

## Fostering Decent Work: Evaluating Factors Influencing Workplace Incivility in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan

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*Although workplace incivility has been a major research focus for the last 10 to 15 years, higher education institutions have received very little attention from researchers. The focus of this study is on the causes and precursors of incivility in higher education institutions. The general atmosphere as well as the teachers' capacity to instruct are both impacted by the rise in workplace rudeness at educational institutions. Teachers, administration, and students can all exhibit disrespectful and cruel behaviour. In this study, the moderating influence of emotional regulation ability is used to examine the effects of high job expectations, low control, low social support, felt injustice, and perceived job insecurity on workplace incivility. Questionnaires are used to collect data for this quantitative study. The nearly 210 faculty members of Karachi, Pakistan's higher educational institutions were the target population chosen for this study. The collected data was analysed through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using software SmartPLS. High job expectations, little autonomy, little social support, perceived injustice, and perceived job instability all had a significant beneficial impact on workplace civility, according to data we collected and analysed. However, the ability to control one's emotions plays no meaningful role as a moderator between the independent and dependent variables.*

## 1. Introduction

Incivility is defined as unpleasant, haughty, and disregarding behaviour that undermines workplace principles but otherwise seems normal (Cortina et al., 2017). In the current working day, incivility is regarded as a subject that has drawn the attention of numerous researchers worldwide (Cortina, 2008; Lim & Lee, 2011). In contrast to (Paroth & Pearson, 2013), which revealed that 98% of employees in the workplace recognized that they had experienced incivility in their company after approximately 5 years, 71% to 79% of workers accepted that they had faced or instigated incivility in their employment (Cortina, 2008). While (Paroth & Pearson, 2013) found that, after almost 5 years, 98% of employees in the workplace acknowledged having encountered rudeness in their workplace.

Despite its low intensity, rudeness is thought to be a precursor to more significant hostility and unfavourable issues. Although it's not generally seen of as an individual trait, rudeness can occasionally be considered as a product of one's environment and culture. A high level of rudeness can have a lot of negative effects (Lim et al., 2012). Even when job stress is managed, rudeness at work lowers employee job satisfaction and damages their mental health, which eventually lowers the organization's productivity as a whole (Sliter et al., 2012). Pearson et al. (2005) provide numerous examples of how rudeness develops.

From the lowest level of not complimenting co-workers, it may be seen. It can also show itself as gossiping about co-workers, making a mess in the office and leaving it there, failing to fix problems, sending unpleasant emails to co-workers, and claiming credit for other people's efforts. Incivility is often described as low-intensity, unusual behaviour that has no obvious malice in it (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Low job stability and having a lot of extra work to do make faculty and other emotional labours more uncivil, according to (Buhler, 2003).

Numerous studies have also shown that rude behaviour at work reduces employee motivation to stay with the company and lowers overall performance, all of which contribute to the organization's low productivity (Cortina et al., 2001) Work commitment and loyalty decline as workplace incivility rises (Pearson et al., 2005), constructive contact with managers and co-workers' declines, work-life conflict arises, and a sense of injustice is created (Laschinger et al., 2009).

People working in the service industry frequently encounter rudeness because they interact directly with consumers and are required to follow criteria for appropriate emotion expression created by service-oriented firms in all circumstances. Research on impoliteness is expected to continue to develop, according to earlier studies (Chris et al., 2022). The victims and effects of workplace incivility have received the majority of attention in prior studies; the antecedents (triggers) have received far less attention (Torkelson et al, 2022). Incivility is rising and becoming a major problem in Pakistan's educational institutions and organisations. Millennials who are transitioning from their academic to professional stage of life may be negatively impacted by the rise of workplace disrespect at academic institutions. Teachers, students, and administration can all be the catalysts for rude and disrespectful behaviour in a school setting. We must therefore handle this issue (Sood & Kour, 2023).

In this study, the moderating effect of emotional regulation ability will be examined in relation to the influence of some antecedents (high job demands, low control, low social support, perceived injustice, and perceived job insecurity) on uncivil behaviour in higher education institutions of Karachi, Pakistan. Meier et al. (2013) highlight the importance of such studies to recognise and become familiar with the causes of incivility as a basis for developing remedies for workplace incivility.

In this research, the focus is on the impact of work characteristics on incivility with a special emphasis on the role of high job demands, low job control, low social support, perceived injustice, and perceived job insecurity as possible causes of workplace incivility. Moreover, it aims to check whether emotional regulation skills play the role of mediating variables in workplace incivility and these four independent variables, or high job demands, low control, low social support, perceived injustice, and job insecurity. Moreover, the proposed model will also be evaluated for its relevance in higher education institutions of Karachi, Pakistan.

The current study aims to determine the impact of different individual characteristics (like high expectations, lack of autonomy, scarce social support, perceived injustice, or job insecurity) impacting workplace incivility. It further attempts to find out if the sub constructs emotional regulation acts as a mediator between workplace incivility (dependent variable) and these (independent variables). Further, the study examines the importance of the proposed research model in higher education institutions of Karachi, Pakistan.

This study aims to identify the factors that lead to workplace disrespect at higher education facilities in Karachi, Pakistan. In addition, this study only examines the difficulties that the faculty of about 16 higher education institutions in Karachi had as a result of this viral modern-day problem. Moreover, this study is aligning with sustainable development goals that is SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic growth) as it focuses on incivility at workplace, which hinders the development of safe, inclusive and equitable work environments. The study also contributes to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) as workplace incivility has been proven to have negative effects on employees' mental and physical health.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Workplace Incivility**

Workplace incivility has been broadly studied as a low-intensity, deviant behavior marked by a lack of respect for others, which undermines mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). It interrupts workplace harmony and can have organizational consequences. Incivility is particularly alarming in higher education institutions (HEIs) because of the mental demands and multiple roles expected from educators (Unterbrink et al., 2007; Cortina et al., 2017).

### **2.2 Job Demands and Control**

The JDC Model by Karasek, 1979, offers a basic framework in the context of workplace stress and its relation to incivility. As Milner et al., 2016 defined job demands as psychosomatic, emotional, and physical stressors, job control relates to the decision-making

authority of employees and their use of skills. When demands exceed control, employees are prone to stress, fatigue, and burnout, thereby being vulnerable to incivility (Broeck et al., 2013).

### **2.3 Emotional and Psychological Demands in Academia**

Unterbrink et al. (2007) point out that teaching is a very mental-intensive activity and exacerbated with the process of preparation of lessons, grading, and attending to events. Stress accumulates due to high demands with poor resources, which according to COR Theory by Hobfoll (1989), results in stress that leads to burnout followed by the resultant incivility in an organization.

### **2.4 Social Support and Incivility**

Holm et al. (2014) examine incivility as a social phenomenon and its relationship with turnover intentions, job dissatisfaction, and employee well-being. The study draws upon Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that negative social interactions (e.g., incivility) disrupt the reciprocal exchange of respect and support, fostering a toxic environment.

### **2.5 Perceived Organisational Justice and Incivility**

Lilly (2017) utilizes the Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg 1987) to explain why workers may perceive that their bosses have treated them unfairly thereby creating workplace incivility. When employees perceive inequalities in decision-making, there's likely to be retaliatory practices hence a polarized nature of the work environment. Furthermore, Cortina et al. (2013) apply the notion of interpersonal injustice to investigate how sex variables and observed disrespect relate with the well-being at workplace.

### **2.6 Ego Depletion and Incivility**

Rosen et al. (2016) draws on the Ego Depletion Theory by Baumeister et al. (1998) to study how depletion of self-control breeds reactive incivility. The results show that individuals who feel victimized by incivility retaliate with similar forms of incivility resulting from a lack of self-regulation, thus creating an escalatory cycle of nastiness.

### **2.7 Job Insecurity and Stress at Work**

Cuyper et al. (2009) analyze the association of job insecurity with workplace bullying through the lens of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This model describes how perceived employability acts as a moderator in the bullying stress process, and that coping mechanisms are important to buffer against the effects of incivility.

Samnani and Singh (2012) summarize the concept of workplace bullying, which is associated with incivility. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) describe the behaviors that are subtle, including gossiping, failure to address problems, and passive-aggressive behavior. These behaviors fit well within the Behavioral Ethics Theory of Treviño et al. (2006), which discusses how moral disengagement contributes to unethical behaviors such as incivility.

### **2.8 Implications for Higher Education**

Cassum (2018) explains that incivility in nursing academia is complex, being related to teaching quality and institutional benchmarks. This corresponds with findings by Cortina et al. (2017), which have pointed out the often-overlooked organizational costs of incivility.

In an organized synthesis of theoretical concepts such as JDC, COR, Social Exchange, Organizational Justice, Ego Depletion, and Behavioral Ethics, this understanding in the institution can be heightened. From this perspective, the balance of organizational structure, personal actions, and social forces makes up a rather practical insight, offering a point of consideration to reduce the practice of workplace incivility.

## 2.9 Research Hypothesis

Based on above literature survey, following are the research hypothesis.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Workplace rudeness is greatly reduced by high job demands.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: High job demands and workplace rudeness have a significantly favourable connection that is moderated by emotional control skills.*

*H<sub>3</sub>: Lack of job control considerably reduces rudeness at work.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: Low job control and workplace rudeness have a significantly favourable association that is moderated by emotional management skills.*

*H<sub>5</sub>: A lack of social support has a big impact on rudeness at work.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Low social support and workplace incivility have a significantly favourable connection that is moderated by emotional management skills.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: Workplace incivility is significantly positively impacted by perceived injustice.*

*H<sub>8</sub>: The ability to control one's emotions serves as a moderator in the considerably beneficial correlations between perceived injustice and workplace rudeness.*

*H<sub>9</sub>: Workplace civility has been dramatically positively impacted by perceived job instability.*

*H<sub>10</sub>: Perceived job insecurity and workplace rudeness have a significant positive association that emotional control skills can moderate.*

## 3. Methodology

This part discusses the methodology, plan, statistical model, sampling techniques, tools, data, and its collection procedures while taking ethical issues into account. Independent policies are designed to learn more about a variety of things, some of which are unknown. Through the examination of the cross-sectional questionnaire, this study is proposed. Approximately 356 faculty members from higher education institutions in Karachi, Pakistan, provided the information needed to move on.

In order to acquire quantitative data for this study on workplace disrespect, we used a deductive technique to gather information from primary sources. We began with a notion in this study before moving on to a statistical analysis that shows the causal relationship between the independent, dependent, and moderating factors. Statistical data analysis for this research is done through Partial least squares Structural Equation modelling (PLS-SEM) by using SmartPLS that is suitable while dealing with multifaceted models comprising of various constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, PLS-SEM allows simultaneous exploration of all predicted relationships of study (Fazal et al., 2021). Lastly, PLS-EM is widely used in numerous social sciences studies (Atta et al., 2021).

The link between the independent variables (high job demands, low job control, low social support, perceived injustice, and job insecurity) and the dependent variable (workplace incivility) is investigated using a correlational research design (emotional regulation ability). For this investigation, a cross-sectional time horizon is employed.

### 3.1 Population and Sample Size

The research's intended audience consists of academic staff members who hold visiting faculty, lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor positions at Karachi, Pakistan's higher education institutions. Approximately 500 questionnaires were issued in various universities and institutes for this study, and 356 of those were returned. The sample size increased to 210 after data cleaning in SPSS and the removal of univariate and multivariate outliers. Statistical data analysis and hypothesis testing are done using a systematic, uniform questionnaire. 52 items make up the questionnaire utilised in this study, of which 5 are used to identify demographic factors and the remaining 47 are variables.

### 3.2 Data Analysis

### 3.3 Reliability and Validity

**Table No 1: Reliability and Validity**

Statistics of Reliability and Validity					
Construct	Item	Factor Loading	AVE	CB Alpha	CR
Low Job Control	JC1	0.765	0.616	0.895	0.918
	JC2	0.769			
	JC3	0.697			
	JC4	0.744			
	JC5	0.824			
	JC6	0.830			
	JC7	0.851			
High Job Demands	JD1	0.874	0.692	0.888	0.918
	JD2	0.800			
	JD3	0.845			
	JD4	0.836			
	JD5	0.799			
Low social support	SS1	0.865	0.708	0.897	0.924
	SS2	0.859			
	SS3	0.823			
	SS4	0.827			
	SS5	0.832			
Perceived Injustice	PI1	0.822	0.674	0.839	0.892
	PI2	0.801			
	PI3	0.832			
	PI4	0.828			
Job Insecurity	JI1	0.761	0.626	0.851	0.893
	JI2	0.789			
	JI3	0.808			
	JI4	0.806			
	JI5	0.795			
Workplace Incivility	WI1	0.767	0.625	0.880	0.909
	WI2	0.751			
	WI3	0.808			
	WI4	0.813			
	WI5	0.831			
	WI6	0.722			

The items in the above table No 1 that show the validity and dependability of the data under investigation range from 0.69 to 0.85 for the variable low job control, 0.79 to 0.87 for the item of high job demands, 0.82 to 0.86 for the item of low social support, 0.80 to 0.83 for the item of perceived injustice, 0.76 to 0.80 for the factor loadings of the construct job insecurity, and 0 for the factor loading of the dependent variable workplace incivility. The average variance of the study's variables, which ranges from 0.616 to 0.708 and is greater than the cut score of 0.50, demonstrates the converging validity of high job demands, limited control, low social support, felt unfairness, and job insecurity.

### 3.4 Discriminant Validity

Table No 2: Discriminant Validity

	Low Job Control	High Job Demands	Job Insecurity	Perceived Injustice	Low Social Support	Workplace Incivility
JC1	<b>0.765</b>	0.384	0.404	0.490	0.493	0.544
JC2	<b>0.769</b>	0.333	0.361	0.510	0.483	0.519
JC3	<b>0.697</b>	0.274	0.332	0.444	0.494	0.497
JC4	<b>0.744</b>	0.425	0.479	0.550	0.616	0.639
JC5	<b>0.824</b>	0.407	0.545	0.558	0.613	0.641
JC6	<b>0.830</b>	0.346	0.407	0.473	0.596	0.550
JC7	<b>0.851</b>	0.380	0.413	0.556	0.614	0.625
JD1	0.402	<b>0.874</b>	0.224	0.379	0.357	0.450
JD2	0.300	<b>0.800</b>	0.161	0.297	0.298	0.360
JD3	0.408	<b>0.845</b>	0.299	0.381	0.435	0.505
JD4	0.408	<b>0.836</b>	0.335	0.369	0.438	0.477
JD5	0.411	<b>0.799</b>	0.349	0.349	0.419	0.452
JI1	0.360	0.189	<b>0.761</b>	0.355	0.472	0.468
JI2	0.362	0.175	<b>0.789</b>	0.395	0.456	0.463
JI3	0.465	0.291	<b>0.806</b>	0.430	0.518	0.601
JI4	0.460	0.309	<b>0.806</b>	0.391	0.528	0.559
JI5	0.479	0.341	<b>0.795</b>	0.352	0.537	0.512
PI1	0.500	0.341	0.338	<b>0.822</b>	0.460	0.611
PI2	0.500	0.288	0.327	<b>0.801</b>	0.449	0.569
PI3	0.572	0.321	0.452	<b>0.832</b>	0.541	0.637
PI4	0.574	0.449	0.470	<b>0.828</b>	0.566	0.683
SS1	0.623	0.439	0.594	0.567	<b>0.865</b>	0.666
SS2	0.597	0.445	0.577	0.551	<b>0.859</b>	0.670
SS3	0.554	0.361	0.540	0.486	<b>0.823</b>	0.588
SS4	0.616	0.379	0.516	0.503	<b>0.827</b>	0.616
SS5	0.628	0.362	0.441	0.483	<b>0.832</b>	0.590



WI1	0.522	0.360	0.455	0.614	0.529	<b>0.767</b>
WI2	0.531	0.409	0.423	0.587	0.541	<b>0.751</b>
WI3	0.570	0.401	0.582	0.578	0.596	<b>0.808</b>
WI4	0.657	0.444	0.656	0.635	0.679	<b>0.813</b>
WI5	0.604	0.454	0.580	0.615	0.578	<b>0.831</b>
WI6	0.600	0.513	0.423	0.596	0.602	<b>0.772</b>

The above table illustrates the loading of hypotheses item high job demands, low control, low social support, perceived injustice, and job insecurity, emotional regulation ability, and workplace incivility. In comparison to other variables, each item is loaded with the maximum value possible in its own column. When compared to its value in other item columns, each item loads in its own column with a high value.

### 3.5 Correlation

Table No 3: Correlation

Analysis of Correlation						
	Job Control	Job Demand	Job Insecurity	Perceived Injustice	Social Support	Workplace Incivility
Low Job Control	1.000					
High Job Demand	0.469	1.000				
Job Insecurity	0.542	0.335	1.000			
Perceived Injustice	0.656	0.430	0.488	1.000		
Low Social Support	0.717	0.474	0.637	0.617	1.000	
Workplace Incivility	0.737	0.545	0.663	0.764	0.746	1.000

The association between job controls and job demand is 0.469, job controls with job insecurity are 0.542, job controls with perceived injustice are 0.656, job controls with social support are 0.717, and job controls with workplace incivility are 0.737. The power of association between these variables is shown in the above table. Job demand has a 0.335 correlation with job stability, a 0.430 correlation with perceived injustice, a 0.474 correlation with social support, and a 0.545 correlation with workplace incivility.

The correlation between job insecurity and perceived injustice is 0.488, the correlation between job insecurity and social support is 0.637, and the correlation between job insecurity and workplace rudeness is 0.663. The correlation between felt injustice and social support is



0.617, while the correlation between perceived injustice and rudeness at work is 0.764. The correlation between social support and rudeness at work is 0.746. All of the factors in this study have a positive relationship with one another.

### 3.6 Model Summary

**Table No 4: Model Summary**

<b>R Square and Adjusted R Square</b>		
	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Workplace Incivility	0.773	0.767
<b>F value</b>		
Low job Control→ Workplace Incivility	0.057	
High job Demand→ Workplace Incivility	0.066	
Job Insecurity→ Workplace Incivility	0.128	
Perceived Injustice→ Workplace Incivility	0.296	
Low social Support→ Workplace Incivility	0.054	

Above table reveals that the model's R-square value is 0.773, or 77%, while the adjusted R-square value is 0.767, or 76%. F-Square values are also included in this table.

### 3.7 Hypotheses Testing

**Table No 5: Hypotheses Testing**

<b>Testing of Hypotheses</b>		
	T Statistics	P Values
Low job control → Workplace Incivility	2.295	0.022
High job demands → Workplace Incivility	3.106	0.002
Job insecurity→ Workplace Incivility	3.986	0.000
Perceived injustice→ Workplace Incivility	3.852	0.000
Low social support→ Workplace Incivility	2.015	0.044

The following hypotheses are supportive: H1, H3, H5, H7, and H9 based on P values of less than 0.05 for each construct.

### 3.8 Moderating Effect

**Table No 6: Moderating Effect**

<b>Moderating Effect</b>		
	T Statistics	P value
Low job control → ERA→ Workplace Incivility	0.688	0.492
High job demands →ERA→ Workplace Incivility	1.547	0.122
Job insecurity →ERA →Workplace Incivility	0.492	0.687
Perceived injustice →ERA→ Workplace Incivility	0.927	0.354
Low social support → ERA→ Workplace Incivility	0.448	0.654

P value of every construct is greater than 0.05 which make effect of moderator insignificant hence hypotheses H2, H4, H6, H8 and H10 are not supported.

#### 4. Discussion

Job control is defined as a decision-making authority over how a job is carried out at work that is equally distributed between skill choice and decision-making authority (the extent of skills that are used on the work). According to this study, limited job control has an effect on workplace incivility since it increases the likelihood that rude behaviour will occur. Low job control and workplace rudeness were positively and significantly correlated, according to a study by Torkelson et al. (2016).

According to the findings of this study, if we discuss the relationship between a high demand for jobs and workplace rudeness, it is discovered that they also have a good, substantial relationship with one another. (Jaarsveld et al., 2010) examined this construct as well and found that one of the causes of workplace rudeness is excessive job demands. High job demands and workplace rudeness were positively and significantly correlated, according to (Torkelson et al., 2016).

In terms of the relationship between job insecurity and workplace rudeness, it can be shown from this study that these two variables are significantly correlated, meaning that as job uncertainty rises, so does workplace rudeness. According to an analysis by (Cuyper et al., 2009), employment uncertainty has a strong beneficial impact on workplace rudeness. In general, factors that contribute to workplace uncivility include significant job instability and a heavy workload.

When it comes to perceived injustice, this study has found a strong correlation between it and rudeness at work. According to Lilly's (2017) explanation of organizational justice theory, as workplace injustice rises, so does workplace civility, indicating that employees get along well with one another. One of the three antecedents of workplace rudeness explored by Blau and Andersson (2005) was perceived injustice.

As a result, if we talk about low social support, it can be demonstrated that low social support has a positive, considerable impact on workplace rudeness. Numerous studies have mentioned evidence for this connection. (Cortina et al., 2001) found that workplace incivility is greatly increased by a lack of social support from coworkers and supervisors. Low social support and workplace incivility have a positive, statistically significant link, according to (Torkelson et al., 2016).

#### 5. Conclusion

Workplace incivility is an infectious illness that affects the entire business, and it is an important subject for researchers to examine because it involves even somewhat abnormal behaviour like ignoring someone. As it reduces social and interactional skills in the personality, workplace rudeness can have serious negative effects on the institute's reputation and productivity. These implications can be severe for both the faculty members and the organizations they work for. Because an overworked and mentally stressed person might affect workplace incivility, high job expectations or psychological demands of the job are thought to

be a trigger for incivility in the workplace. The findings indicated that having a demanding job had a considerable favourable impact on rudeness at work.

Teachers in Karachi's higher education institutions may experience burnout and low job satisfaction due to the heavy demands of their jobs. Employee impression of unfavourable management decisions is known as perceived injustice. It lessens teachers' commitment to and love for their workplace, which lessens any institution's general output. The findings of this study demonstrated a strong correlation between perceived unfairness and workplace rudeness.

Job insecurity is the dread of losing your job for any cause or no reason at all. Employee morale and productivity can both be negatively impacted by insecurity since those who work in such environments don't feel committed and lose a sense of ownership. The findings show that job uncertainty is one of the factors that contribute to workplace rudeness, and there is a strong correlation between the two.

### 5.1 Limitations of Research

Only academics from higher education institutions are included in this study; no management personnel or students are included. This study's instrumentation is restricted to the use of the Likert scale solely. Another drawback of this research is that although surveys could have been used to gather data, only questionnaires were. The number of participants in this study was capped at 210. This research was time-bound because it had to be completed within a specific time frame.

### 5.2 Implications

Supportive leadership can play a crucial role in overcoming the workplace incivility creating due to high job demands in higher education institutions where the high job demands of faculty are higher and can lead to workplace incivility as they must deal with both student matters and administrative tasks. In addition, good communication between professors and their managers helps lessen workplace rudeness caused by increased employment demand. High decision-making power can help rein in unruly behaviour brought on by demanding work environments. Higher education institutions should recognize the value of informal events like dinners, picnics, and other casual gatherings and make sure to include all workers to increase opportunities for faculty and administration to develop social relationships with one another. Social support is one of the main causes of workplace incivility.

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