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## **Editorial Note**

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**WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND STAFF JOB  
PERFORMANCE IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES: THE  
STUDY OF SOUTH-SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST OF  
NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the impact of workplace incivility on staff job performance in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional research design. Data was obtained from academic and non-academic staff in the Faculty of Management Sciences of the

thirteen (13) Federal Universities in South-South and South-East of Nigeria. The population for the study was 2,691 and 348 respondents were sampled from the selected thirteen (13) Federal Universities across eleven (11) states in South-South and South-East Nigeria. The technique of probability random sampling was employed for the selection of 300 respondents. The Statistical tool used for the analysis of data includes descriptive statistics, the jacquebera normality test and correlation tests. The ordinary least square multiple regression tests was conducted to test the hypothesis formulated using Stata version 13 software. The results show that: exclusionary behavior has a significant negative relationship with job performance of staff (Coef. 0.1901, p = 0.000),. There is significant negative relationship between workplace gossiping and job performance of staff (Coef. 0.3260, p = 0.000). Workplace hostility has a significant negative relationship with the job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East in Nigeria (Coef. 0.4020, p = 0.000). The study concluded that non-physical incivility like impoliteness, verbal abuse, harsh criticism, and non-cooperation among co-workers that manifest in the work environment can undermine employees' motivation for work and also reduce their abilities to perform.

**Keywords:** Exclusionary behavior, Workplace incivility, workplace gossiping, Employee Job Performance

## Introduction

The business world is thought by many to be one of the last bastions of civility. The usage of part-time workers, workforce diversity, reengineering, downsizing, budget cuts, increasing productivity pressures, and authoritarian work settings are some of the factors contributing to the rise in hostile and violent workplace behaviors (Porath & Pearson, 2020). There are fewer overt indications of what constitutes "appropriate" corporate behavior as organizations have become more flat and informal. Everyone wants to be treated with respect, thus it goes without saying that some fundamental decency and respect should be anticipated in any form of relationship, whether it be romantic, friendly, or physical. People desire to operate in an environment where they are respected, particularly in the workplace. Rude and disrespectful behavior can lead to disgruntled workers, damaged relationships, and a bad work atmosphere. Unfortunately, there are many instances of incivility on the job, including unpleasant remarks, being ignored, being impolite, and sarcasm. (Blau & Andersson, 2019; Tarraf, 2021).

Workplace incivility is a deviant behavior or can be described as acts that are of *lower intensity and frequency*—either verbal or non-verbal (Andersson & Pearson, 2019). It is also regarded as a less intense form of organizational mistreatment and includes behaviors demonstrating a lack of consideration toward others, in which the intent to harm is ambiguous. The goal of the perpetrator to harm the victim must be viewed as ambiguous, that is, there must be no obvious desire to harm, in order for behavior to be categorized as uncivil. Rude and uncourteous actions are defining characteristics of uncivil behavior. Examples of these actions include using derogatory language, making subtle threats, gossiping, disobeying instructions from coworkers, sending flaming emails, or otherwise acting in a way that shows disdain for

people at work. (Guo& Kumar, 2020; Rahim & Cosby, 2016).

Performance on the job is an extensively researched organizational concern since one of the key issues that most organizations face nowadays is the need to improve employee job performance (EJP). According to Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019), the primary problem for businesses is to assess employee job performance and think about how it may be made more effective and "valid." In other words, how can organizations use performance evaluation procedures to enhance their ability to differentiate between "good" employees (those who exhibit desired performance) and the undesirable ones? In order to manage personnel and, in turn, align them with the company's broader business strategy, it is crucial for organizations to be aware of their capabilities.

Improving employee job performance has been one of the most important objectives for several organizations. This is because higher levels of employee performance provide an organization and its employees with various advantages. For instance, higher performance leads to favorable economic growth, big profits and higher societal advancement (Sharma & Sharma, 2014). High-performing employees can also expect to receive greater pay, better working circumstances, and attractive job chances. Additionally, increased productivity typically maximizes an organization's competitive edge through cost savings and an increase in high-quality output (Hanaysha, 2016).

There is no doubt that productivity is crucial for the smooth operation and successful operation of any firm. Armstrong (2006) asserts that a company's success is mostly dependent on its workforce. As a result, in any industry, the level of organizational success is determined by personnel performance. The majority of workers are aware of the things that hinder their performance and productivity at work. According to Chebet (2015), investigating the variables that influence employee productivity is crucial in every economy.

To its primary stakeholders, the prominent actors responsible for the day-to-day management of University activities in Nigeria, the outcomes of this study will be extremely beneficial to them. Firstly, it offers them a better understanding of the subtle harmful work behaviors existing in the University setting that hitherto has not warranted serious attention. Secondly, it will enable them to take practical actions to limit the influences these lesser forms of organizational mistreatment have on performance outcomes. Furthermore, because regional variances in values or standards of politeness exist, past studies have discovered various manifestations of workplace civility issues. Due to the lack of a universal definition of incivility that can be accepted by all studies, there is still a need for research into this problem.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Key stakeholders in the University educational sectors are trying several options in a bid to stem the tide of dwindling performance among staff many of which are targeted at boosting the infrastructural facilities and increasing the emoluments and welfare packages of staff. In spite of these ongoing interventions, there has not been an appreciable increase in the overall work output. Evidence from observation reveals that employees are engaging in counterproductive work behavior instance as willfully disobeying instructions or performing work improperly. Even the interactions between academic or teaching staff members are now marked by sarcasm, rudeness, and disrespect, leading to strained relationships and disgruntled workers. Unfortunately, there is a serious problem with workplace rudeness in the academic setting. For sure, any organization that fails to recognize and deal with issues relating to incivility as they pile up may ultimately contend with overall performance problems later on. Thus, it can be rightly said that the explanation for the issues of job performance might border on the inability to address incivility in the workplace. On this account, this study attempts to examine the effect that components of workplace incivility could wield on employee

performance in Universities. Specifically, it will provide answers on how exclusionary behavior, gossiping, hostility, privacy, invasion and interpersonal conflict are connected to employee job performance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of workplace incivility on staff job performance in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria. In addition to this main objective, other specific objectives are to:

- a. Establish the effect of exclusionary behavior on job performance of staff in universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria
- b. Determine the influence of workplace gossiping on job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.
- c. Find out the effect of workplace hostility on job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the research questions raised are;

- a. How does exclusionary behavior impact job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria?
- b. Does workplace gossip influence job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria?
- c. To what extent does workplace hostility affect job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria?

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

To guide data collection and analysis, the researcher makes conjectural statements about the expected relationship of the research variables as follows:

$H_1$ : exclusionary behavior has no significant negative relationship with Job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

$H_2$ : There is no significant negative relationship between workplace gossiping and Job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

$H_3$ : Workplace hostility has no significant negative association with Job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **Workplace incivility: meaning and nature**

Workplace incivility is a term used more recently in the extensive research that is available on unethical behaviors (Hanrahan & Leiter, 2014). The concept was introduced by Andersson and Pearson in 1999. According to their definition, workplace incivility is low-intensity aberrant behavior that violates workplace norms for mutual respect while also having an uncertain intention to injure the target. Typically harsh and disrespectful, uncivil behavior shows a lack of consideration for others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). According to Tepper (2018), another definition of this concept is "subordinates' perceptions of the large extent to long-term use of hostile verbal and a nonverbal behavior pattern by bosses is common, excluding physical contact. These rude and insulting behaviors are typically rude and discourteous, they show a lack of regard for others, and they frequently include demeaning remarks and activities like "not listening to others" (Andersson and Pearson, 2019; Pearson and Porath, 2020). A unique feature of workplace incivility is that the intent to harm as perceived through the eyes of the instigator, the target, and/or the observers is ambiguous. We can all agree that workplace incivility is behavior that undermines respect for one another at work, even while what is deemed uncouth in one organization may not be uncouth everywhere.

## **Workplace incivility and workplace bullying: the differences**

Bullying and rudeness at work are both considered to be abnormal work habits. Because incivility can be misconstrued for bullying, it is frequently unclear how the two types of behavior vary in the workplace (Branch, 2018). Workplace bullying, in particular, differs from workplace incivility in that it happens when a person is repeatedly exposed to other employees' unkind behavior (Einarsen, 2000). These *purposeful* acts may include abuse that is frequent; teasing and mockery. Bullying is therefore more intense because of its intent, intensity and frequency (Hershcovis, 2020). Workplace incivility is believed to be the conduct of low intensity, the aim remains vague, and power imbalance is not a must, but workplace bullying is thought to be very persistent and demonstrates a clear power imbalance between two or more individuals (Hershcovis, 2020). The fact that there are no rules specifically prohibiting workplace incivility (Lim & Cortina, 2019) may be the reason why managers pay less attention to this type of hostile behavior than they do to more overt types of aggression (Lim & Cortina, 2019). Due to the fact that this type of behavior is subtler than workplace bullying and overt harassment, managers may not be aware of the effects of it in their departments (Lim & Cortina, 2019).

## **Workplace incivility outcomes**

The relationships that have been established between workplace incivility and outcomes, such as work engagement, workplace bullying, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention, were determined within the United States of America and other countries (Shim, 2015). Outcomes of incivility on workers can be viewed in terms of the individual, interpersonal relationships, and productivity. In terms of the individual, attitudes toward work, effort, and health will be presented. Interpersonal relationships will present a discussion of subordinates, peers, supervisors, and overall employee engagement. Productivity will include the constructs of job performance, innovation\creativity, and learning (Lan et al. 2020).

## **Exclusionary behavior**

There are many different definitions of exclusionary behavior, commonly referred to as workplace ostracism. According to Pearson et al. (2018), the most severe kind of ostracism involves death. Other examples of ostracizing behavior include curt reactions and other smaller exclusionary strategies. Exclusionary conduct can range from mild forms, such as curt reactions, to more severe situations, with ostracism behavior being the most severe, according to Guo and Kumar's (2020) perspective. Williams (2001) adopts a balanced stance in his study on ostracism, describing it as "any act or acts of ignoring or excluding an individual or groups by an individual or groups." There are many different types of exclusionary actions, such as giving someone the silent treatment, unrequited love, being shunned, ignoring another, outright rejection and not being invited to business meetings or social gatherings (Leary, 2001). Exclusionary behavior, in a sense, is the act of a person who excludes other employees from the organization to a significant degree (Kumar, 2020).

## **Workplace gossiping**

The term "gossip" refers to an unofficial, unconstrained, or casual conversation or reporting about other individuals that frequently includes unconfirmed facts (Kuo, Chang, Quton, Lu & Lee, 2015). Foster (2004) identifies the practice of making, hearing, or taking part in disparaging remarks about someone as gossip. In the office, idle conversation about absent coworkers is frequently considered to be gossip. Workplace gossip, as defined by Guo and Kumar (2020), is the dissemination of untrue or unfavorable information about coworkers to another individual or group with reference to their personal, private, and confidential information. Privacy protection: Since gossip may not always end up in the public domain, gossipers can escape responsibility and freely express their opinions without worrying about being found out. Therefore, seclusion offers a safe setting for emotional outpouring without the worry of being blamed or held accountable for one's words. Therefore, gossip is more likely to occur once the speakers' right to

privacy is respected.

### **Workplace hostility**

A hostile act aims to cause harm that is not just physical. The ones who have been seen most frequently in organizations tend to be impolite, rude, and show little consideration for others. A form of non-physical rudeness called "workplace hostility" aims to cause rage, hatred, or injury (Guo & Kumar, 2020). Workplace hostility encompasses acts that, like all other categories in the field of hazardous work behavior, can harm the target and which, as a result, the target is motivated to avoid. However, hostile behavior at work only refers to clear-cut incidents that consistently involve the same person or group of persons.

According to Bhaveet al. (2019), privacy invasion is felt when contextual standards are thought to be broken. For security reasons, forcing each employee to swipe an organizational identity card to enter their office might not go against privacy norms. Due to the fact that "it allows the employer the power to establish its responsibility simply by adjusting the work environment to lessen employee privacy expectations," the current standard exacerbates the already precarious power relations between employer and employee (Emily, 2017). The fundamental ideas of privacy doctrine are based on a distorted legal fiction of a separate "private sphere," which is unrealistic to provide protection in the contemporary workplace where distinct lines between work and private lives have blurred. As a result, it is not enough to rewrite the current legal tests.

### **Employee job performance**

One of the dependent variables that interest educators, businesses, the government, and society the most is job performance. Just now are academics and industry coming to an agreement on standard definitions and conceptualizations of individual level job performance. A conventional definition places more emphasis on the acts or behaviors of specific people than on the results or effects of those actions or behaviors (Cook, 2008). The micro and macro

definitions of job performance are two distinct theories and methodologies, according to Rotundo & Rotman (2002). The micro definitions focus on specific individual behaviors whereas macro definitions focus on productivity or effectiveness.

### **Workplace gossiping and employee job performance**

Research findings have suggested that workplace gossip and employee behavior are somehow connected (Kovac *et al.* 2015; Kong, 2018; Lufkin, 2021), from a different perspective Lufkin (2021), asserts that while some gossip can be petty and unprofessional, others can be fun, normal, even healthy and productive. Gossip was developed in order to facilitate cooperation in a group. By talking about other co-workers employees can learn whom to collaborate with and whom to stay away from, something that helps a group work better together. Similarly, Sommerfeld, Krambeck, and Milinski (2008) claimed that gossip includes positive information, and that gossip can deliver a more accurate, experiential truth than objective explanations. More specifically, positive gossip facilitates group member cooperation, and the levels of reciprocity trust and reputation between individual members are also enhanced. McAndrew, Bell, and Garcia (2007) posit that positive gossip facilitates information transmission and group dynamics. Research has shown that most gossips are benign. A 2019 study for instance, showed when researchers recorded conversations around 500 participants, the vast majority-more than three quarters- of the conversations weren't positive or negative but neutral. It could be banal information travelling through the grapevine, like "I heard Mary's daughter is majoring in business management"(Lufkin, 2021)

### **Workplace hostility and employee job performance**

There is no doubt that hostilities in the workplace influence employee job performance as well as organizational output. Guo and Kumar, (2020) discovered that hostilities that manifest in less dramatic ways can nonetheless have a tremendously negative

impact on a business by producing an environment marked by poor or non-existent communication, lousy morale, excessive employee absenteeism, turnover and low job performance. Several studies have raised concerns about the increased concern about the increased hostile behavior at the workplace. These behaviors are expressed in various ways like impoliteness, verbal abuse, harsh criticism, non-cooperation among co-workers, hiding information, all of which make the workplace inhospitable, which can negatively impact employee and organizational performance (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013). a hostile work environment wherein offensive remarks or actions based on a worker's gender, nationality, color, religion, disability, etc. impact their performance or make their workplace unpleasant for the harasser. This conduct may lower a worker's output and self-esteem (Robert Half 2021). Previous studies have shown a connection between poor job performance and several forms of workplace abuse, including bullying (Einarsen and Mikkelsen, 2003), hostile interpersonal conduct, and abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000).

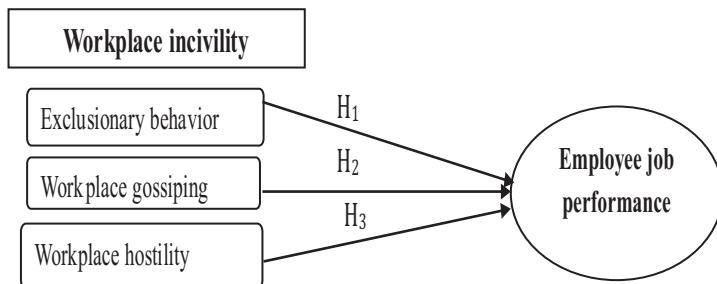
### **Privacy Invasion and employee performance**

Employers have advanced a number of reasons for employee surveillance like improving employee productivity, choosing and keeping trustworthy personnel, monitoring job performance, and even abiding by confidentiality agreements with relation to company dealings. From a different angle, though, heightened surveillance leaves no room for employee self-control and supervision. An employee who is no longer trusted by the employer creates a culture where the employee sees no incentive for being productive, resourceful and efficient. As a result, the employee will gradually start experiencing a decline in job performance overtime as the psychological impacts of the constant violation of privacy rights become burdensome. Employees that have reported a high measure of surveillance from their employer are often demoralized too and would seek to exit the organization whenever the opportunity arises (Kovac, Jordan, Tansen & Framinan, 2000). Bhavveet *al.* (2019), stressed that organizations

have a right to invade privacy and to collect information on their workforce in an objective manner. Through the course of the employment relationship, organizations need information regarding the ability, motivation, and performance of their employees.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The goal of a conceptual framework is to describe concepts relevant to the study and map relationships among them (McGaghie, Bordage and Shea, 2001).



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Researcher Conceptualization (2022)

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory is one of the key theories of social interaction in social sciences. The principal theorists that created the initial theories of social exchange were Homans, Blau, and Emerson (Cook, 2015). One of the earliest sociological theorists to concentrate on interpersonal interactions was Homans (1958), and for him, the main emphasis was on the individual conduct of actors in their interactions with one another. Homans (1961) defined social exchange as the exchange of activity between at least two parties, whether it is concrete or intangible, more or less rewarding or expensive. The cost was largely understood in terms of the opportunities or alternative activities that the concerned actors passed up.

The key ideas of Homans framed the investigation of social behavior in terms of rewards and penalties. Behavior that is generally rewarded persists (up to the limit of diminishing marginal utility). His first thesis, the success proposition, asserts that actions that result in favorable outcomes are likely to be repeated. The second hypothesis, known as the stimulus hypothesis, asserts that behavior that has previously resulted in rewards will be repeated in comparable circumstances. The third proposition, the value proposition, states that an action is more likely to be performed the more valuable the result of the action is to the actor. Because workplace disrespect is an interactive event or exchange involving two or more parties, the social exchange theory is applicable to this study. The 'costs' components of the theory, which are things that a person could view as bad in a relationship according to the theory, are what the indications of workplace incivility such as exclusionary behavior, gossiping, antagonism, privacy invasion and interpersonal conflicts relate to.

### **Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory**

Stevan Hobfoll's conservation of resources (COR) theory was put forth in 1989 as a way to supplement the existing research on stress as a construct. In essence, COR theory is a stress hypothesis that explains why people seek new resources while still maintaining their current ones. It provides a framework for understanding reactions to stress and contends that situations that entail the actual or threatened loss of high valued resources (Lanet al.2020). According to the COR theory, stressful work-related incidents that lead to resource depletion might either threaten or really happen. Put in proper perspective, the stress associated with workplace adversity depletes employees' energy resources, reducing their propensity to engage in performance-enhancing work behaviors (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Stock, 2015). According to COR theory, when employees encounter workplace disrespect, such as when they are shunned, their energy is depleted to the point that it becomes too distracting for them to perform the tasks necessary for their jobs (Abbas et al., 2014; Ng & Feldman, 2012). Because it

offers a helpful framework for examining the potential negative impacts of workplace incivility on job performance and how this effect could be mitigated, the COR theory is thus particularly pertinent to this research. Workplace rudeness is a form of interpersonal conflict as well as workplace stress (De Clercq, et al., 2017).

### **Hybrid theory of Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory**

According to the social exchange theory, persons who are trying to engage with society and the environment can think of their conduct as the outcome of cost-benefit calculations. That person will engage in the conduct if they believe they can gain more benefits from it than they will lose from doing so. In an organizational setting, the theory views the employee and the organization as exchange partners: The organization provides employees with material and social rewards in exchange for their work effort and loyalty. Contrarily, the COR theory contends that stressful situations at work pose a threat to or actually result in resource depletion. Put in proper perspective, the stress associated with workplace adversity depletes employees' energy resources, reducing their propensity to engage in performance-enhancing work behaviors. Emphasizing that employees tend to feel more energized when undertaking their job tasks if they believe their colleagues are supportive and include them in daily interactions. COR theory is particularly relevant to this research because it provides a useful framework in investigating the possible negative impacts of workplace disrespect on work performance and potential solutions.

This study adopts the hybrid theory of Social exchange theory and Conservation of resources theory that creates a model for understanding employee misbehavior. The two theories teach us two things: first, that employees who perceive unfavorable treatment from their employers should act in a way that

undermines their employer; and second, that employees are more motivated to complete their work tasks if they perceive their coworkers to be supportive and use them in daily interactions. According to this viewpoint, employee misbehavior would have its source in this. While organizations should provide a useful framework in investigating the possible harmful effects of workplace incivility on job performance and how this effect might be contained and that workplace incivility is an interactive event or exchange in which two or more parties are involved.

## **Empirical Review**

The research was conducted by Sharma and Sing(2016) to examine the effects of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and employees' turnover intentions in Indian work settings. The data for this study were collected from a simple random sample of 283 restaurant employees in the Northern and Western parts of India over an eight-month period utilizing the survey method. Principal component analysis can be used to measure the construct validity of a questionnaire while the Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy were administered on the data obtained from the survey. The statistical test for the Bartlett test of sphericity was found to be significant. Hierarchical regression analysis was utilized to measure the impact of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and the turnover intentions of employees. The study found that the restaurant industry in India experiences moderate to high levels of workplace-incivility-related concerns. Further regression analysis found that, in the Indian context, workplace rudeness is also adversely correlated with job satisfaction and favorably correlated with employee attrition. It was recommended that the responsibility of owners and managers of these restaurants is to ensure that the structure, operations and culture of their organizations do not accommodate any injustice or rudeness toward any of their employees.

With the use of psychological capital as a mediating variable, Guo

and Kumar (2020) evaluated how workplace uncivility affected organizational results. Organizational commitment, job engagement, and job satisfaction were measures of organizational outcomes. A quantitative research method was used to collect relevant data from a sample of 250 teachers employed by the Ministry of Education, Fiji. Multiple regression analyses were the major statistical tools used in testing the study hypotheses. According to the findings, workplace rudeness has a negative impact on organizational commitment, job involvement, and job satisfaction. Second, there was a bad correlation between psychological capital and workplace rudeness. Thirdly, psychological capital significantly and positively correlated with organizational commitment, job involvement, and job satisfaction, as was anticipated. Fourth, psychological capital was found to play a major mediation role in the relationship between workplace disrespect and organizational success. Finally, a useful suggestion was made for the Ministry of Education staff in Fiji. This study is different from the present study because it was done in a developed country, while this present study is carried out in a developing country (Nigeria).

Workplace uncivility influences employee work performance in hotels in Thika town (CBD), Kenya, according to a study by Musyoka (2020). The study's overarching goal was to examine the impact of workplace rudeness on employees' job performance in hotels in Thika. Investigation of workplace uncivility among hotel employees, assessment of employee performance in hotels, and identification of a link between workplace uncivility and employee job performance was the particular goals. It was a cross-sectional survey for this study. Using stratified random sampling, 133 individuals were selected from the target population of 200 hotel employees. The structured questionnaire that was used to collect the data was validated by a pretest study that was given to the sample size. A total of 85 respondents—70% employees and 30% managers from various hotels—returned their questionnaires. Data that was given in tables and figures were

obtained by analyzing objectives 1 and 2 in terms of percentages and frequencies. Pearson correlation analysis was employed for objective three. (-) 0.60 was the Pearson coefficient of correlation (r). The results showed that there is a high degree of workplace rudeness in hotels in the center of Thika town, and that this has a significant impact on hotel performance since it lowers employee morale. Additional research revealed a link, although a harmful one, between workplace rudeness and job performance.

In their study, DeClercq et al. (2017) looked into how employees' perceptions of workplace ostracism might affect how well they perform at work as well as how their self-efficacy might mitigate this link. It also takes into account how the self-efficacy of workers may change in accordance with their level of employment. The data for the study came from longitudinal surveys of Pakistani employees and supervisors in 22 organizations, who work in multiple sectors, such as banking, telecommunication, and textiles. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in three rounds of the survey. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied in the assessments of the convergent and discriminant validity of the three focal constructs. The study's hypotheses were put to the test using regression analysis. The findings show a negative association between workplace exclusion and job performance, but this relationship is reduced at greater levels of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy plays a particularly significant balancing function for workers at higher employment levels. The practical implication was that businesses might reduce the possibility of underperformance by encouraging employees' confidence in their own abilities and competencies even when they are unable to stop some of their employees from feeling excluded by other team members.

Lan, Xia, Li, Wu, Hui, and Deng (2020) investigated the association between workplace incivility by supervisors and coworkers and newcomer proactive behaviors, drawing on the conservation of resources (COR)theory. The association between

workplace incivility toward newcomers and their proactive behaviors was examined using resource depletion as a mediator variable and the newcomer's proactive personality and current organizational tenure as moderators. In two subsidiaries of a big food processing company in China, data on 322 newcomers and their immediate supervisors were collected using a time-lag research method to test hypotheses. To examine the validity of the six key constructs, several confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted using AMOS 22.0. Linear regression analysis was utilized to test H1, after controlling for the effects of age, gender, education and position while the remaining hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 22 with a 5000-resample bootstrap method to construct 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs). The findings demonstrate a negative relationship between newcomers' proactive behaviors and workplace disrespect. Resource depletion acts as a mediator in this interaction. Additionally, the proactive attitude of newcomers moderates the association between rudeness at work and resource exhaustion. Moreover, the interaction between a newcomer's proactive personality and their present organizational tenure moderates both the direct effect of workplace incivility on the depletion of resources and its indirect effect on newcomer proactive behaviors.

From the Empirical studies reviewed, it was observed that there was a gap in content and scope. Firstly, concerning the content, not all reviewed work used all the Workplace Incivility variables and hence their findings cannot be generalized, hence this study. As regards Scope, most of the works reviewed were done in developed countries, while the ones done in Africa were done in East and North Africa, hence there is a contention in geographical scope, and hence a gap the study seeks to fill.

## Methods

Survey approach is deemed to be the most appropriate for this study since the issue of concern deals with opinions, perceptions or attitudes of individuals which cannot be measured directly because we cannot observe them. Within the survey research, a cross-sectional study that involves drawing a sample of elements from the population of interest that are measured at a single point in time is used. With respect to these constituents part, the target population of the study comprises academic and non-academic staff in the Faculty of Management Sciences of the 13 Federal Universities located in the South-South and South-East region of Nigeria as at September 2021 (NUC updated list, 2021). The population comprised two thousand, six hundred and ninety one (2,691) (Personal interview, January 17 - 21, 2022).

A sample is the representativeness of the population from which it is drawn if the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same aggregate characteristics of the population (Agbonifoh&Yomere, 1999). The sample size is derived using the Taro Yamani's formulas stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Therefore, 348 were deemed appropriate to form the sample size, having a population of 2,691.

**Table 1 Proportionate Distribution of the sample size to the selected University**

S/N	List of Federal Universities in South-South, South-East Nigeria	Population	Sample Size
1.	University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun	102	(102/2,691)*348=13
2.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	112	(112/2,691)*348=14
3.	Federal University, Ndifur-Alike, Ebonyi State	301	(301/2,691)*348=39
4.	Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa	305	(305/2,691)*348=39
5.	Michael Okpara University of Agricultural Umudike	114	(114/2,691)*348=15
6.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	311	(311/2,691)*348=40
7.	University of Benin	324	(324/2,691)*348=42
8.	University of Calabar	161	(161/2,691)*348=21
9.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	211	(211/2,691)*348=28
10.	University of Port-Harcourt	315	(315/2,691)*348=41
11.	University of Uyo	220	(220/2,691)*348=28
12.	Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko, Delta State	113	(113/2,691)*348=15
13.	Federal University of Technology, Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State	102	(102/2,691)*348=13
		2,691	348

**Source: Researcher's Computation**

A combination of convenience and quota sampling techniques which are non-probability sampling was used. Convenience sampling is deemed fit to be relevant because workplace incivility is a sensitive issue that targets don't usually want to talk about. Thus, the employees who participated in the survey are selected based on their willingness and availability. The addition of quota sampling was informed by the need to have a representative of a different group (i.e. academic staff and non-academic staff) and to prevent overloading the sample with a subject having certain characteristics.

**Table 2 Quota distribution of the sample size of selected companies**

S/N	Categories	Percentage	Number
	Academic Staff	65%	$0.65*383=226$
2	Non-Academic Staff	35%	$0.35*383=122$
	Total	100	348

Source: researchers' computation, 2022.

The instrument used for data collection is a single set of a structured questionnaires which is developed in accordance with generally accepted survey research principles. The questionnaire is divided into three sections (A, B and C) containing questions on respondents profile and another in closed ended questions pattern on constructs and variables of the study. The 5 point Likert type rating scaled responses are used for the closed-ended questions. A Likert scale is commonly used to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavioral changes. A Likert-type scale involves a series of statements that respondents may choose from in order to rate their responses to evaluative questions (Vagias, 2006). The scaled responses are as follows: 1=Never (N), 2=Rarely(R), 3=Sometimes (S), 4=Often(O), 5=Always (A). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing data. Descriptive statistics involves the computation of frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation etc., which are useful to

identify differences among groups. Inferential analysis assists in understanding relationships between the study variables. In order to meet the research objectives of the study, all valid responses were assessed using regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was chosen because it is best suited to test the relative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Regression analysis describes the way in which a dependent variable is affected by a change in the value of one or more independent variable. It helps to predict the value of a dependent variable using one or more independent variables (Kometa (2007).

### **Operationalization of workplace incivility**

At the first stage of measurement, workplace incivility was operationalized in terms of five indicators (exclusionary behavior, gossiping, hostility, privacy invasion and interpersonal conflict) as identified in previous studies. (Guo & Kumar, 2020; Sharma & Sing, 2016). Subsequently, these five measures were adopted from standardized scales of previous studies and operationalized as follows:

**Exclusionary behavior**— silent treatment, curt responses, social exclusivity, involuntary isolation and unreturned greetings (DeClercq *et al.* 2017; Hitlan, *et al.*, 2006). **Workplace gossiping**— destructive information, unreliable capability appraisal, private life comments and finance profiling gist (Kong, 2018; Kuo *et al.*, 2015), **Workplace hostility**— belittling comments, resources denial acts, stressful workloads and undue interference (Selden & Downey, 2012)

### **Operationalization of employee job performance**

The individual work performance questionnaire is used to measure the dependent variable of firm performance. It will be measured in three perspectives of *task performance*, *contextual performance* and *counterproductive work behavior* on the questionnaire items (Koopmans, 2015; Ramos-Villagrasa, *et al.* 2019). This is a self-

report scale an approach that measures job performance using the three main dimensions of it.

### Models Specification

$$EJP = f(WPI) \dots \text{equation (1)}$$

$$WPI = (EXB, GSP \text{ and } HST) \dots \text{equation (2)}$$

To further simplify this equation, the variables in this study are juxtaposed to fit the model. Therefore, the equation (1) and (2) is expanded as:

$$EJP = \alpha + \beta_1 EXB + \beta_2 GSP + \beta_3 HST + \beta_4 PVI + \beta_5 IPC + \varepsilon; \dots \text{equation (3)}$$

Where:

**EJP:** employee job performance is the dependent variable.

**EXB:** exclusionary behavior

**GSP:** workplace gossiping

**HST:** workplace hostility

$\beta_i$  the coefficients of the regression.

$\varepsilon$ : error term.

## Results

The response rate for this study was 89.9%. Three hundred and forty-eight (348) copies of a single questionnaire were administered to respondents, out of which three hundred and thirteen (313) representing about eighty nine percent (89.9%) were retrieved while thirty-five (35) were not returned. After assessing the retrieved questionnaire through data preparation, thirteen (13) were rejected due to acts such as multiple ticking, blank responses, halfway ticking etc. Hence, only three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were unable to achieve the study objectives and testing hypotheses.

**Table 3 : Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	189	63
Female	111	37
Total	300	100
<b>Age</b>		
18-28 years	18	6
29-39 years	120	40
40-50 years	136	45.3
Above 50years	26	8.7
Total	300	100
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	53	17.7
Married	221	73.7
Separated	12	4
Divorced	14	4.6
Total	300	100
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>		
WAEC/GCE/NECO	30	10
OND/NCE	33	11
HND/B.Sc.	85	28.3
MBA/MSc.	115	38.4
Ph.D.	37	12.3
Total	300	100
<b>Staff category</b>		
Academic staff	236	78.7
Non-academic staff	64	21.3
Total	300	100
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
1-3 years	146	48.7
4-7 years	87	29
7-10 years	51	17
Above 10 years	16	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Name of institution</b>		
Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun		
Federal University of Technology, Owerri	11	3.7
Federal University, Ndifur-Alike, Ebonyi State	17	5.7
Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa	22	7.3
Michael Okpara University of Agricultural Umudike	25	8.3
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	10	3.3
University of Benin	12	4
University of Calabar	61	20.3
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	43	14.3
University of Port-Harcourt	37	12.3
University of Uyo	29	9.7
Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko, Delta State	19	6.3
Federal University of Technology, Ikot Abasi,	14	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: computed from field survey data, 2022

## Analysis of Data

**Table 4: Exclusionary behavior (EXB)**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N (1)		R (2)		S (3)		O(4)		A (5)	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	Co-workers refuse to communicate with me or acknowledge my presence.	20	6.7	20	6.7	49	16.3	117	39	94	31.3
2	Co-workers give brief and rude responses to my questions or demands.	10	3.3	27	9	19	6.3	155	51.7	89	29.7
3	Co-workers avoid me in group-related discussion and activities.	26	8.7	48	16	41	13.6	39	13	146	48.7
4	I involuntarily sit alone in a crowded lunchroom or canteen at work.	-	-	29	9.7	39	13	144	48	88	29.3
5	My greetings go unanswered.	-	-	60	20	55	18.3	58	19.3	127	42.4

Source: Analysis of Field Survey, 2022

**Table 5: Gossiping (GSP)**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N (1)		R (2)		S (3)		O(4)		A (5)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
6	I perceive co-workers communicated damaging information about me in the workplace.	20	<b>6.7</b>	27	<b>9</b>	19	<b>6.3</b>	145	<b>48.3</b>	89	<b>29.7</b>
7	I perceive co-workers talk about my	-	-	28	<b>9.3</b>	40	<b>13.4</b>	88	<b>29.3</b>	144	<b>48</b>
	credibility in job the role and experience.										
8	I perceive co-workers talk about major life events in my life.	25	<b>8.3</b>	49	<b>16.3</b>	41	<b>13.6</b>	39	<b>13</b>	146	<b>48.7</b>
9	I perceive co-workers gist about earnings and financial investment decisions.	-	-	9	<b>3</b>	29	<b>9.7</b>	174	<b>58</b>	88	<b>29.3</b>

Source: Analysis of Field Survey, 2022

**Table 6: Hostility (HST)**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N (1)		R (2)		S (3)		O(4)		A (5)	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
10	I have been subjected to derogatory name calling.	6	<b>2</b>	32	<b>10.7</b>	63	<b>21</b>	101	<b>33.6</b>	98	<b>32.7</b>
11	I have had co-workers needlessly destroy or take the resources that I needed to do my job.	36	<b>12</b>	159	<b>53</b>	77	<b>25.7</b>	18	<b>6</b>	10	<b>3.3</b>
12	I have been given unreasonably workloads or deadlines more than co-workers.	-	-	48	<b>16</b>	22	<b>7.3</b>	113	<b>37.7</b>	117	<b>39</b>
13	I have had co-workers interfere with my work activities.	-	-	67	<b>22.3</b>	79	<b>26.3</b>	70	<b>23.3</b>	84	<b>28</b>

Source: Analysis of Field Survey, 2022

**Table .7: Measures of Employee job performance (EJP)**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N (1)		R (2)		S (3)		O(4)		A (5)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
21	In the past 6 months, I managed to plan my work but prevalent workplace incivility in most cases affected my ability to finish it on time.	-	-	9	3	54	18	107	35.7	130	43.3
22	In the past 6 months, I wasn't able to carry out my work efficiently due to workplace incivility	-	-	7	2.3	29	9.7	174	58	90	30
23	In the past 6 months, I find it difficult to keep my work skills up-to-date.	-	-	18	6	41	13.6	95	31.7	146	48.7
24	In the past 6 months, I couldn't come up with creative solutions for new problem.			27	9	19	6.3	165	55	89	29.7
25	In the past 6 months, most time I focused on the negative aspects of situation at work instead of the positive aspects			66	22	44	14.7	40	13.3	150	50

Source: Analysis of Field Survey, 2022

### Bartlett test for sampling Adequacy

The null hypothesis of equal variances is not rejected (Bartlett test p-value < 0.05)

### KMO Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, takes values between 0 and 1, with small values indicating that overall, the variables have too little in common to warrant a PCA. Thus, from the above test the result (0.90 to 1.00 marvelous).

### Table 8 Descriptive characteristic Data collected

#### Source: Researcher's computation (using Stata version 13.0)

The table shows the descriptive properties of the data set used for the analysis, the constructs have a maximum value of 5 indicating that the respondents always experience or encounter at some point for all the questions asked, while the minimum of 2 for the constructs except employee job performance of staff in South-South Public Universities and minimum of 1. On the average the

respondent chooses 4 (often). The descriptive statistics Table further shows that the sample size of 300 respondents were sampled (n=300)

**Table 9: Normality Test**

**Source: Researcher's computation(using Stata version 13.0)**

The result of the normality test shows that all the variables are normally distributed at 5% level of significance. Hence, any recommendations made to a very large extent would represent the characteristics of the entire population of the study.

**Table 10: Correlations among the Variables**

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Source: Researcher's computation (using Stata version 13.0)**

The result in Table 10, reveals that there is a positive correlation analysis involving the dimensions of workplace incivility and employee job performance. Workplace incivility maintained a positive correlation with employee job performance.

**Test of Hypotheses (Post-Regression Diagnostic Test)**

**Test for Heteroskedasticity**

**Source: Researcher's computation (using Stata version 13.0)**

The test for heteroskedasticity, shows that the variation between the dependent and independent variables are homoscedastic, in that there is no heteroskedasticity problem (12.86 (0.1203)). Implying that, the model is free from the presence of unequal variance. This further indicates that our probability values for drawing inferences on the level of significance are reliable and valid. Thus, validating the OLS results hence, the regression results can be used to test the formulated hypotheses.

## **VIF Test**

**Source:** Researcher's computation (using Stata version 13.0)

The result shows the test for variance inflation factor test (VIF); the mean VIF value reported is 1.37 which is less than the benchmark value of 10 points to the absence of multicollinearity.

## **Ramsey Regression Equation Specification Error Test (RESET)**

**Source: Researcher's computation**

The results obtained from the test for Ramsey regression equation specification error test, the probability value of 0.8075, implying that the model has no omitted variables.

## **Table 11:Workplace incivility dimensions (independent Variable) on employee job performance (dependent Variable)**

**Dependent Variable: Employee Job Performance**

**Source:** Researcher's computation (using Stata version 13.0)

**H<sub>i</sub>:** **Exclusionary behavior has no significant negative relationship with the Job performance of staff in universities in South-south and South-East Nigeria.**

The regression result output in table 11 shows that the exclusionary behavior dimension of workplace incivility has a significant effect on employee job performance (Coef. 0.1901, p = 0.000), the p-values for exclusionary behavior is less than 0.05, hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate, which state that exclusionary behavior has a significant relationship with Job performance of staff in universities in South-south and South-East Nigeria.

**$H_2$ : There is no significant negative relationship between workplace gossiping and Job performance of staff in universities in South-south and South-East Nigeria.**

The regression result output in table 11 shows that workplace gossiping as a dimension of workplace incivility has a significant effect on employee job performance (Coef. 0.3260,  $p = 0.000$ ), the  $p$ -values for workplace gossiping variable is less than 0.05, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate, which state that there is a significant relationship between workplace gossiping and Job performance of staff in universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

**$H_3$ : Workplace hostility has no significant negative association with Job performance of staff in universities in South-south and South-East Nigeria.**

The regression result output in table 11 shows that workplace hostility has a significant effect on job performance of Staff in universities in South-south Nigeria (Coef. 0.4020,  $p = 0.000$ ), the  $p$ -values for workplace hostility is less than 0.05, hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate, which state that workplace hostility has a significant relationship with Job performance of staff in universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria.

As indicated in Table 11, Adj. R-Squared of the models is 0.555 implying that 55.5% change in job performance is accounted for by the joint predictive power of exclusionary behavior, gossiping, hostility, privacy invasion and interpersonal conflict. Thus informing us that the dimensions of workplace incivility: gossiping and hostility adversely decrease our ability to perform. Implying that, workplace incivility reduces employee performance.

## **Discussion of Results**

### **Exclusionary behavior and employee job performance**

The test of hypotheses above showed that the exclusionary behavior dimension of workplace incivility has a significant adverse effect on employee job performance of staff in universities in South-South Nigeria (Coef. 0.1901, p = 0.000), with the p-values for exclusionary behavior dimension of workplace incivility less than 0.05, this led to the acceptance of the formulated alternate hypothesis, implying that the two variables moves in opposite direction such that when exclusionary behavior is on the increase, there is a decrease in employee job performance of staff in Universities in South-South Nigeria. Similarly, when exclusionary behavior is on the decrease, there is an increase in employee job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria. This finding is in alignment with De Clercq, Haq, and Azeem (2017) assertion that the energy depletion employees experience when they face adverse work situations, such as when they are excluded, may become so distracting that it diminishes their ability to meet their job requirements. Similarly, according to Williams (2001) if employees sense that they are being ignored and deprived of social support, they also may fear for their personal standing in the organization diminishes, and the associated drainage of energy prevents them from devoting sufficient effort to meeting the performance standards set by their organization.

### **Gossiping and employee job performance**

The result shows that workplace gossiping as dimension of workplace incivility has a significant adverse effect on employee job performance of staff in universities in South-South and South East Nigeria (Coef. 0.3260, p = 0.000), the p-values workplace gossiping is less than 0.05, therefore, we accept the alternate, which state that there is a significant relationship between workplace gossiping and job performance of staff in universities in

South-South and South East Nigeria. What this means is that when there is rise in the incidence of gossip among employees, there is decline in Job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South-East Nigeria and vice versa. The finding is also supported by Kuo et al. (2015) discovery that job related gossips have encouraged a rise in cynicism as cynicism may undermine leaders, institutions and HR strategies. For instance, cynics at work distrust the motives of the leaders, and employees with cynical views may feel that their employers will exploit their contributions. Furthermore, Pate, Martin, and Staines, (2000) emphasized that when gossip is just 'talking trash'- commenting on someone appearance for example- it serves no purpose, and therefore negative, problematic and damaging on employee work behavior.

### **Hostility and employee job performance**

The regression result output shows that workplace hostility has a significant adverse effect on job performance of Staff in universities in South-south Nigeria (Coef. 0.4020,  $p = 0.000$ ), since the p-values for workplace hostility is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate, which state that workplace hostility has a significant relationship with Job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South East Nigeria. This implies that when workplace hostility is on the increase, there is decrease in employee job performance of staff in Universities in South-South and South East Nigeria and vice versa. This is in consonant with Guo and Kumar, (2020) findings that hostilities that manifest in less dramatic ways can nonetheless have a tremendously negative impact on a business by producing an environment marked by poor or non-existent communication, lousy morale, excessive employee absenteeism, turnover and low job performance. This is further supported by Hutchinson and Jackson, (2013)statements that a hostile workplace environment where unsavory comments or behavior based on gender, nationality, race, religion, disability etc affects a worker's performance or creates an unfavorable work environment for the

person being harassed.

## **Conclusion**

Workplace incivility refers to low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect while employee job performance are actions or behaviors under the control of the employee, that contribute to the organization's goals. In light of the foregoing findings noted, the relevant conclusions made regarding the relationship between dimensions of workplace incivility and employee job performance are stated: When employees perceive that their colleagues intentional leaves them out of group related activities regularly and overtime their confidence level begins to diminish which will eventually affect their performance. Thus, group acceptance or rejection is paramount to any employee work outcome. In a work setting where indulgence in gossip is well pronounced or is the order of the day, productivity is bound to suffer due to the negative toll it takes on the subject of gossips and the fact that gossips steal from their productivity work time to do it. Non-physical incivility like impoliteness, verbal abuse, harsh criticism, and non-cooperation among co-workers that manifest in the work environment can undermine employees' motivation for work and also reduce their abilities.

## **Recommendations**

1. Adequate effort should be put in place to disseminate timely and accurate information about developments in the institutions, and people should be encouraged to share their opinions on issues in meetings so that others get information from firsthand sources.
2. Academic institutions authorities should promulgate rules that forbid the usage of unsavory comments and proper penalty should be taken against the violators of these regulations.
3. The management of public universities must have privacy

policy clearly stating employee data that can be collected, aim for collection measures the company will take in case of data breach.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

1. The study shows that exclusionary behaviour has a significant adverse relationship with job performance of staff in universities in south-south and south-east Nigeria.
2. The study reveals that there is a significant adverse effect between workplace gossiping and job performance of staff.
3. The study demonstrated that workplace hostility has a significant adverse effect with job performance of staff.

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