perceived incivility.

One way for an individual to repay the organisation is through continued participation. Gardner and Johnson (2017) argued that perceptions of support would encourage the adoption of organisational membership as an important part of an employee’s self-identity. Thus, individuals perceiving greater support would be less likely to seek alternative employment or to leave the organisation. Such arguments are conceptually consistent with an inducements-contributions framework of voluntary turnover which Gardner and Johnson (2017) further stated that serves as the foundation of much of the contemporary turnover theory. However, the present researchers argue that this may not explain the job immobility of a typical Nigerian worker in the current job scarcity saga.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the survey research method which brings the researcher into direct contact with respondents in their natural settings. The use of a qualitative approach assists in exploring a subjective term such as workplace bullying (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Descriptive survey research design was also used to examine Workplace Incivility and Firms’ Productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from Governmental Enterprises. The population of the study was 609 employees of the selected tertiary institutions in Delta State, @ Nigeria.

The Taro-Yemane formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 176 out of the population of 306 employees. A sample is the set of people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling; the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study. Structured questionnaire titled “Workplace Incivility and Firms’ Productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from Governmental Enterprises Questionnaire (WPIFPQ)” was used to obtain information from respondents. The Questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section “A” and Section “B”. Section “A” contained information on socio-demographic characteristics while section “B” contained information on Workplace Incivility and Firms’ Productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from Governmental Enterprises.

The data collected was cross-checked for entering error and was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The results obtained were presented in frequency tables with their percentages and comments. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from employees' of three selected government institutions in Delta State,



Nigeria (College of Education Warri, College of Technical Education, Asaba and Delta State University of Science of Technology, Ozoro). The techniques employed in analyzing the data were descriptive statistics and ordinal least square.

RESULTS

Table 1: The Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent teachers

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	40	22.7
Female	136	77.3
Marital Status		
Single	92	52.3
Married	79	44.9
Others (please specify)	5	2.8
Religion		
Christianity	136	77.3
Islam	40	22.7
Age		
Less than 25-50 years	92	52.3
51-55 years	79	44.9
Above 55 years	5	2.8

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 1 shows that 40 (22.7%) of the respondents who participated in this study were males while 136 (77.3%) of the respondents were females. The table also indicates that 92 (52.3%) of the respondents were singles, 79 (44.9%) were married, while the minority of the respondents, 5 (2.8%), were others (widows and separated). This implies that the majority of the respondents were single females. The table also indicates that 136 (77.3%) of the respondents were Christians while 40 (22.73%) of the respondents were Muslims. This implies that the majority of the respondents were Christians.

Table 1 further shows that 92 (52.3%) of the respondents who participated in this study were within the age bracket of less than 25-50 years, 79 (44.9%) of the respondents who participated in this study were within the age bracket of 51-55 years, while 5 (2.8%) of the respondents who participated in this study were above 55 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of less than 25-50 years.

**Table 2: The effects of discrimination on firms' productivity**

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
Costly lawsuits and damages against the company	82(46.6)	89(50.6)	4(2.3)	1(0.6)	2.84	Agreed
Absenteeism of staff resulting to decreased company productivity	92(52.3)	78(44.3)	4(2.3)	2(1.1)	2.76	Agreed
Loss of profits as result of lack of commitment of staff	89(50.6)	82(46.6)	1(0.6)	4(2.3)	3.71	Agreed
Negative behaviours such as violence and destruction of companies properties	2(1.1)	1(0.6)	99(56.25)	74(42.1)	3.88	Agreed
Decreased productivity	64(36.4)	110(62.5)	1(0.6)	1(0.6)	3.67	Agreed
High costs of recruitment and training	82(46.6)	91(51.7)	2(1.1)	1(0.6)	2.76	Agreed

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that the factors as indicated in the above table are the effects of discrimination on firms' productivity, as indicated in items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 in the table above. The potential effects of discrimination are disempowerment, low self-esteem and self-confidence, marginalization, restricted opportunities, unemployment, lack of social cohesion, negative behaviours such as violence or criminality, and loss of rights. It can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression as well as physical problems including stomach aches, headaches and a rapid heartbeat. Racial inequities at work can also result in decreased workplace productivity. Other effects of discrimination in the workplace are loss of knowledge and highly experienced and skilled staff, high costs of recruitment and training, loss of productivity in workplaces and levels of job satisfaction.

Table 3: Responses on the effects of sexual harassment on firms' productivity

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
Employees suffer from absenteeism resulting to decreased company productivity	92(52.3)	81(46.0)	2(1.1)	1(0.6)	3.66	Agreed
Employees suffer from low morale resulting to decreased company productivity	72(40.9)	102(58.0)	1(0.6)	1(0.6)	3.92	Agreed
Employees suffer from gossip, antagonism resulting to decreased company productivity	1(0.6)	3(1.7)	98(55.7)	74(42.0)	3.83	Agreed
Employees suffer from tension and anxiety resulting to decreased company productivity	2(1.1)	1(0.6)	53(30.1)	120(68.2)	3.70	Agreed



Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the factors, as indicated in the above table, are the effects of sexual harassment on firms' productivity, as indicated in items 7, 8, 9 and 10 in Table 3 above. The effects of sexual harassment on firms' productivity are: decreased company productivity, employees suffer from absenteeism, low morale, gossip, antagonism, tension, and anxiety as a result of the hatred caused by harassment. Potential employees might be discouraged from working for a firm with racial prejudice in the workplace, while existing employees may experience a disutility from working in such an environment. Firms might then experience a smaller pool of applicants and a decline in productivity.

Table 4: Responses on how bullying affect workplace incivility and firms productivity

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
Disturbed relationships with co-workers resulting to decreased company productivity	43(24.4)	130(73.9)	2(1.1)	1(0.6)	2.84	Agreed
Decreased ability to function at work resulting to decreased company productivity	32(18.2)	141(80.1)	2(1.1)	3.92	Agreed	3.92
Increased absenteeism resulting to decreased company productivity	3(1.7)	1(0.6)	63(35.8)	3.83	Agreed	3.83
Feelings of anxiety and depression resulting to decreased company productivity	102(58.0)	72(40.9)	1(0.6)	3.70	Agreed	3.70
low self-esteem	68(38.6)	101(57.4)	1(0.6)	6(3.4)	2.76	Agreed

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

The above table shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that the factors, as indicated in the above table, are the effects of bullying on firms' productivity, as indicated in items 7, 8, 9 and 10 in Table 4 above. Workplace bullying can contribute to increased stress, low self-esteem, and feelings of anxiety and depression. Emotional problems resulting from violent incidents include self doubt, depression, fear, post traumatic stress syndrome, loss of sleep, irritability, disturbed relationships with family, friends and co-workers, decreased ability to function at work, and increased absenteeism.

**Table 5: Least Square Results**

<i>Regression Statistics</i>									
Multiple R	0.940634								
R Square	0.884793								
Adjusted R	0.769585								
Std. Error	4.082483								
Obs.	3								
<i>ANOVA</i>									
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>				
Regression	1	128	128	7.68	0.22046				
Residual	1	16.66667	16.6666						
Total	2	144.6667							
	<i>Coefficien</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-val</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Intercept	6.19047	6.19047	4.054616	1.5267	0.3691	-45.3283	57.70925	-45.3283	57.70925
14	1.14285	1.14285	0.412393	2.7712	0.2204	-4.09709	6.382808	-4.09709	6.382808
<i>Residual Output</i>									
<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Predicted</i>	<i>Residuals</i>							
1	24.47619	-0.47619							
2	11.90476	3.095238							
3	9.619048	-2.61905							

The results revealed that discrimination has a significant negative effect on firms' productivity since multiple R=0.940634, R-Square=0.884793. Adjusted R-Square=0.769585 and significance F (0.220463), Probability Value of 0.369154 and 0.220463 are less than 0.05. It therefore implies that discrimination has a significant negative effect on firms' productivity.

**Table 6: OLS Results**

<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.981981							
R Square	0.964286							
Adjusted R	0.928571							
Std. Error	0.707107							
Obs.	3							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>			
Regression	1	13.5	13.5	27	0.121038			
Residual	1	0.5	0.5					
Total	2	14						
<i>Coefficien</i>								
	<i>t</i>	<i>Std. Err</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-val</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Intercept	4.25	2.48746	1.7085	0.3371	-27.3563	35.8562	-27.3563	35.85629
2	1.125	0.21650	5.1961	0.1210	-1.62597	3.87597	-1.62597	3.875974
<i>Residual output</i>								
<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Predicted</i>	<i>Residual</i>						
1	15.5	-0.5						
2	15.5	0.5						
3	20	0						

The result signifies that sexual harassment has a significant negative effect on firms' productivity since multiple R=0.981981, R-Square=0.964286. Adjusted R-Square=0.928571 and significance F (0.121038), Probability Values of 0.33711 and 0.121038 are less than 0.05. It therefore implies that sexual harassment has a significant negative effect on firms' productivity.

**Table 7: OLS Results**

<i>Regression Statistics</i>										
Multiple R	0.89331									
R Square	0.798002									
Adjusted R	0.596005									
Std. Error	4.770578									
Obs.	3									
<i>ANOVA</i>										
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>					
Regression	1	89.9082	89.908	3.9505	0.296754					
Residual	1	22.7584	22.758							
Total	2	112.666								
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std Errr</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-val</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>		
Intercept	8.244648	4.24567	1.9418	0.3027	-45.7018	62.1910	-45.7018	62.19109		
10	0.642202	0.32310	1.9875	0.2967	-3.46323	4.74763	-3.46323	4.747631		
<i>Residual output</i>										
<i>Observation</i>	<i>Predicted</i>	<i>Residual</i>								
1	22.37309	-0.37309								
2	11.45566	3.54434								
3	10.17125	-3.17125								

The result in Table 7 signifies that poor organizational culture characterized with bullying as a moderating factor does significantly affect the relationship between workplace incivility and firms' productivity since multiple R=0.89331, R-Square=0.798002. Adjusted R-Square=0.596005 and significance F (0.296754), Probability Values of 0.302741 and 0.296754 are less than 0.05. It therefore implies that poor organizational culture characterized with bullying as a moderating factor does significantly affect the relationship between workplace incivility and firms' productivity.

The findings are not in line with the work of Hina (2019) who sought to establish the impact of workplace incivility in public organizations on customer satisfaction. Their findings indicated that work related incivility and customer related incivility are negatively correlated



with customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the study correlates with the finding of Smith, Andrusyszyn, and Spence (2019); they seek to find out the effects of workplace incivility and empowerment on newly-graduated nurses' organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous literature has many of the individual variables but does not provide a clear view of how all the variables integrate within workplace incivility, with workplace incivility being on the rise. Some theories and models of turnover intention were reviewed and the empirical studies indicated that turnover intention has not been much researched in the African context unlike what it is in the Western world. This study examined whether workplace incivility affects firms' productivity in Nigeria with evidence from governmental tertiary institutions. The results indicated that discrimination and sexual harassment have significant effects on firms' productivity. It was also revealed that organizational culture served as a moderating factor affecting firms' productivity.

Based on the findings, the study concluded that workplace incivility affects firms' productivity. It was recommended among others that the management of governmental tertiary institutions need to protect workers against discrimination and encourage them to respect each other's differences in order to reduce labour turnover and increase employees' retention in the organization, as well as ensuring that policies against discrimination are enacted and enforced; allegations of discrimination need to be fully investigated and handed over to employees' disciplinary committee if any exist for appropriate actions.

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