Influence Of Incivility on Counterproductive Work Behaviour at The Workplace: In the Occurrence of Emotional Dissonance and Psychological Capital

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Abstract

It has been hypothesized previously that incivility has several negative consequences on employee outcomes and it has been observed due to incivility employees and organizations are seriously victimized. Thus, little is known about how emotions are affected by workplace incivility so the present study is going to examine the impact of workplace incivility on counterproductive work behaviour in the presence of psychological capital as moderator and emotional dissonance as mediator. Time lagged longitudinal research has been conducted therefore, 259 employees were approached from the private sector and a convenient non-probability sampling technique has been used to distribute self-administered questionnaires. Results of this study depicted a positive relationship between incivility with emotional dissonance and counterproductive work behaviour and negatively related with psychological capital, furthermore study shows psychological capital is required to refrain from the negative reaction of incivility to overcome stress. Research limitations and potential directions for future researchers are also discussed, to sum up, this study.

Keywords: Workplace incivility, psychological capital, emotional dissonance, counterproductive work behaviour.

Introduction

Previous work on incivility focuses on individual and organizational relevant antecedents of incivility and did not focus much on its outcomes Lim, Cortina & Magley (2008). Bateman (2015) established that when individuals encounter incivility in the workplace, it affects their different attitudes and behaviors thus generating unpleasant cognitive, behavioral, affective and attitudinal responses. In this line of reasoning, the most commonly studied affective outcomes include stressful situations and depression (Lim & Lee, 2011). Research claims that, regardless of the origin of incivility, it yields unfavorable outcomes for individuals and organizations (Sliter, Sliter & Jex, 2012). For instance, it has been found in past research that rude and discourteous behavior (uncivil treatment) results in lessoning creativity (Sliter et al., 2010).

Emotional dissonance

Emotional dissonance is revealing those emotions which are not felt in actuality according to a specific situation (Zapf, 2002), it initiates conflict between person role expectations and emotional display required in the workplace (Abraham, 1998; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Emotional dissonance has been conceived in several different ways in the literature on emotional labor. Some authors consider emotional dissonance as a consequent state which emerges as a result of emotional labor; for example, when employees display emotions as a part of their job requirement which does not match with their inner felt emotions (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). Recently, Mishra & Kumar (2016), further studied the inter-relationship of emotional dissonance, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention with the buffering effect of perceived organizational support and mediating effect of emotional exhaustion and emotional dissonance and focused on diminishing the negative costs of emotional dissonance at workplace.

Psychological capital

Psychological capital is derived from positive organizational behaviour (Luthans, 2002a). This construct is built on the grounds of theory and research from positive psychology (Sheldon & King, 2001) and is practised in the workplace (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) as a positive psychological resource. It is connected with individual strength and how much they are adept to develop and thrive (Luthans, et al., 2008). The construct of psychological capital is significantly interpreted as 'who you are and what you can become" about positive personal development (Luthans & Avolio, 2006). Luthans, et al., (2007) introduced a psychological capital that is composed of four constructs self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism.

At the individual level, psychological capital is taken as a psychological resource that enhances growth and performance through its worthy positive states (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Li, 2005). Further, psychological capital is found to have a positive influence on employee motivation (Stajkovic, 2003), creative performance (Sweetman et all, 2011) positive workplace attitudes and performance outcomes. (Avey, et al., 2009).

Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Due to the rise in negative organizational behaviour research, there is increased attention being devoted to negative work behaviours such as counterwork behaviours (CWB) Sulea et al., 2012). It is named under several different constructs such as aggression, interpersonal conflict, sabotage, theft and inert acts (Fox et al.,2001). Counter work behaviour (employee deviance and employee deviance) is defined by (Robinson and Bennett, 1995) as employee deviance; voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms and threatens the wellbeing of the organization, and its members, or both and Organizational deviance is defined as acts directed against the company or its system.

Counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) are voluntary employee behaviours that are viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests, violate significant organizational norms, and threaten the well-being of the organization or its members, examples include theft, withholding effort, interpersonal aggression and reduced poor attendance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Hobfoll's (1988;1989) conservation of resources theory states that individuals struggle to obtain, preserve, protect, and increase valued resources and minimize any threats against resource loss. According to Hobfoll (2001), any individual feels stress when resources are threatened with loss, actually lost and where individuals fail to gain sufficient resources following major resource investment" (p.341, 342). This conservation process consists of two parallel mechanisms accumulation and protection. The accumulation mechanism is defined as a means through which employees consume their resources to regulate their behaviours and gain control over the environment to build up their resources to meet their needs (Hobfoll, 2002). The protection mechanism emphasized an individual's capacity to defend, guard and prevent resource losses which include primary and secondary resource loss. COR lens manifests how individuals and organizations both are expected to obstruct by the stressful state of affairs, what those stressful situations are and how they both perform to return, save and protect their resources (Westman et al., 2004).

Relationship between Workplace Incivility and Counterproductive Work Behaviour

The rationale of this study is to analyse the impact of workplace incivility on counterproductive work behaviour by utilizing the gaps identified by Li, et al. (2016) based on the conservation of resources theory by Hobfoll (1989). Mistreatment like incivility acts as a workplace stressor; in the presence of enduring (incivility) thus it unfolds difficult to hold, retain and protect resources, therefore, individuals identify net loss of valued resources. To reduce loss of resources, individuals make effort to engross coping by investing further resources but when they fail to gain them; They start depleting valuable resources and it leads to increased counterproductive work behaviour. It happens because they do not have residual resources for their protection that safeguard the negative effect of the stressor. So, it is postulated that incivility ultimately leads to high counterproductive work behaviour and makes employees less productive and causes deviance from the workplace. Based on the above support, it is thus hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: Incivility is positively related to counterproductive work behaviour.

Relationship between Emotional Dissonance and Counterproductive Work Behaviour

It is speculated by using the Conservation of resource theory individuals make effort to protect, retain and build resources; individuals try to conserve their valuable resources but emotional dissonance is delaying this resource building; resources of individuals during faking emotional displays get depleted with the addition of ambiguity that emotional dissonance is bringing up. Thus, individuals are likely to face the threat of resource loss and to avoid resource loss individuals make an effort to engage in coping strategies. But when there are no coping resources available individuals encounter actual resource loss in the form of increased emotional dissonance. Furthermore, this stressful situation leads employees towards counterproductive work behaviour; As individuals deviate from the actual path of getting productive at the workplace and due to resource loss and conflict between actual and fake emotional displays individuals will get into a stressful situation and finally leads towards counter work behaviour. Thus, individuals with high emotional dissonance will be high towards CWB and those who are less in emotional dissonance would have less in CWB so based on the above support, it is thus hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional dissonance is positively related to counterproductive work behaviour.

Relationship between Workplace Incivility and Emotional Dissonance

Previous research by diverse scholars has recognized the relationship between observed incivility and emotional reactions (Reich and Hershcovis, 2015). As individuals react differently and generate different emotional responses due to workplace stressors (Porath & Pearson, 2012). Yet, such an association between workplace incivility and emotional dissonance is not explored by scholars. Also, this limited existing literature on emotional responses to incivility is recognized by scholars and this turmoil is required to examine other emotional responses employees engage in the workplace owing to perceived or experienced incivility (Sguera et al., 2016). By using the conservation of resource theory Hobfoll, (1988), the current study speculates that individuals owing to incivility (stressor) will accustomed to resource loss threats, in addition, their resources will get depleted because initially, individuals are unable to recognize the stressful situation to minimize this stressor, moreover, individuals either accept the stressful aspect and show actual emotions or in another case might ignore the stressor and show fake emotion that is emotional dissonance. Furthermore, individuals due to constant exposure to stressors will have to face constant resource loss. Thus, resources for coping with the inner feelings and displayed feelings due to incivility will come into conflict and cause resource depletion. Thus, incivility will result in increased emotional dissonance in employees. Thus, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Workplace incivility is positively related to emotional dissonance

Emotional Dissonance as a mediator in the relationship between Workplace Incivility and Employee Outcome (Counterproductive Work Behaviour)

The current study manifests that incivility brings negative emotions that further affect behavioural responses in individuals (Porath & Pearson, 2012). Moreover, in past literature, emotional reactions to counter workplace incivility also examined a few mediators to explain the underlying process through which incivility translates into unfavorable outcomes. These mediators include emotional exhaustion (Jaarsveld et al., 2010), optimism and emotionality (Bunk & Magley, 2013). Yet, emotional dissonance has not been examined as an underlying process between incivility and

outcomes (Ricciotti, 2016).

Thus, the newness of the study is the integration of emotional dissonance as a mediator in linking the mechanism between incivility and outcome (CWB). Furthermore, Welbournae & Sariol (2016) have strongly advocated considering emotional reaction as a causal mechanism between experienced incivility and outcomes and finding out what are the consequences of incivility on an individual's emotions. According to the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988) whenever employees experience incivility at the workplace it would be a stressful situation and resources get diminished. To manage such an emotionally demanding situation of workplace incivility employees consume emotional energies by altering their emotions. Thus, emotional dissonance would occur because employees will not able to recognize, either to show actual emotions which are against organizational demand or express fake unfelt emotions.

Moreover, research on emotional dissonance revealed that a weak relationship with the organization leads to emotional dissonance because these employees do not adopt the organizational roles genuinely and consider the performance of these roles as a threat to their identity and express fake emotions promoting emotional dissonance (Mishra & Bhatnagar, 2010). Connecting the literature on incivility and emotional dissonance, it is stated that when employees get victimized by uncivil treatment at work they feel emotionally abused which creates emotional dissonance in them as these employees feel betrayed and do not truly reveal the inner negative emotions felt by them and display emotions only which are required by the organizational norms thus creating emotional dissonance which further leads to counterproductive work behaviour; Therefore, emotional dissonance become emotional response and it further affects the employee behavioural responses in the form of increased CWBs.

Thus, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: Emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and counterproductive work behaviour.

The Moderating Role of Psychological Capital in The Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Emotional Dissonance

Avery et al., (2009) argued that psychological capital is a personal resource that can hold back stress and anxiety, thus it seems meaningful that employees who are high on psychological capital are more confident and possess a positive attitude towards job-related challenges. Moreover, individuals having positive emotions and high psychological capital are better capable of dealing with stress (Wiegert, 2016). Thus present study based on COR theory (Hobfoll,1988) claims that resources are the core components of an individual and psychological capital would serve as a resource bank and used as an alleviating factor while resources get depleted in presence of the workplace stressor like incivility, thus individuals who are high in psychological capital are better equipped to deal with stressful and demanding work situations, and thus ample resource availability will not easily develop negative emotions in the form of emotional dissonance, in other words, individuals high on psychological capital will not be largely affected by incivility as they can cope with it through their resource, and they do not need to fake their emotions. Thus, psychological capital being a personal resource would result in less resource depletion and cause less emotional dissonance. Thus, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 5: Psychological capital moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and emotional dissonance; such that this positive relationship will be weaker when psychological capital is high.
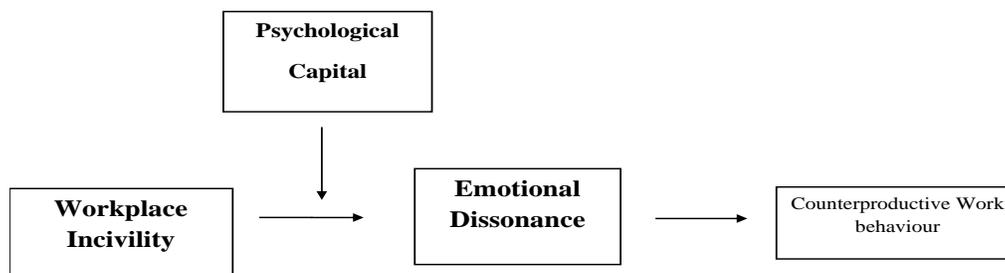
Research Model

Fig 1: Research model depicting the direct impact of workplace incivility on the outcome (counter work behaviour), moderating role of psychological capital and mediating role of emotional dissonance

Figure 1: Research model

Methodology

Research Design

The design of this study is quantitative research and adopted a time-lagged longitudinal design in which sample respondents were approached at different measurement points with appropriate time lags with independent measures. Whereby self, as well as peer-rated data, were gathered through structured questionnaires. Data was collected at three-time intervals i.e., time one and time two and time three. At the time one independent variable (workplace incivility) and moderator (psychological capital) were measured, at time two mediator (emotional dissonance) was tapped and at time 3 interval counterproductive work behaviour (dependent variable) questionnaires were distributed to peers for dependent variables (CWB).

Population

Data collection for the current research study was accomplished from employees of the service sector working in private organizations. The reason for choosing diverse groups and sectors such as banking, telecom and educational institutions corroborate the findings of this study to a diverse sample.

Sampling Size and Technique

Current research study employed time-lagged longitudinal research was conducted therefore the sample size was 259, and 400 questionnaires were distributed out of which 259 because 101 questionnaires were not usable because they lack information and were also not properly filled. A convenient non-probability sampling technique was used to distribute self-administered questionnaires.

Data Collection Methods

Statistical data gathering was thru with aid of a survey method/questionnaire as a research tool. A cover letter was dispatched with the questionnaire that described the aim along with the scope of present the study. It guaranteed the protected anonymity of the respondents concerning their feedback and it also appeal to them about their deliberate participation. Initial reliability of the measuring instrument was done through pilot testing.

Measures

Workplace incivility.

Workplace incivility was measured by using a 7-item scale at time 1 developed by Cortina et al., (2001). Sample item included "Put you down or was condescending to you?" Respondents rated their responses on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= never to 7= Always. The scale had internal reliability of .95 in current studies.

Emotional dissonance.

Emotional dissonance was measured at time 2 by incorporating the 5-item scale established by Zapf et al., (2000). Example items are "During your work, how often do you have to suppress your feelings (e.g., irritation) to give a 'neutral' impression?". Responses were measured with a 7-point Likert scale 1 = never and 7 = always. The scale had internal consistency reliability of .92

Psychological capital.

Psychological capital was also measured at time 1, by using 12 item scale by Luthans et al., (2007). Examples of items include "I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management". Respondents reported their

answers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly agree, 2= slightly agree, 3=neutral, 4= slightly disagree and 5= strongly disagree. The scale had a reliability of .96.

Counterproductive Work Behaviour.

CWB was measured at time 3 by peer rating, using 14 items scale of organizational deviance by Aquino et.al., (1999) Samples of these items include 'Intentionally arrived late for work, 'Made unauthorized use of the organizational property. Respondents reported their answers on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= never, 2= Once in a while, 3= once a month or less 4= a few times a month, 5= once a week, 6= a few times a week and 7= every day. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the scale was .95.

Results

In this section table, 1 demonstrates the standard deviations (SD), means, correlations and reliability of the variables of the study. The means for variables comprised of workplace incivility T1 is (M = 2.62, SD = 1.45), psychological capital T1 (M = 3.69, SD = 1.10), emotional dissonance T2 (M = 2.43, SD = 1.37) and counterproductive work behaviour T3 (M = 2.08, SD = 1.02). The means for variables comprised of workplace incivility T1 is (M = 2.62, SD = 1.45), psychological capital T1 (M = 3.69, SD = 1.10), emotional dissonance T2 (M = 2.43, SD = 1.37) and counterproductive work behaviour T3 (M = 2.08, SD = 1.02). The bivariate correlation reflects that workplace incivility T1 has negative correlation to psychological capital T1 (r = -.56, p < .01), strong positive to emotional dissonance (r = .56, p < .01) T2 and also positive to Counter productive work behaviour (r =.58, p < .01). Psychological Capital T1 is significantly negatively correlated to emotional dissonance T2 (r = -.59 p<.01) and Counterproductive work behaviour T3 (-.47, p< .01) and emotional T2 dissonance is positively related to CWB (r =.52, p< .01).

Table 1: Mean, SD, Correlation and alpha Reliability

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Total tenure	5.41	4.41					
Incivility	2.62	1.45	.23**	(.95)			
Psy Cap	3.69	1.10	-.22**	-.56**	(.96)		
ED	2.43	1.37	.22**	.56**	-.59**	(.92)	
CWB	2.08	1.02	.04**	.58**	-.47**	.52**	(.95)

Results for Moderated Mediation using Bootstrapping

Table2: results of Moderated Mediation using boots strapping analysis

Sr No	Predictor	R	R²	B	SE	T	P
	Emotional Dissonance						
	Step-1	.69	.47				
1	Constant			2.16	.10	20.30	.00
2	INCIVILITY			.33	.05	6.46	.00
3	PCAP			-.26	.08	-3.29	.01
4	INCIVILITY*PCAP			-.22	.04	-5.02	.00
	Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)						
	Step-2	.63	.39				
1	Constant			1.6	.12	.13	.00
2	ED			.22	.04	5.20	.00
3	INCIVILITY			.30	.05	7.26	.00

		Indirect Effect and Significance using the normal distribution			
	PCAP	**Boot Indirect Effects**	**Boot SE**	**Boot LLCI**	**Boot ULCI**
		Conditional Indirect effects at EE= M + - 1 SD			
1	ED -1 SD (-1.10)	.13	.03	.06	.21
2	ED Mean (0.00)	.07	.02	.03	.13
3	ED +1 SD (1.10)	.02	.01	-.01	.06

Note: n= 259. The control variable is only Total Tenure. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Bootstrap sample size=5000. LL=Lower limit, CI= Confidence Interval, UL= Upper Limit.

In this study main effects in addition to moderation and mediation, effects are tested using Preacher and Hayes (2004) robust data analytical techniques. Hypothesis testing was performed with the Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrapping procedure to estimate the main effects, direct and indirect effects related to the hypothesis I to 5. Hypothesis 1-3 predicted the main impact of incivility on counterproductive work behaviour; the main effects of emotional dissonance on counterproductive work behaviour and outcomes: and the direct impacts of workplace incivility on emotional dissonance. According to hypothesis 4 emotional dissonance mediates the link between workplace incivility and counterproductive work behaviour. Hypotheses 5 suggest that psychological capital moderates the link between workplace incivility and emotional dissonance, for instance, these relationships will be weakened in the occasion of high psychological capital and strengthened in the situation of low psychological capital. Table 2 depicts the results for the main effects, mediation and also interaction effects. This study finds full support for all hypotheses, it has found a positive bond between workplace incivility and counterproductive, between workplace incivility and emotional dissonance also amongst emotional dissonance and counterproductive work behaviour. The results show that psychological capital moderates and acts as a buffer between incivility and emotional dissonance as this association will get weaker in case of high psychological capital and finally, emotional dissonance mediated the link between incivility and counterproductive work behaviours. Hence found full support for all hypotheses.

Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between workplace incivility and employee outcome with the mediating role of emotional dissonance and the moderating role of psychological capital. The findings of this study indicated that workplace incivility directly leads to emotional dissonance and counterproductive work behaviour but in the presence of high psychological capital the association between variables starts declining. As supported by previous studies incivility is related to the reciprocation of deviant and counterproductive behaviours (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Penney & Spector, 2005), moreover, previous studies also show that burnout mediates the relationship between customer incivility and employee outcome (van et al., 2010), Consequently, past findings indicated that positive experiences are trait-relevant it shows that individual will activate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses and these reactions are more likely to activate a response based on their personality. This is to further point out that when individuals are confronted with workplace incivility, this situation might activate several emotional, cognitive, and behavioural, similarly in line with these outcomes those individuals high in psychological capital will influence recollection of those positive occurrences therefore stress does not harm on them they leap on low emotional dissonance and less counter productivity from their work would occur thus congruent with previous research (Tett & Burnett, 2003). When all four dimensions of psychological resource capacities work together while supporting each construct simultaneously through filling the deficiencies if found in any constructs (Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Wright, 2005; Avey et al., 2009), and helping the individuals to effectively adjust threat. These psychological resources conduct emotional, cognitive and motivational vitality (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) which aid individuals to lessen the destructive effects of negativity (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Based on these arguments this study projected that when individuals encounter workplace incivility their psychological capital may help them efficiently reduce resource loss and let them cope well with probable stressors and challenges associated with workplace incivility, by this means reducing the impact of detrimental incivility on outcomes. Thus, mentioned past studies support the findings of the current study.

Strengths of Study

This study has several theoretical and methodological strengths. This study is exclusive as it suggests and then examines new and unexplored moderation mechanisms of how and why incivility along with psychological capital disturb an individual's emotion. Explicitly, it argues that employees who are high in psychological capital as an innate trait have the potential to hold less emotional dissonance against workplace incivility, this study showed the underlying mechanism of emotional dissonance between workplace incivility and counterproductive work behaviour. This study by inspecting new dynamics opens a new avenue in incivility literature and enables insight into psychological capital accompanying emotional dissonance. This study offers another distinctive edge as it employed a renowned theoretical pattern in the workplace incivility domain which is the conservation of resource theory as a fundamental theory to support the conceptual basis of the proposed research model relationships. The strong explanations developed to build arguments for hypothesized relationships and the resulting approval of all hypotheses provide an extension of the theory.

Research limitations and future directions

First of all, despite the current study utilizing a research design with longitudinally collected data at more than one-time point, it cannot be classified as a full longitudinal design as all the research model variables were not tapped at all 3 different times points. The sample size (N=259) of the present study is considerably larger but it is still relatively small as well. This is due to the amount of work involved in gaining access to this type of sample and receiving a late response is a major drawback as well as the temporal longitudinal design makes it difficult to access the same employees at three different time intervals. Future researchers would replicate the proposed research model in a newer and developing country's context. Moreover, based on the assumptions of COR it can be proposed that future researchers can examine how workplace incivility depletes other individual resources such as self-identity and self-concept which further creates resource depletion in the form of stress, and psychological resources depletion and affect productivity. Other contextual if examined along incivility and outcomes would be another fruitful avenue for future scholars.

Theoretical contributions

The current research study contributes to this line of investigation on workplace incivility and offers new arguments for theory building and expansion in this domain. This research extends the workplace incivility literature by suggesting novel dynamics through which workplace incivility as a stressor exhibits its deleterious consequences on strains. Specifically, in this study emotional dissonance is a mediator between workplace incivility and outcomes. The above underlying mechanisms have not been examined to date to the best of the researcher's understanding thus this research is unique in the sense that it is examining these particular processes. Thus, the theoretical foundations of COR address the main, mediation and moderation hypothesis of psychological capital between incivility and emotional dissonance and emotional dissonance between workplace incivility and outcome. Hence, the theoretical justifications and the subsequent data collection and analysis build confidence for the suggested relationships and the Conservation of resources theory framework. This research study employs one of the most popular theories in the areas of stress namely Conservation of resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989; 2001; 2002) and to justify the suggested research model relationships.

Managerial implications

Managers who are part of organizations should take potential actions to lessen incidences of maltreatment in the form of incivility to employees. Managers must be assigned the task of establishing, clearly conveying and approving a system of policy guidelines and rules concerning interpersonal behaviour within organizations. There must be equitable and just procedures established utilizing adequate contribution, involvement and agreement of employees at all levels in the organization to tackle and curb incidences of workplace incivility. Official liability procedures should be operational whereby employees despite their position and status are answerable and accountable for their misconduct to concerned authorities and departments.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between workplace incivility and outcome with the mediating role of emotional dissonance and the moderating role of psychological capital. Overall, the results of the study promoted positive support for the notion psychological capital plays against workplace incivility and holding emotions it demonstrated a significant relationship between incivility and outcomes, Employees high in psychological capital help themselves to build resources and create a more favorable environment which is likely to have less impact of incivility on emotional dissonance. Given that such employees are beneficial to an organization's functioning, as they display positive organizational behaviour due to more pressure of psychological capital employees get motivated and employers must aim to address incivility in organizations by reducing its occurrence to decrease the imminent risk of deviance from work.

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