

INCIDENCE OF INCIVILITY IN KENULE SARO-WIWA POLYTECHNIC

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ABSTRACT

This research work focused on incidence of incivility in Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, Rivers State. The study was undertaken to investigate workplace incivility and employees' job dissatisfaction using cross-sectional research design and used questionnaire to collect primary data. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study with Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic as target population while Admission & Registration Unit and HND II students of Science Laboratory Technology were selected as sample size. 80 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 70 copies were retrieved. The study found that incivility has effect on both employees' performance and students' academic performance. On the basis of the empirical result of this study, we recommend the following: Incivility should be viewed the same way corruption is perceived so that it can be check-meted by everyone; those charged with responsibilities like the Ethics and Misconduct committees should discharge their duties without fear or favour; Awareness on existing norms and the need for civility in the institution or organizations should be created periodically through stakeholders' engagements and internal publications.

Keywords: Incivility, Incidence, Impact, Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, students, employees, performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Some forms of behaviours that individuals display at workplace, in higher institutions and in fact any other place speaks volumes of their up-bringing, knowledge, exposure, experience, values, perception, judgment, and belief. Often times, we hear comments like ‘this person lacks manners; this person is ‘uncultured’; this person is ‘crude’ or ‘unrefined’. All these express feeling of dissatisfaction, displeasure and disappointment to the one who is meted with such phenomena or an observer, while the person exhibiting such behaviour attracts resentment, rejection, exclusion and in some extreme instances denial of favour or merits. Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined workplace incivility as “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, displaying a lack of regard for others”.

Going by the aforementioned, it is obvious that the organization under review and by extension our society in general is fraught with incivility. People both high and low, educated and uneducated, tend to display incivility perhaps without knowing. Inherent in the definition of incivility is deviance and violation of norms (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Norms underpin mutual respect in both corporate and social spheres. Deviance or violation of norms means working contrary to an acceptable standard way of behaving or doing things that most people agree with. Deviance relates to a behaviour that is purposeful therefore, violating the norms of the organization can be damaging (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Every organization or group has norm which is a standard that people who belong to the group must exercise conformity. Any act or behaviour displayed in contrary is adjudged uncivil. Norm, like culture is shared, and accepted to be right and binding. It forms the basis of collective expectations that members of a group, organization or community have from each other, and plays a key part in social control and social order by exerting a pressure on the individual to conform (BusinessDictionary.com). Norm is also described as a formal rule or standard laid down by legal, religious, or social authority against which appropriateness (what is right or wrong) of an individual’s behaviour is judged. In all of these, incivility has implications for individuals and organizations. It is a phenomenon that may affect anyone either as a recipient or an instigator.

Incivility sometimes manifest very mildly, most times without pre-meditation. It can come out of thoughtlessness. Sometimes, supervisors display incivility when they take credit for the novelty achievement of their subordinates without making reference to them for their creative initiatives, but shift the blame to subordinates when something goes wrong. Pride, wanting to show supremacy and greed are some other factors responsible for display of incivility. Coincidentally, when these unpleasant behaviours get accumulated enthusiasm at future engagement may be impaired. Furthermore, ignorance, oversight, misinterpretation or hypersensitivity has been identified as responsible for incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

This study is prompted by the observed alarming display of uncivil behaviours ranging from the superiors and the subordinates and among coworkers which results in work dissatisfaction and low productivity.

1.2 PURPOSE OF STUDY

1. The purpose of this study is to investigate how incivility relates with employees' job dissatisfaction.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does incivility relate with employees' job dissatisfaction?
2. To what extent does nepotism relate with employees' job output?
3. To what extent does rude remarks relate with employees' commitment?

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant relationship between incivility and employees' job dissatisfaction.
2. There is no significant relationship between nepotism and employees' job output.
3. There is no significant relationship between rude remark and employees' commitment.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is poised to highlight the incidence of incivility and the impact on employees' performance. Previous research work on incivility carried out by Lilia Cortina & Vicki Magley which focused on workplace incivility looked at uncivil behaviours in relations to superior and the subordinate, and the effect on the organizational functionality. They conceptualized incivility as an inherently social phenomenon and described it as an escalating exchange of behaviours between colleagues (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). We therefore adopt Social Power Theory as relevant to this study. Social power relates to the ability of an actor to change the incentive structures of others to bring about outcomes (Carli, 1999). It is about exerting power. Social power is found in politics, within rules of society and the laws of the land. It can be acquired through wealth, fame and laws.

2.0 INCIDENCE OF INCIVILITY

The term incivility has been copiously defined in this study furthermore, a discussion held between the researcher and the Secretary of the Ethics Committee of Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic Mr. Pius Yorkpara revealed various dimensions of incivility among non-academic and other members of staff.

There have been cases where supervisors denied their subordinates recommendation for promotions and/or normal increment in salary. The denial may not have anything to do with performance level but on such trivial issues such as tribal or denominational sentiment. Some supervisors favour those who belong to the same church denomination with them or those who hail from the same village with them while those who do not belong suffer discriminations and loss of some organizational benefits.

Some supervisors activate incivility through overt criticism of their subordinates. They perceive their subordinates as incompetent and consequently rate every of their job efforts negative. This tends to demoralize subordinates and this has negative implication on subordinates who may begin to avoid taking creative initiatives in future. This way both the individual and the organization stand to lose. The individual could witness job dissatisfaction while the organization definitely will lose some forms of creative ideas and contributions. Again, some supervisors make rude remarks on their subordinates. Every individual no matter the status in the organizational hierarchy desires to be treated fairly and respectfully. It is pertinent to note that there is tendency for the victim of a supervisor's incivility to take a revenge on someone else, especially co-workers thereby infecting the workplace with the spiral effect of incivility (Andersson and Pearson, 1999).

Derogatory words as well as constant threat for sack are other forms of incivility that supervisors exhibit against their subordinates. There were also reported incidences of some occupants of certain offices ganging up against their colleagues, keeping malice and displaying coldness during interactive moments. Generally, there have been reported cases of abandonment of work ethics within the work environment.

2.1 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Cortina & Magley (2001), reported job-related impact, stressing that incivility was found responsible for the employees' dissatisfaction over entire aspect of their employment. They also opined that their finding corroborated the finding of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984), that ordinary daily hassles considerably outstrip major life stressors in predicting damaged morale, impaired social and work functioning and psychosomatic symptoms. Hom (2014), asserted that incivility in the workplace has been linked to several detrimental effect, such as lower job satisfaction. Lower well-being and lower work commitment were also reported. Furthermore, Hom (2014), on the prevalence of incivility, postulated that previous measures in the US have shown reports of 78% experiencing supervisor incivility; 81% being subjected

to co-worker incivility, that as high as 91% have been reported over the past 5 years in Asia (Lim & Lee, 2011).

Experiencing incivility in the workplace was also linked to negative effects such as anger, fear and sadness (Hom, 2014). Anger was equally associated with a higher degree of aggressive behaviour, whereas fear was associated with higher levels of indirect aggression towards the instigator (Porath & Pearson, 2012). Taylor and Kluemper (2012) further reported a finding that related workplace incivility and workplace aggression. They posited that a stressful environment would induce higher ratings for perceived incivility which will ultimately resonate to 'do me, I do you' behaviour.

2.2 IMPACT OF INCIVILITY

Harvard Business Review reported that many people including managers are oblivious of the negative consequences of incivility. Uncivil behavior does have tangible impact on individuals, organizations and the society in general. They further indicated that targets of incivility often punish their offenders and the organization, although, many try to conceal their feeling, and may not consider their actions as revenge. They also carried out a poll involving 800 managers and employees in 17 industries, to ascertain how people react to uncivil behaviours in the workplace among employees who have been victims and the following were revealed:

- 48% intentionally decreased their work effort,
- 47% intentionally decreased the time spent at work,
- 38% intentionally decreased the quality of their work,
- 80% lost work time worrying about the incident,
- 63% lost work time avoiding the offender,
- 66% said that their performance declined,
- 78% said that their commitment to the organization declined,
- 12% said that they left their job because of the uncivil treatment.
- 25% admitted to taking their frustration out on customers.

When incivility takes grip on any organization, the existing norms in that organization will gradually be eroded. In other word, when uncivil behavior becomes the order of the day in the society manifesting in the form of impunity, the existing and binding norms will equally be depleted and the consequence will be lawlessness and disorganized environment. To this end, Andersson and Pearson (1999), cautioned that incivility has capability of unleashing a spiral effect that may engulf the entire organization and will eventually, come to erode current norms and terms of conduct in the workplace.

When a superior refuses to attribute outstanding performance to the subordinate who achieved the feat but takes the report to shine, the subordinate will be de-motivated and will become less interested to go extra mile to attain success in future.

Victims of incivility may lack zeal to contribute to team success. They may feel reserved, and ‘let them do it now’ syndrome takes over them leading to withdrawal. Targets of incivility experience lowered satisfaction with work, supervision, co-workers and the job in general (Cortina & Magley, 2001). Smith, Andrusyszyn & Laschinger (2010), also postulated lower work commitment.

Uncomplimentary remarks, incessant abusive words, threat of sack or disciplinary measures on subordinates and students will certainly create emotional stress. Such stress can further lead to apprehension, incoherence, and even sickness. Holm (2014) reported evidence that employees experienced emotional drain when witnessing unpleasant interactions between co-workers.

3.0 METHOD

Purposive sampling technique was used in this study with Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic as target population while Admission and Registration (A&R) Unit and HND II students of Science Laboratory Technology (SLT) were accessible population while 80 employees’ and students became our sample size. The Admission & Registration unit represented the employees/non-academic segment while HND II SLT represented the students’ constituency.

Data Collection

The researcher used structured questionnaire to elicit primary data from target audience. Also, secondary data was sourced from published journals.

Our primary data which were collected in ordinal form using Likert 5-point scale was converted by the Researcher to interval scale, thereby making it parametric test considered suitable for the analysis. Also the researcher encountered 10 errors that aroused from sorting of the questionnaires returned, this was due to the fact that respondents tick both answers concurrently leaving us with a workable sample size of 70 employees and students. This was done with the aid of SPSS 20.0.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data was analyzed descriptively and bivariate analysis. As the questions asked respondents was tested with a base mean ($x = 2.50$) as a result of the scaling type (5-point Likert) is used to ascertain levels of affirmation to the indicators (where $x \leq 2.50$ = poor and weak level of affirmation to the indicator; where $x > 2.50$ = substantial and adequate level of affirmation to the indicator). Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the stated hypotheses in null form.

Table 4.1: Statistics on the Incidence of Incivility in Kenule Saro- Wiwa Polytechnic

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is poor human relationship among supervisors and subordinates in this institution.	70	1.00	5.00	4.1613	.97835
Rude remarks from superiors lead to subordinates' low commitment to job.	70	1.00	5.00	4.2097	1.04233
Nepotism results in declined job output.	70	1.00	5.00	4.2903	1.07714
Incivility results in low morale and de-motivation amongst subordinates.	70	1.00	5.00	4.2100	1.02649
Incivility manifests when superiors take credit for outstanding achievement of their subordinates.	70	1.00	5.00	4.1452	.98923
Emotional stress is likely to result due to uncivil behaviour.	70	1.00	5.00	4.1500	.86549
Incivility manifests in violation of norms.	70	1.00	5.00	4.0645	.90302
Overt criticism from super ordinate leads to loss of creativity and enthusiasm on the job.	70	1.00	5.00	4.0806	.89256
Supervisor's incivility leads to job dissatisfaction for subordinates.	70	1.00	5.00	3.8905	1.12902
Valid N (list wise)	70				

Source: Data results, 2017

The data (table 4.1) illustrates that there is a high level of affirmation (where $x > 2.50$) as regards the indicators of incidence of incivility in Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic. The construct examined the context human relationship among supervisors and subordinates, rude remarks from superiors to subordinates, emotional stress etc. within the target organization.

The results affirm to all indicators of incidence of incivility in Kenule Saro-Wiwa polytechnic within the target organizations as also supported by the low disparity in response ($SD \leq 2.00$).

Bivariate Analysis

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data below.

HO1: Incivility does not have significant relationship with employees' job dissatisfaction

Table 4.12: Hypotheses testing (IC and EJD)

			IC	EJD
Spearman's rho	IC	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.803
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	70	144
	EJD	Correlation Coefficient	.803	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	70	70

Source: Data results, 2017

From our first hypotheses, we realized there is a strong relationship existing between incivility and employees' job dissatisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.803 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. Therefore, we would reject the null hypothesis and state that there exist a significant and positive relationship between incivility and employees' job dissatisfaction. This is in cognizance with the study of Porath and Pearson (2013), who argued that nearly everybody who experiences workplace incivility responds in a negative way, in some cases overtly retaliating. Employees are less creative when they feel disrespected, and many get fed up and leave. About half deliberately decrease their effort or lower the quality of their work and incivility damages customer relationships.

H02: Nepotism does not have significant relationship with employees' job output.

Table 4.3: Hypotheses testing (NT and EJO)

			NT	EJO
Spearman's rho	NT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.314
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.268
		N	70	144
	EJO	Correlation Coefficient	.314	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.268	.
		N	70	70

Source: Data results, 2017

From our findings, there is no significant relationship existing between nepotism and employees' job output with a correlation coefficient of 0.314 which is weak and a p-value of 0.268 which is above alpha level of 0.05. This clearly means that employees may not have considered nepotism in their superior as a factor which would affect the level of his/her output. Therefore, we would accept the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between nepotism and employees' job output. This is in line with Porath and Pearson (2013), who posit that targets of incivility often punish its offenders and the organization, although most hide or bury their feelings and don't necessarily think of their actions as revenge.

HO3: Rude remark does not have significant relationship with employees' commitment.

Table 4.4: Hypotheses testing (RR and EC)

			RR	EC
Spearman's rho	RR	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.896
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	70	144
	EC	Correlation Coefficient	.896	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	70	70

Source: Data results, 2017

This finding shows a perfect relationship existing between rude remark and employee commitment. This means that superiors who are not cautious in their communication towards employees may end up demotivating them instead of bringing out the much needed motivation in them. This would require senior staff to acquire more training on organizational communication as it would expose them to the much needed skills required for communicating with lower employees. Therefore we would reject the null hypothesis. This is supported by the findings of Porath and Pearson (2013), who posited that rudeness at work is rampant and it's on the rise. They stated that over the past 14 years there have been polled thousands of workers about how they are treated on the job, and 98% have reported experiencing uncivil behaviour. In 2011 half said they were treated rudely at least once a week – up from a quarter in 1998.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In an organization where incivility reigns, creativity suffers, performance and team spirit deteriorate. Survey results and interviews have shown that simply witnessing incivility has negative consequences. People are less likely to buy from a company with an employee they perceive as rude, even if the rudeness isn't directed at them.

Customers turn away. Public rudeness among employees has been seen to be common. Also, managing incidents is expensive; human resources professionals say that just one incident can soak up weeks of attention and effort. Managers at fortune 1,000 firms spend the equivalent

of seven weeks a year dealing with the aftermath of incivility. From the review of previous research on incivility and the finding from this study, it is convincing that incivility has a far-reaching negative consequence for employees in terms of job dissatisfaction, organizations in terms of low productivity, eroding of norms and students in the area of low academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There needs to be constant vigilance to keep the workplace civil, otherwise rudeness tends to creep into everyday interactions. Superiors can use the following to keep behaviour in check and foster civility among other:

1. Incivility should be viewed the same way corruption is perceived so that it can be check-meted by everyone.
2. Those charged with responsibilities like the Ethics and Misconduct committees should be firm, transparent and should handle any reported case or cases of incivility without fear or favour.
3. Awareness on existing norms and the need for civil behaviour in the institution or organizations should be created periodically through stakeholders' engagements and internal publications.
4. Superiors need to manage themselves. Managers set the tone, so they need to be aware of their actions and how they come across to others.
5. Superiors need to model good behaviour. If employees see that those who have climbed the corporate ladder tolerate or embrace uncivil behaviour, they are likely to follow suit. Managers need to also express their appreciation as its one way to help create a culture of respect and bring out employees' best.
6. Ask for Feedback. Managers could keep a journal in which to track instances of civility and incivility and not changes that they would like to make as employees won't always be honest.
7. Superiors need to pay attention to progress. When Managers speak up when colleagues or subordinates are rude, it can really make a difference. It puts them on alert that somebody is watching and cares how everyone is treated.
8. Superiors need to manage the organization by monitoring and adjusting their own behaviour as an important piece of the puzzle and need to take actions across the organization.
9. Managers and organizations need to hire for civility. They need to avoid bringing incivility into the workplace. Companies like Southwest Airlines and Four Seasons in the U.S, put civility at the fore when they interview applicants. It has also been reported that only 11% of organizations report considering civility at all during the hiring process, and many of those investigate it in a cursory fashion, meaning Kenule Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic is among the 89% of organizations that does not consider civility in hiring.

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