Incivility: Is It All Just Perception? Identifying the Differences in Intensity and Frequency of Perceived Uncivil Behavior

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Over the past decade, incivility has emerged in organizational behavior literature as a construct that needs to be addressed given its potential to negatively affect the profitability of an organization, and the psychological well-being of employees. The direction from which these empirical studies have examined incivility from include, the conditions under which incivility occurs and the nature and consequences of incivility for individual and organizational outcomes. However, the literature is lack on the role that perceptions play in incivility. Meaning, what are the factors that contribute to employees perceiving incivility in the workforce.

Keywords: Workplace Incivility, Organizational behavior, Perceived Incivility

INTRODUCTION

Incivility is an everyday occurrence in organizations, Porath and Pearson (2013), found that "managers at Fortune 1000 firms spend the equivalent of seven weeks a year dealing with the aftermath of incivility" (p. 118). It is doubtful that any other single negative issue in the workplace dominates a manager's time as much as incivility.

Incivility has emerged in organizational behavior literature as a construct that needs to be addressed given its potential to negatively affect the profitability of an organization, (Pearson, Andersson, and Wagner, 2001) and the psychological well-being of employees (Miner-Rubino, and Reed, W., 2012; Lim and Lee, 2011; Martin and Hine, 2005; Cortina, 2001). The direction from which these empirical studies have examined incivility from include the conditions under which incivility occurs and the nature and consequences of incivility for individual and organizational outcomes. However, the literature is lacking analysis into the role that perceptions play in incivility. Meaning, what are the factors that contribute to employees perceiving incivility in the workforce?

Incivility

Workplace incivility is a subset of deviant behavior identified by Andersson and Pearson (2001), as *"Low intensity, deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect"* (p. 457). Authors give examples of behaviors such as speaking to others in a disrespectful or demeaning manner, exclusion from workplace camaraderie, ignoring others, cutting people off while speaking, making snide remarks about others, or other rude behaviors. This definition of workplace incivility has been the one most widely adopted by researchers (Blau and Andersson, 2005; Caza and Cortina, 2007; Lim, Cortina, and Magley, 2008; Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout, 2001; Penney and Spector, 2005; Pearson, Andersson, and Porath, 2000). In a similar vein, rudeness, according to Porath and Erez (2007), is "insensitive or disrespectful behavior enacted by a person that displays a lack of regard for others" (p. 1181). Giacalone and Greenberg (1997), frame workplace incivility as a subset of antisocial employee behavior. With these definitions, it is assumed that all behaviors are viewed as equally uncivil by all parties involved, and that these behaviors are in violation of norms for respect. Not only may workplace norms vary from organization to organization, but the definition also assumes that all individuals within that organization display and interpret the same behaviors for the same norms.

Incivility has been operationalized as "personal mistreatment" (Cortina, et al. 2001) and "disrespectful behavior that undermines the dignity and self-esteem of employees and creates unnecessary suffering, indicating a lack of concern for the well-being of others and contrary to how individuals expect to be treated" (Zauderer, 2002, p.36).

Studies have examined the source of incivility such as supervisor (Leiter, Price, and Spence, 2010; Lim and Teo, 2009; Porath and Erez, 2007), coworker (Scott, Restubog, and Zagencyk, 2013; Totterdell, Hershcovis, Niven, and Stride, 2012) and customer (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, and McInnerney, 2010; Van Jaarsvel, Walker, and Skarlicki, 2010), as well as the focus of incivility target (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, and Magley, 2013), instigator (IWIS; Kim and Shapiro, 2008), and witness (Porath and Erez, 2009; Totterdell et al, 2012).

Literature agrees that workplace incivility is damaging to organizations in the form of decreased motivation (Sakurai and Jex, 2012), increased turnover intention (Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout, 2001; Giumetti, McKibben, Hatfield, Schroder, and Kowalski, 2012; Lim, Cortina and Magley, 2008), decreased job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina and Magley, 2003; Lim, et al., 2008; Lim and Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2004; Morrow, McElroy and Scheibe, 2011; Penney and Spector, 2005), decreased performance (Estes and Wang, 2008; Porath and Erez, 2007; 2009), decreased organizational commitment (Blau and Andersson, 2005), decreased organizational citizenship behavior (Porath and Erez, 2007), and increased levels of stress (Cortina et al, 2001; Lim and Cortina, 2005; Miner et al, 2010).

What is considered acceptable workplace behaviors depends on organizational norms. For instance, less formal organizational cultures may accept conduct that would be unacceptable in a more formal organization. On the other hand certain levels of incivility may be seen as an acceptable cost of doing business for high performers in a structure where the bottom line is the primary focus. Johnson and Indvik (2001), suggested that workplace incivility may cause the development of a hostile work environment increasing the likelihood of harassment, intimidation and violence, which may lead to serious legal and economic ramifications.

Sherif (1936), defined norms as acceptable or desirable prescribed behaviors and attitudes within a given social unit. Consequently, anyone whose behaviors fall outside of such prescribed boundaries will be perceived as violating behavioral norms. Workplace norms are shared behavioral standards developed from people, traditions, policies and culture of a workplace (Pearson, Andersson, and Porath, 2000). Therefore, it could be postulated that these norms vary not only from culture to culture, but also from person to person within the organization. It is plausible that the perceived intensity (or severity) of incivility may be viewed differently from individual to individual, and thus likely that the effects of incivility will also vary per individual. To date there are no known studies that have examined the intensity of incivility itself.

The present paper examines frequency of perceptions of incivility; the perceived intensity of incivility from the same group of individuals; and perceptions of frequency and intensity of incivility comparing amongst gender and ethnicity. Examining individuals' perceptions allows us to explore the subjective side of uncivil behavior. Perceptions do characterize reality for those who report it and therefore have real consequences for workers and employers.

Perception

There is a saying that suggests that "perceptions are reality." Perhaps a more adequate quote is one by philosopher W.I. Thomas that states, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." This statement suggests that in social situations, such as the workplace, realties are perceived. The meaning individuals make of other people's behaviors is based on perception. Up until this point, literature has focused on incivility as a behavior. In this paper, our goal is to treat incivility as a perception of the behavior.

Perception is the process of organizing information into meaningful patterns through means the senses (Bahn, 1986). As individuals cognitively organize perceptions, mechanisms for making sense of other's behaviors are initiated automatically. By focusing on experienced uncivil behavior as a result of a subjective perception, we can attempt to better understand how and why some behavior is seen as uncivil to some individuals and not others.

Literature shows that it is important to study and understand perceptions, as well as misperceptions (Porter, 1976). When considering that perceptions are created in a social environment, it is clear that both the individual and the situation have some impact on the way that perceptions are created. Many researchers assume that social perception creates social reality equal to, if not more, than actually reflecting social reality (Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Jones, E., 1986; Miller and Turnbull, 1986). Others assume that individual influences such as fundamental errors, prejudices, and personal beliefs can actually create social reality (Higgins and Bargh, 1987; Schneider, Hastorf, and Ellsworth, 1979). Together these tell us that the perceptions of uncivil behavior can differ based on the individual or the social environment.

Gage and Cronbach (1995), suggest that an individual's perception is more influenced by the individual themselves rather than what they experience. There are also many variables in the workplace that may have an impact on the way we perceive behaviors as uncivil. Literature suggests that perceptions can be influenced by things such as, organizational climate (James and James, 1989; Schneider, 1975), gender and ethnicity (Harnois, 2014; Kehn and Ruthig, 2013), and even frequency (Mathwick, 2002). As all these variables are considered in the workplace, the perceptions of uncivil behavior can easily differ from individual to individual and organization to organization.

Hierarchical Framework of Negative Workplace Behavior

The hierarchy of negative workplace behavior has been organized by Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, and Alberts (2007). This hierarchy includes levels of superordinate, intermediate, and subordinate types of negative communication and conduct. Superordinate negative workplace behavior includes such constructs as workplace aggression, antisocial work behaviors, and broadly defined workplace violence. These are defined as general behaviors that span a wide range of harmful workplace actions and interactions. The intermediate category of negative workplace behavior falls under the superordinate and include behaviors of both general and specific forms of workplace abuse. The general forms include bullying, emotional abuse, generalized harassment, and social undermining. In this category the specific forms of workplace abuse are exemplified by sexual harassment, abusive supervision, and ethnic harassment. These authors considered that in the workplace, generalized and specific forms of workplace abuse may very well overlap. Finally, as outlined by these authors, the subordinate category of negative workplace behavior often include characteristics of the behavior found in the intermediate category. These include behaviors like victimization, incivility, and verbal aggressiveness.

As with many hierarchical structures, each level of the hierarchy described incorporates the negative workplace behavior described at the lower levels. For instance, in considering a construct such as

workplace bullying, it has been described by O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin (2000), as an antisocial behavior that includes verbal/physical and active/passive dimensions and produces harm or injury. Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, and Alberts (2007), outlined the literature on bullying to include: intensity, repetition, duration, and power disparity. Bullying involves a pattern of multiple negative acts (Mikkelsen and Einarsen 2001), and the majority of targets report being subjected to numerous forms of abuse (Einarsen, 1999; Keashley and Harvey 2005). The term intensity refers to the specific number of different negative acts that targets report.

If we consider workplace incivility as a subordinate construct to workplace bullying as laid out in the above hierarchal framework, then in our continued investigation of incivility, it becomes essential that we include similar features of workplace incivility. In the incivility literature, there is a lack of consideration for intensity of incivility in the workplace. Andersson and Pearson (1999) introduced the concept of the spiraling effect of incivility suggesting different, escalating levels of incivility. The spiraling effect states that in the presence of incivility a retaliation of sorts occurs, possibly leading to much higher intensity aggressive behaviors. Based on this, research has found that incivility has the potential for targets to act with retaliatory, deviant, and counterproductive behaviors in the workplace (Bunk and Magley, 2013; Kim, Shapiro, Aquino, Lim, and Bennett, 2008; Lim and Teo, 2009; Penny and Spector, 2005). The spiraling effect lays the foundation for uncivil behavior to be perceived with increasing intensity as it is played out in the workplace. Little is known about the perceptions of victims of low or high intensity uncivil actions.

Intensity

The existence of overlapping constructs has been an issue in the area of mistreatment in the workplace. It has been suggested that incivility is similar in intensity to multiple dimensions of the construct petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994). Although both incivility and petty tyranny represent inconsiderate behavior towards others with ambiguous intent, petty tyranny is a profile usually attributed to leaders (Andersson and Pearson, 1999) as opposed to incivility, which can unfortunately be attributed to all levels in the workplace.

When a person experiences an adverse encounter, a cognitive-emotional process begins, in order to help the individual assess the threat. When assessing the threat, many factors come into play. How a person experiences or perceives an event will have a direct correlation with the manner in which they react both emotionally and behaviorally (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). As incivility exists only in perception, it is crucial to understand how one perceives uncivil behaviors.

As perceptions about a stimuli become more consistent, more elaborate cognitive structures form. It is these structures that assign meaning and make discriminations between stimuli (Piaget, 1952). Therefore one could conclude that the more frequent an individual is exposed to a certain stimuli, the stronger the perception becomes. Further, Mathwick (1999), found that individuals that experienced greater frequency of positive transactions, resulted in greater positive perceptions compared to those with less frequent positive transactions. Thus, it is plausible that this would remain consistent if the transactions were negative. Frequently experienced negative transactions could result in greater negative perceptions.

H1a: *Different types of incivility will be experienced with different frequency*

H1b: *Civility items will differ in terms of intensity*

Gender

Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) proposes that men and women behave according to the stereotypes associated with the social roles they occupy. In general, women are seen as more communal ("friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive"), whereas men are more independent ("masterful, assertive, and instrumentally competent" (Eagly and Wood, 1991, p. 309)). Using social role theory, we propose that there will be a significant gender difference in perceptions of what constitutes

uncivil behavior. The ability of social role theory to help explain gender differences in perceptions of uncivil behavior is important both theoretically and managerially.

There has been a great deal of work examining gender differences and perceptions of ethical behavior (e.g. Dobson and White, 1995; Gillligan, 1982; Whitely, Nelson, and Jones, 1999). Several studies have resulted in a better understanding of the different moral orientations and thus different perceptions and practices of each gender (Kholberg, 1984; Roxas and Stoneback, 2004). Some studies find that women are more thoughtful concerning ethical issues and more cautious compared to men (Collins, 2000). Males appear to more often behave unethically. Females, on the other hand, view uncertain acts as unethical (Beu, Buckley, and Harvey, 2003; Dawson, 1997; Mason and Mudrack, 1996; Ritter, 2006). One potential explanation may be found in the literature on the socialization process. Gilligan (1982) and Gilligan and Attanucci (1994), for example, found that men and women perceive ethical matters from distinctly different perspectives. The authors attributed this finding to the early socialization process which fosters an "ethic of caring" in women.

Given the literature on gender and ethics (O'Fallon and Butterfield 2005; Schminke, Ambrose, and Miles, 2003), we believe that it is important to consider the role of gender when examining the perceptions of incivility. A significant amount of debate has occurred over the past a few decades about the presence of gender differences in unethical behavior (Detert, Trevino, and Sweitzer, 2008; Schminke et al. 2003). Several researchers have found empirical support for women being more ethical than men (e.g., Ameen, Guffey, and McMillan, 1996; Singhapakdi 1999). Others have found little or no differences across gender in ethical behaviors (e.g., Jones and Kavanagh 1996; Robin and Babin 1997). Detert et al. (2008) concluded that gender differences may seem different when considering the role of moral disengagement.

Socialization and gender role theories provide rationale for latter findings. According to these theories, gender differences are spun from childhood socialization processes for boys and girls. This would account for distinct moral reasoning and ethical decision-making orientations for males and females (Ward and Beck 1990; Whitley, Nelson, and Jones, 1999). Females are socialized to hold themselves to a higher moral standard than men (Franke, Crown, and Spake 1997; Kristiansen and Hotte 1996). Females are more intolerant of cheating behavior (Coleman and Mahaffey 2000), experience shame when they cheat and hold more negative attitudes toward cheating. In contrast, males learn to be more individually oriented and perceive minor deviance and risk taking as expectations associated with their gender (Sinn, 1997). Given that minor social deviance is significantly related to academic dishonesty it is conceivable that attitudes toward academic integrity will be susceptible to gender differences.

Male students deem cheating and plagiarism significantly less objectionable than do female students. This is consistent with previous research identifying males as more likely to engage in dishonest academic practices (Ameen et al. 1996; Guo 2011; Hendershott, Drinan, and Cross, 1999; Szabo and Underwood 2004). This may signal social changes to gender roles. Research suggests that current socialization practices embolden female individuals to be more like males (Goodkind, Wallace, Shook, Bachman, and O'Malley 2009), which could have important implications for academic conduct in years to come.

Relational theory suggests that connectedness and relationship building represent central and desired aspects of women's development (Miller and Stiver 1997; Schminke et al. 2003). This theory suggests that females possess a unique desire to develop and maintain personal relations with others (Schminke et al. 2003). Such desires and goals will tend to make women more hesitant than males to engage in uncivil behaviors because these behaviors may likely compromise positive relations with others, such as supervisors and peers. Hence, females' desire for positive personal relations may limit their engagement in uncivil behavior. For men, on the other hand, a relatively lower desire for connectedness and relationship building will be associated with a lower perceived cost of engagement in uncivil behavior and, in turn, greater engagement in such behavior. Some research has demonstrated that females pay greater attention to distinguishing between ethical versus unethical behaviors (Frank et al. 1997). Researchers have also contended that females tend to be more accurate than males in their assessments of

whether they are actually engaging in ethical versus unethical behaviors (Fiske and Taylor 1984; Schminke et al. 2003).

Gender biases in the workplace have been a focus of much attention. Literature on gender differences suggests that women have a greater sensitivity to the behaviors of others than men (Basow, 1986; Tannen, 1990). Gender differences in perceptions of workplace behaviors is why a reasonable women standard in sexual harassment cases exists (see the dissenting opinion of Judge Keith in Rabidue v. Oscoela Refining Company (1986; Adler and Peirce, 1993)). In the Ellison v. Brady, 1991 case, using a reasonable person standard, the district court dismissed Ellison's sexual harassment complaint. The reasonable woman standard is justified because there is supporting research in the social sciences suggesting that men and women perceive harassment differently (Blumenthal, 1998; Rotundo, Nguyen and Sackett, 2001). It appears that women define sexual harassment more broadly than men (Gutek, Morasch, and Cohen, 1983; Jones and Remland, 1992).

An important note, women are more likely to perceive less severe incidents (e.g., sexual jokes, sexual innuendos) as harassment compared to men (Perry, Kulik, and Bourhis, 2004) and these differences are more likely to be seen in a hostile environment (Rotundo et al, 2001). While there is a great deal more literature on gender differences related to sexual harassment, there have been fewer studies that have examined gender and incivility. And, among the few studies that have been done, there seems to be a disagreement in the findings as to whether women report more frequency in experienced workplace incivility (Cortina et al, 2001; Cortina et al, 2013; Pearson and Porath, 2009) or whether men more frequently experience workplace incivility (Lim and Lee, 2011). Moreover, Montgomery et al (2015) found that women were more likely than men to assess disrespectful behaviors as inappropriate when they created a hostile environment. Thus, based on the theoretical evidence cited above, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H2a: *Women will report greater frequency of incivility compared to men*

In addition to assessing the frequency of incivility, it is also important to determine the severity or intensity of the uncivil acts. Research suggests that men and women vary in their allocation of attentional resources (Meyers-Levy, 1986). Meyers-Levy's Selectivity Hypothesis suggests that the processing mechanisms utilized by males tends to focus on one piece of information. This would result in men imposing structures on seemingly unrelated information (Wajda and Hu, 2004). Females, however, tend to attempt to assimilate all available information leading to a more comprehensive view of available information.

According to Helgerson (2011), women spend more time encoding events and are able to recall events at a higher rate than men. Helgerson suggests that women are socialized at to pay close attention to the environment. This leads women to be more aware and perhaps notice more detail than men. This heightened awareness could lead women to recognize more incivility or perceive it as more intense than men. Thus, based on the information presented above, we posit the following hypothesis:

H2b: *Women will report acts of incivility with greater intensity compared to men*

Race

In today's workplace racism is being addressed by laws and policies. However, researchers would still argue that it continues to occur at astonishing rates, and seems to present itself in more covert and discrete manors (Dipboye and Halverson, 2004).

While incivility is not a direct form of discrimination, it is likely that the behaviors directed toward a specific race or ethnic group could present itself in the form of indirect discrimination. Research shows that groups with members who differ from one another on one or more salient characteristics tend to experience greater incivility (King, Dawson, West, Gilrane, 2011). According to Cortina (2008), a person can be explicitly against discrimination, yet hold implicitly stereotypical beliefs that cause them to unknowingly target minorities with uncivil behaviors.

Studies examining race differentials have found that being a minority is correlated with more frequently experienced workplace incivility (Cortina et al 2013). It has been suggested that targeted incivility towards minorities may occur at greater frequency in organizations that do not have strong discrimination policies. Further, it is suggested that in order to be discrete, the incivility that minority targets might experience more would be the behaviors that are more ambiguous in nature (Cortina, 2008).

H3a: *Underrepresented group members will report greater frequency of incivility compared to majority members*

Subtle discrimination is open to "interpretational ambiguity" by the targets of the perceived discrimination (Combs and Milosevic, 2015). Interpretational ambiguity is defined as "a failure in the ability to make sense of aversive, conflicting and colliding circumstances" (Combs and Milosevic, 2015, p. 22). As a target of a discriminatory act attempts to determine intent, interpretational ambiguity comes into play. Although acts of incivility are not necessarily the same as acts of discrimination, the resulting feeling from underrepresented group members may involve more intensity since they have likely had more negative experiences and have had to develop more coping mechanisms, and thus may recognize an uncivil act as more severe compared to majority group members.

H3b: *Underrepresented group members will report incivility with greater intensity compared to majority members*

The theory of double jeopardy suggests that women of color experience mistreatment at a higher rate due to their gender minority status compounded with their race minority status. Berdahl and Moore (2006), found that this theory holds true in the context of harassment, where they found women and minorities reported higher levels of harassment than their male and Caucasian counterparts. Likewise, Cortina et al (2013), found that women and minorities had higher levels of exposure to incivility than their male and Caucasian counterparts. Further, they state that African-American women reported higher levels of experienced incivility than Caucasian women.

A recent report by Catalyst (2015) revealed that women, and especially minority women, are greatly underrepresented at the manager and above ranks in S and P's 500 companies. The break down reveals that while White women make up 27.4% of total employees, 26.8% of first/mid-level officials and managers and 21% of executives and senior level managers, the following is found respectively for Asian women (2.9%, 2.5%, 1.7%) Black women (7.4%, 3.8%, 1.2%) and Latina women (6.2%, 3.1%, 1.0%). This underrepresentation leads to a problem of tokenism. Tokenism refers to situations when individuals make up less than 15% of a workgroup, unit, or organization (Kanter, 1977; Nelson and Burke, 2000), which obviously is reflected in the numbers above. Kanter (1977) suggested that because the token is different from the majority in a way that is highly visible (e.g., race, gender), the token will be noticed and judged in a way that is different from majority members. Because tokens are different, they may feel more isolation and are particularly vulnerable to stereotypes and discrimination resulting from their differences (Combs and Milosevic, 2015; Nelson and Burke, 2000) leading to the possibility of more, and more severe acts of incivility towards them.

H4: *Gender and race will interact to produce higher levels of reports of frequency and intensity of incivility*

Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS)

The first instrument created to capture incivility specifically, was the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001). The original WIS focused on targets of incivility and was created to measure prevalence. The items were identified based on the definition by Andersson and Pearson (2001) and included behaviors that were identified as low level intensity and having ambiguous intent to harm. These behaviors were also identified as the most common negative acts in the workplace (Einarsen et al., 1994).

Their sample consisted of 1,662 employees of the U.S. Eighth Circuit federal courts system. It was demographically broken down into 833 women, 325 men.

The WIS has been the most widely used instrument for measuring incivility. The WIS measures the frequency of experienced incivility from a target prospective over the past five years. Using confirmatory factor analysis, researchers determined that all 7 items fit the single factor model appropriately. Further, when the 7-items were summed into the WIS scale, it produced an alpha coefficient of 0.89.

For our analysis we used six of the seven items from the WIS instrument (Cortina et al, 2001). We chose to not include the seventh WIS item of "made unwanted attempts to draw you into a decision or personal matter" as this was the lowest fit item in the original scale, and we questioned that this particular item was identifiable as an uncivil behavior. Our instrument captures the perceived intensity of an uncivil behavior. This is to determine if various groups of people perceive a behavior to more or less uncivil. We used the lead question of: "At what level do you consider the following behaviors to be rude, disrespectful, or discourteous. The responses listed were in the form of an intensity continuum with minimum being on one end, moderate in the middle, and maximum on the other end.

We also used the WIS as the measure for frequency as it was intended. We used the same six items to answer the question "In the past year how often have you experienced the following behaviors." The responses listed were in the form of a frequency continuum with never being on one end, often in the middle, and all the time on the other end.

METHOD

Participants and Settings

A total of 372 undergraduates voluntarily participated in the study during an undergraduate course in management at a university located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Participants completed the survey instrument in paper-and-pencil format. The incivility items described here were embedded in a larger group of items not relevant to the present study. As the study was based on perception of incivility, the subject pool was asked to provide perceptions of intensity, rather than actual experiences of incivility.

MEASURES

Incivility Frequency

Participants completed a modified version of the Workplace Incivility scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001). The original WIS used a 5-year timeframe to measure the frequency with which individuals experienced seven workplace behaviors deemed mildly offensive, impolite, or condescending. This frequency estimate included behaviors of either coworkers or supervisors. The frequency of experience was rated on a 5-point scale from "Never" to "Most of the Time." In the present study, one item was omitted ("Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters") because (1) it lacked face validity as an indicator of incivility and (2) it had the lowest factor loading among the items in the scale (.58; Cortina et al., 2001, p. 70). In addition, the timeframe was modified to include the past one year. The resulting questionnaire, which we refer to as the WIS-F-R was a 5-item scale measuring the frequency with which individuals experienced 5 acts of incivility (condescending, ignoring, demeaning, disrespecting, excluding, and doubting) over the past year. Items wording can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
OVERALL RATINGS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALES (N = 237) AND FEMALES (N = 135) FOR THE "INTENSITY" OF INCIVIL ACTS

Item	Overall	Females *M* (*SD*)	Males *M* (*SD*)	*t* (*df*)
Put you down or been condescending to you	3.86 (1.18)	4.34 (0.97)	3.58 (1.20)	6.27** (327.68)[a]
Paid little attention to your statements or showing little interest in your opinion	3.85 (0.96)	4.13 (0.85)	3.69 (0.98)	4.29** (313.03)[a]
Made demeaning remarks about you	4.11 (1.18)	4.51 (0.96)	3.88 (1.23)	5.11** (335.57)[a]
Addressed you in unprofessional terms	3.15 (1.10)	3.44 (1.07)	2.98 (1.08)	3.92** (370)
Excluded you from professional camaraderie	3.40 (1.09)	3.63 (1.08)	3.27 (1.08)	3.09** (370)
Doubted your judgment on a matter for which you have responsibility.	3.66 (1.02)	3.99 (0.91)	3.48 (1.04)	4.75** (290.36)[a]
WIS Total	22.03 (4.64)	24.03 (3.81)	20.89 (4.69)	6.63** (326.87)[a]

[a] Test has been adjusted due to inadequate homogeneity of variance.

Incivility Intensity

Participants completed a second version of the questionnaire that was designed to measure the intensity of each of these acts of incivility. We refer to this questionnaire as the WIS-I-R. To obtain intensity ratings of the acts, participants were asked to rate the degree to which they saw each of these acts as "rude disrespectful, or discourteous." Each item was rated on a 5-point scale with "Min" and "Max" as anchors and "Moderate" at the mid-point.

Demographics.

In addition to the WIS-F-R and the WIS-I-R, participants completed a number of demographic question, including age, sex, and ethnicity items.

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaire at the end of class time during one of several management courses. Participants were advised that their participation was voluntary, were asked not to include any identifying information and were reminded that their answers were confidential.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

A total of 372 students participated in this study. Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2. Participants were students in undergraduate business classes and, being a college sample, demographics indicate that the sample was largely made up of young, single adults. The sample was also predominantly Caucasian. Due to small subsamples of certain racial groups (American Indian = 1, Asian/Pacific Islander = 6, Other = 9, and Multi-Racial = 2), these groups were collapsed into a single "Other" category.

TABLE 2
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

		N	(%)
Gender:	Male	135	36.3
	Female	164	63.7
Age:	18 – 24 years	362	97.3
	25 – 34 years	8	2.2
	35 – 44 years	1	0.3
	45 – 54 years	1	0.3
Marital Status:	Single	363	97.6
	Married	8	2.2
	Separated	1	0.3
Race:	Caucasian	303	82.3
	African-American	31	8.4
	Hispanic	16	4.3
	Other	18	4.9
Education:	Some College	270	72.6
	Associates Degree	64	17.2
	Bachelors Degree	32	8.6
	Some Post-Graduate	4	1.1
	Masters Degree	2	0.5
Hours Worked:	35+ hours per week	100	27.1
	Less than 35 hours per week	175	47.4
	Not Employed	94	25.5

Scale Properties

To determine the extent to which the frequency items represented a single construct similar to that identified by Cortina et al. (2001), a principal component analysis was completed with the solution constrained to one factor. Factor loadings ranged from .53 (addressed in unprofessional terms) to .72 (put you down or was condescending to you) and a scree plot of the eigenvalues was consistent with a one-factor solution. Similarly, a principal components analysis was completed for the intensity scale with a solution constrained to one factor. Factor loadings ranged from .55 (addressed in unprofessional terms) to .80 (made demeaning remarks) and a scree plot of the eigenvalues was consistent with a one-factor solution.

The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency. The intensity scale had a slightly higher alpha (=.80) than the frequency scale (=.72), but both scales were in the acceptable to good range. Forty-one participants completed a second administration of the scales approximately two weeks after the first administration. Test-retest correlations for the items are presented in Table 2.

Frequency of Incivility

On the WIS-R-F, participants rated the frequency with which they had encountered each type of incivility. Average frequency ratings are displayed in Table 3. Overall, 96.80% (n = 360) of the sample had experienced at least one type of incivility at least "sometimes" in the past year.

A repeated measures ANOVA (F[5,1840] = 56.41, p <.01) revealed that there were differences in the frequency with which different types of incivility occurred. Pairwise comparisons indicated that "Paid little attention to you…" and "Addressed you in unprofessional terms" were experienced significantly more frequently than the other types of incivility (Figure 1) and these two items were not significantly different from each other (t = 1.74, p = .10). The next most frequently occurring type of incivility was

"Doubted your judgment…" which occurred more frequently than "Put you down…" (t=4.21, p < .01) and "Made demeaning remarks…" (t=4.33, p < .01), which were not different from each other (t=0.19, p = .90). "Excluded you from professional camaraderie" which occurred significantly less frequently than all other types of incivility. Frequencies of experiences of incivility types for this sample are given in Table 2.

FIGURE 1
FREQUENCY RATINGS OF TYPES OF INCIVILITY (SCALE OUT OF 5)

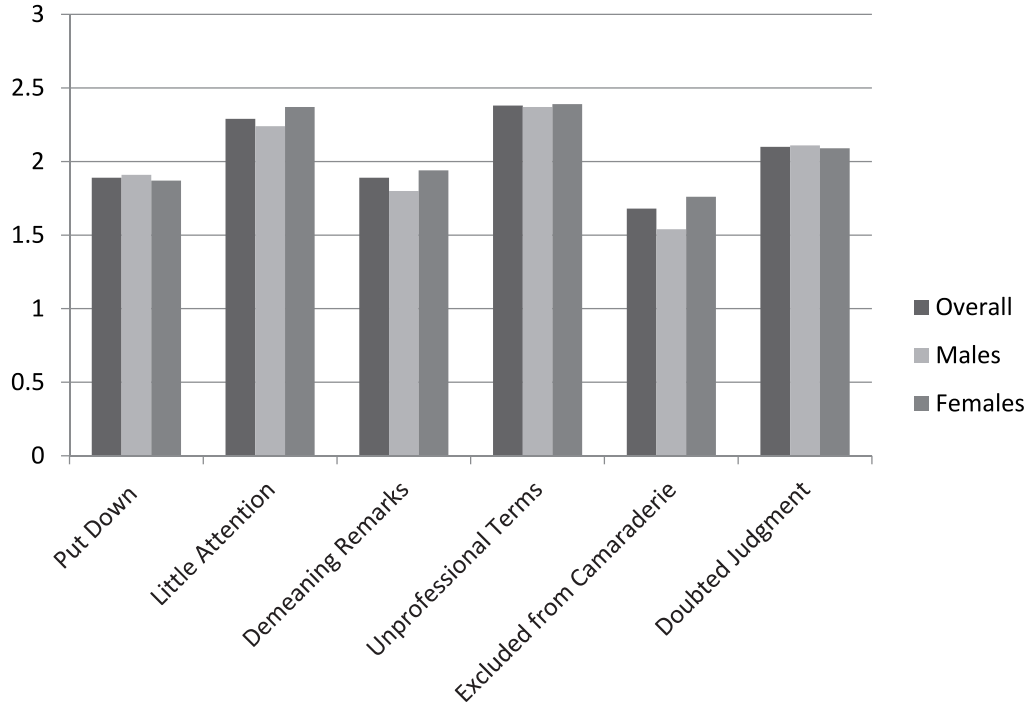


TABLE 3
FREQUENCIES OF EXPERIENCES OF INCIVILITY TYPES

Item	*M (SD)*	*n**	%
Put you down or been condescending to you	1.89 (0.81)	255	68.9
Paid little attention to your statements or showing little interest in your opinion	2.29 (.77)	332	90.0
Made demeaning remarks about you	1.89 (0.76)	260	70.3
Addressed you in unprofessional terms	2.38 (0.98)	316	85.4
Excluded you from professional camaraderie	1.68 (0.77)	192	51.9
Doubted your judgment on a matter for which you have responsibility.	2.10 (0.77)	304	82.2
WIS-R-F Total	12.24 (3.16)	360	96.8

Note. Columns headed by *n* and % indicate the number and percent, respectively, of individuals in the sample who experienced the indicated type of incivility at least "Sometimes."

Gender and Race Differences in Frequency

A series of t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in mean scores on the frequency items and scale score. Results revealed that only one item was significantly different for men and women. Women experienced "Excluded you from professional camaraderie" less frequently than men ($t(368) = 2.67$, $p < .01$).

One-way ANOVAs were conducted for each of the items and scale score to examine mean differences among the racial groups. Using an alpha level of .01 to control for familywise error, there were no differences between racial group means in their experiences of the frequency items.

Intensity of Incivility

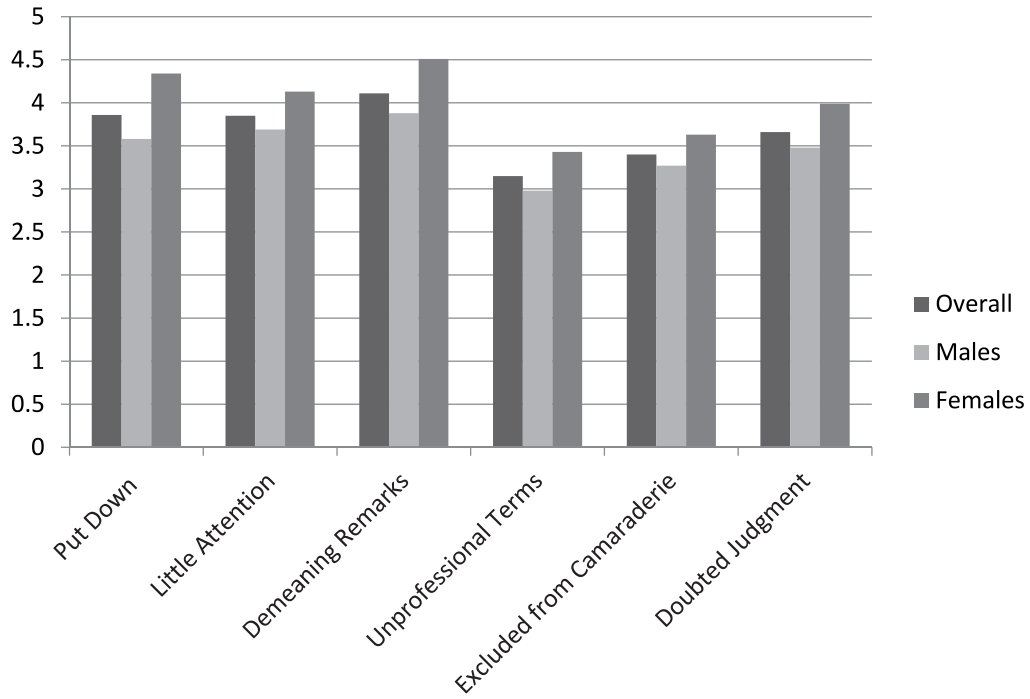
On the WIS-R-I, participants rated the extent to which they found each type of incivility to be "rude, disrespectful, or discourteous." Average ratings for each question and the scale score are displayed in Table 4. A repeated-measures ANOVA ($F[5,1855] = 63.68$, $p < .01$) revealed that there were significant differences in the intensity ratings for the different types of incivility assessed by the items. Pairwise comparisons indicated that all types of incivility were rated as significantly different from each other with the exception of "Put you down…" and "Paid little attention…" which were considered equally rude ($t = 0.13$, $p = .90$). As indicated in Figure 2, participants rated "demeaning remarks" as the most severe form of incivility, on average and "Addressed you in unprofessional terms" was considered the least severe type of incivility.

TABLE 4
TEST-RETEST CORRELATIONS FOR WIS-R INTENSITY AND FREQUENCY SCALES

Item	Intensity	Frequency
Put you down or been condescending to you	.45**	.45**
Paid little attention to your statements or showing little interest in your opinion	.43**	.34*
Made demeaning remarks about you	.26**	.35**
Addressed you in unprofessional terms	.35**	.43**
Excluded you from professional camaraderie	.31**	.26**
Doubted your judgment on a matter for which you have responsibility.	.29**	.35**
WIS Total	.38**	.53**

* = p <.05
** = p <.01

FIGURE 2
INTENSITY RATINGS OF TYPES OF INCIVILITY



Whether or not participants experienced a particular type of incivility had differential effects on intensity ratings, depending on the type of incivility (Table 5). There were no differences for intensity ratings of "Made demeaning remarks…," "Addressed you in unprofessional terms…," or "Doubted your judgment…" There were also no differences for the total scale score. However, this last finding may be due to the small number of individuals who did not experience any incivility and differences in sample variance. As can be seen in Table 4, those who experienced "Put you down…," "Paid little attention…," and "Excluded from camaraderie…" rated these types of incivility as more severe than those who had never experienced these types.

TABLE 5
INTENSITY RATINGS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS WHO EXPERIENCED OR DID NOT EXPERIENCE INCIVILITY TYPES

Item	Experienced *M* (*SD*) *n*	Not Experienced *M* (*SD*) *n*	*t* (*df*)
Put you down	4.04 (0.99) 255	3.51 (1.41) 115	3.59 ** (166.98) [a]
Paid little attention	3.92 (0.88) 332	3.35 (1.27) 37	2.65* (39.91)[a]
Made demeaning remarks	4.18 (1.03) 260	4.01 (1.42) 110	1.12 (159.99) [a]
Addressed unprofessionally	3.19 (1.07) 316	3.00 (1.18) 54	1.17 (368)
Excluded from camaraderie	3.65 (0.87) 192	3.16 (1.22) 178	4.46** (319.13) [a]
Doubted your judgment	3.70 (0.95) 304	3.55 (1.23) 66	0.99 (82.62) [a]
WIS-I-R Total	22.25 (4.31) 360	17.30 (7.96) 10	1.96 (9.15) [a]

[a] Test has been adjusted due to inadequate homogeneity of variance.

Gender and Race Differences in Intensity

To test gender differences, average scores for males and females in the sample were compared using a series of t-tests. As can be seen in Table 1, women found each type of incivility to be more rude, or intense, than did men.

On average, members of different racial groups differed in their ratings of some of the intensity items, but not all. Using an alpha level of .01 to control for familywise error, there were no differences between racial group means for the intensity of "Put you down," "Paid little attention," "Made demeaning remarks," or "Doubted your judgment." There were significant group differences for "Addressed you in unprofessional terms" ($F[3,364] = 5.79$, $p < .01$) and "Excluded You from Professional Camaraderie" ($F[3,364] = 3.86$, $p < .01$) . "Addressed you in unprofessional terms" was seen as less intense by Caucasians ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.09$) compared to those identified as Other ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.88$; $t = 2.61$, $p < .01$). Hispanic participants ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.96$) also rated it as significantly less intense when compared to African-American participants ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.12$; $t = 3.17$, $p < .01$) or to those described as Other ($M = 3.78$ $SD = 0.88$; $t = 3.30$, $p < .01$). "Excluded from professional camaraderie" was rated as significantly less intense by Caucasians ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.09$) compared to African-Americans ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.77$; $t = 3.25$, $p < .01$).

Factorial ANOVAs Using Gender and Race

A series of two-way (2X4) ANOVAs were used to investigate the extent to which gender and race interacted to produce differences in scores. Across both scales, there were no significant interactions between gender and race for any of the incivility items or scale scores.

DISCUSSION

Our findings showed that 96.8% of respondents have experienced incivility. This is an overwhelming finding that should be relevant for practitioners and scientist alike. It is important to continue our investigation of incivility and its ramped presence in the workplace.

It was hypothesized that different types of incivility would be experienced at different frequency (H1a), and that females and minorities would experience frequency of incivility at higher rates than males and Caucasians (H2a and H3a). Hypothesis 1a was supported. Different types of incivility were in deed experienced at different frequencies. "Paid little attention to you…" and "Addressed you in unprofessional terms…" were experienced most frequently. The least experienced type of incivility was "Excluded you from professional camaraderie" which occurred with less frequency than all other types. Our investigation found that only one type of incivility, "Excluded you from professional camaraderie…" was found to have a significant difference between males and females. This allows for partial support of hypothesis 2a. Finally, there was no support for hypothesis 3a. There was no difference in frequency in types of incivility experienced between the different races present in our study.

It was also predicted that different types of incivility would be experienced at different levels of intensity (H1b), and that females and minorities would perceive incivility as being more intense than males and Caucasians (H2b and H3b). Different types of incivility were experienced at different levels of intensity with the exception of "Put you down…" and "Paid little attention…" which were considered equally uncivil in terms of intensity. The study found that "Demeaning remarks" was considered the most intense form of incivility, with "Addressed you in unprofessional terms" as the least intense. Hypothesis 2b was fully supported. Women found each type of incivility to be more intense than did men. Hypothesis 3b was partially supported. "Addressed you in unprofessional terms…" was seen as less intense by Caucasians than those participants identified by other races. "Excluded from professional camaraderie" was found to be less intense compared to others.

Although it was hypothesized that gender and race would interact to produce higher levels of both frequency and intensity (H4), we found no statistical support for this.

Historically, workplace incivility researchers have focused on incivility in the context of an agreed upon construct that everyone views the same way. The present study is the first to provide insight into perceptions related to the varying types of incivility and varying intensity of incivility. This study moves beyond the existing literature by considering the that incivility may not be a universal language. We suggest that certain types of incivility may have a varying affect on different types of individuals. Further, it seems that certain individuals are more sensitive to incivility, and thus uncivil actions may have a greater impact on their related outcome behaviors.

Based on these findings it is plausible that certain types of incivility, or certain targets of incivility may be more prone to the unwanted outcomes associated with workplace incivility such as decreased job performance (Estes and Wang, 2008; Porath and Erez, 2007; 2009), increased turnover intention (Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout, 2001; Giumetti, McKibben, Hatfield, Schroder, and Kowalski, 2012; Lim, Cortina, and Magley, 2008), decreased organizational commitment (Blau and Andersson, 2005), decreased organizational citizenship behavior (Porath and Erez, 2007), decreased job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina and Magley, 2003; Lim, et al., 2008; Lim and Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2004; Morrow, McElroy, and Scheibe, 2011; Penney and Spector, 2005), and increased levels of stress (Cortina et al, 2001; Lim and Cortina, 2005; Miner et al., 2010). Moreover, these findings could help further explain the incivility spiral (Andersson and Pearson, 1999), and how workplace incivility has the potential to escalate to higher and more severe forms of workplace deviance by some individuals, but not all individuals.

The present study focuses on the perceptions of incivility. It introduces the concept of intensity as a factor that needs to be considered in both research and practice. This research may assist practioners in creating performance reviews and workplace trainings based on the most experienced and most intensely perceived forms of incivility. By doing this it is likely that practioners can intentionally target very specific unwanted behavior in the workplace, rather than continue with the "blanket interventions" for all types of unwanted behavior.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

We always have to interpret the results from a student population with a degree of caution regarding reliability. However, the use of a student sample can be defended in the present case because this study was focused more on perceptions of intensity, rather than actual experiences of incivility. While we don't really have a good assessment of the work life of those in the sample, we argue that since we are seeking perceptional information, the answers provided are reflective of people in the full-time work world and can thus be generalized to perceptions of workplace incivility. Additionally, we recognize that our population was somewhat limited in regards to age and demographics. Future research should be pursued to confirm our results, or identify differences, in a more diverse population.

Future research can extend our understanding of workplace incivility in the following ways. First, although we established varying differences between types of incivility, it is still unclear how these types may impact various outcomes. Future researchers may want to investigate outcome differences based on the different intensity levels of the uncivil behaviors. Second, the incivility research has demonstrated that various roles (target, witness) may experience the behaviors at varying levels of intensity. It is quiet plausible that the target of uncivil behavior experiences this specific behavior with greater intensity than a witness. Third, while we were able to show that women perceive this type of behavior in different way than men, it may be beneficial to investigate the mediator of organizational level. Perhaps women at higher levels in the organization do not perceive the same uncivil behavior with the same intensity as women at lower levels in the organization. Finally, as we stated in the beginning of this investigation, meaning-making is a social process. Understanding what behavior is accepted as a social norm or embedded in a culture may have a definite impact on the way the behavior is perceived. For instance, in an organization whose culture could be described as "cut throat", different uncivil behavior may be accepted if not expected by employees that wish to get ahead. As opposed to organizations where leadership uses various forms of collaboration in which forms of uncivil behavior would be a barrier to being perceived as successful.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study demonstrated that individuals experience various forms of incivility with varying frequency. Further we demonstrated that individuals perceive the intensity of various forms of uncivil behavior at different levels. Women and minorities experience differing types of uncivil behavior at both different frequencies and different perceived intensity than males and Caucasians. These findings suggest that workplace incivility is an individual experience and not to be considered as an all or nothing phenomena in any organization.

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