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Federal Women, Incivility, Job Satisfaction, and Job Stress

Wanda Harris Pemberton
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Wanda Harris Pemberton

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The Office of the Provost

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2019

Abstract

Federal Women, Incivility, Job Satisfaction, and Job Stress

by

Wanda Harris Pemberton

MBA, American Continental University, 2006

BA, University of North Carolina, 1986

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

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Abstract

Incidents of incivility in the workplace have continued to increase in frequency. Workplace incivility impacts the health and well-being of those who experience or witness the behavior and impacts morale, levels of engagement, attendance, retention, and overall organizational health. Researchers have explored the damage caused by workplace incivility, but few have focused on the impact of incivility among federally employed women. The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to examine the relationship between incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress among women working in the federal sector. The affective events theory framed this study. Online surveys were used to capture perceptions of workplace incivility while controlling for demographics (i.e., age, race, ethnicity, general schedule level, position, and tenure). Survey responses from 94 federally employed women were analyzed using a regression model. Findings revealed a negative correlation between job satisfaction and job stress, and a positive correlation between incivility and job stress. The findings can be used to create a positive social change within organizations. Organizational development professionals can use the analyses to interrupt and reverse patterns of negative workplace interactions and worker mistreatment.

Key words: civility, incivility, job satisfaction, job stress, federal sector, women

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Levy and Lucille Harris. Thank you for supporting me through thick and thin, financially and emotionally. None of this would have been possible without you, and for that I will always be grateful. This is “our” degree! I am also grateful for Lillian Grace, Catherine Starke, Bobby Pemberton, and Ms. Hannah Hall Spicer. They have all transitioned, but I believe they are watching over me and cheering me on.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

It is important for every organization to create a culture of civility that allows all members to be treated with kindness and respect, yet incidences of incivility, rudeness, and disrespect continue to rise in both the private and public sectors (Duffy & Lee, 2012; McCorkle, 2010; Weber Shandwick, 2016). Incivility has been described as low intensity rudeness and disrespect, which reflects a level of disregard for others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Leiter, 2013; Porath & Pearson, 2013). The presence of incivility within an organization may indicate that the overall environment is suitable or vulnerable to more severe forms of negative workplace behavior (Leiter, 2013). Incivility continues to increase in work environments across the United States such as in the federal sector (Bondioli, 2016; PBS, 2016; Schreck, 2016; Williams, 2016).

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to explore the relationship between workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress among women working within the federal government. Many studies have focused on workplace incivility and its impact on American and international workers, students, teachers, and nurses (Callahan, 2011; Clark, 2011; Doshy & Wang, 2014; Forni, 2003; Galbraith, 2008; Michigan State University, 2016). But fewer studies have been focused on the perceptions and impact of incivility on employee attitudes within the federal workplace (Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, & Belton, 2009). The potential positive social change implications of this study include providing organizations with an enhanced understanding of the behaviors that signal the presence of incivility. Organizations that understand the behaviors that represent incivility (versus other more overt forms of

behavior like harassment or bullying), can create strategies that reduce the frequency of that behavior, reduce the likelihood of negative workplace outcomes, and transform toxic work environments into healthy work environments. Chapter 1 begins with an overview of incivility's impact on workers in an organization (those who experience or witness it). Chapter 1 also includes an overview of the study variables, the problem statement, and a discussion of the study's significance to the field of organizational behavior.

Background of the Study

Incivility can appear as sarcasm, impatience, the use of a condescending tone or an unfriendly expression, or eye rolls during meetings (Leiter, 2013; Porath, 2015). It can also appear as thoughtlessness, dismissiveness, or the absence of courtesy. Prolonged exposure to incivility can lead to employee disengagement (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Leiter, 2013). In comparison to other negative workplace behaviors (i.e., bullying and harassment), incivility is more subtle, but incivility can lead to negative outcomes for the organization, the individuals who witness it, and for the individuals who experience it (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Zhou, 2014). Researchers have found that individuals who were exposed to workplace incivility (either as a recipient or observer) experienced adverse impacts on their mental health, physical health, and overall well-being as a result of the exposure (Cook, 2015; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Porath, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2009).

During a recent radio interview, Governor Rick Snyder stated that incivility was the greatest menace challenging the United States (Michigan Radio, 2017). Moreover, incivility directed toward women, including those in the public sector has also garnered

more attention in recent studies (Gaines-Ross, 2016; Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2012; Miller, 2016). Researchers have reported that women tend to be on the receiving end of incivility in the workplace more frequently than men (Chui & Dietz, 2014; Miner & Eischeid, 2012; Zurbrugg & Miner, 2016). Additionally, Cortina and Kabat-Farr (2008) and Cortina (2012) suggested that selective incivility is the practice of expressing biases that can marginalize women and people of color.

Several positive trends regarding the employment of women in the federal government have been reported, but the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has not issued a specific report related to incidences of incivility within the federal sector. In 2014, the Office of Personnel Management reported that women comprised 43.3% of the federal workforce; among people with disabilities in the federal service, 35.6% were women, and women comprised 18.7% of the veterans working in federal civilian service (Office of Personnel Management, 2014a). Despite a lack of direct reports on incivility, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2011) recently launched a training program designed to prevent harassment and improve respect within the federal workplace. This study contributes to the existing research on workplace incivility within the federal sector. To further explore the existence and impact of incivility in the federal sector, I controlled for the following respondent demographics: gender, age, race, ethnicity, grade/general schedule (GS) level, position, and tenure (see Appendix A).

Problem Statement

Incivility is mistreatment that occurs on the less aggressive end of the continuum of bad workplace behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, 2015). It is an ongoing

issue in the workplace, which impacts organizational culture, job satisfaction, attrition, and the general well-being of staff including those who just observe (Porath, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2009, 2013; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). Viewing incivility as a “social process” can enhance understanding of its impact on those who witness acts of incivility (Holm, 2014, p. 5). Witnessing incivility can cause the witness to experience feelings of anger, fear, anxiousness and despair, especially when the target of the incivility is the same gender (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Hewett, Liefoghe, Visockaite, & Roongrerngsuke, 2016; Miner & Eischeid, 2012).

Organizations have become more aware of the importance and necessity for diversity and inclusion in the workplace, yet workers across the United States still deal with issues of mistreatment, discrimination, and gender inequities in the workplace (Cook, 2015; Cortina et al., 2001; Zurbrugg & Miner, 2016). Forms of less direct negative workplace behaviors (like workplace incivility) continue to persist because of their subtle nature (Zurbrugg & Miner, 2016). The EEOC (2017) has defined harassment as “a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in the Employment Act of 1967, and the American’s with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).” However, more subtle forms of workplace mistreatment (i.e., small slights, minor insults, and aggravating behaviors) are not covered by those regulations. Workplace incivility differs is less obvious than negative workplace behaviors like harassment and intolerable leadership (Bar-David, 2012), which makes it difficult to for the person on the receiving end to determine the true intentions of

the person demonstrating the less than civil behaviors (Porath, Gerbasi, & Schorch, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2009, 2013; Schilpzand, DePater, & Erez, 2014).

Workplace incivility can impact employee engagement and cognition in many ways and at every level of the organization (May, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Porath 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Zanderer, 2000). However, there is a lack of research on incivility in the federal sector. The civility, respect, and engagement at work (CREW) study (National Center for Organization Development [NCOD], 2015) is one of the few studies to target a federal population. Additionally, Veterans Affairs employees who have experienced higher levels of civility have also reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Osatuke et al., 2009). There is also a correlation between higher levels of civility and reductions in attrition (i.e., intent to leave). Reductions in the use of sick leave hours taken and fewer equal employment opportunity complaints registered have been associated with the decrease in acts of incivility (NCOD, 2015; Osatuke et al., 2009).

This study was focused on federal women because researchers have reported disparities in the way men and women experience incivility in the workplace (Chui & Dietz, 2014; Gaines-Ross, 2016; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Miner & Eischeid, 2012). For example, Kabat-Farr and Cortina (2012) reported that women and minorities were more likely to experience incivility or other rude behaviors than other groups. As a result, I controlled for variables to facilitate the examination of similar disparities within the federal sector.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study quantitative, correlational study was to explore the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility (independent variable), job satisfaction (dependent variable), and job stress (dependent variable) among women working in the federal government. Incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress were operationalized to facilitate multiple regression analysis. I also controlled for gender, age, race, ethnicity, GS/grade, position, and tenure (see Appendix A). The purpose was to analyze the relationship between these variables and add to the literature on incivility, workplace attitudes, and affect among women working in the federal sector.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were derived from the review of existing literature in the areas of incivility in the workplace, job satisfaction, and job stress.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale and job satisfaction, as measured by Section 5 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the federal government, after controlling for respondent demographics?

H_0 1: There will not be a relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics.

H_a 1: There will be a relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale, and job stress, as measured by Section 6 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the federal government, after controlling for respondent demographics?

H₀₂: There will not be a relationship between job stress and the experience of incivility, after controlling for respondent demographics.

H_{a2}: There will be a relationship between job stress and the experience of incivility, after controlling for respondent demographics.

For Research Question 1, I expected that civilian women in the federal workplace who experience, or witness incivility will report lower levels of job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics. For Research Question 2, I expected that participants who report higher levels of incivility would also report higher levels of perceived stress, after controlling for respondent demographics.

Theoretical Foundation

Several theories have been used to support the study of incivility and worker mistreatment (Cortina et al., 2001; McFarlin, 2016; Paulin & Griffin, 2016; Schilpzand, Leavitt, & Lim, 2016). The affective events theory (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and the risk management model of incivility (Leiter, 2013) were selected to inform this research because both theoretical concepts have been used show the correlation between negative workplace encounters and their impact on employee attitudes and engagement (Jimenez et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2008). Employee attitudes can shift for many reasons such as external factors that include marital discord, financial fragility, lifestyle changes,

social factors, and cultural shifts (Hersey, 1932; Watson, 2000; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss, Nicholas, & Daus, 1999).

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) proposed that the AET could be used to highlight the connection between work events and the corresponding emotional response to that event. The AET is a psychological model (see Figure 1) that was created to clarify the relationship between the constructs of emotion, feelings, job performance, and resulting behaviors in the context of work (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002). The AET focuses on “structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work” (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996, p. 11).

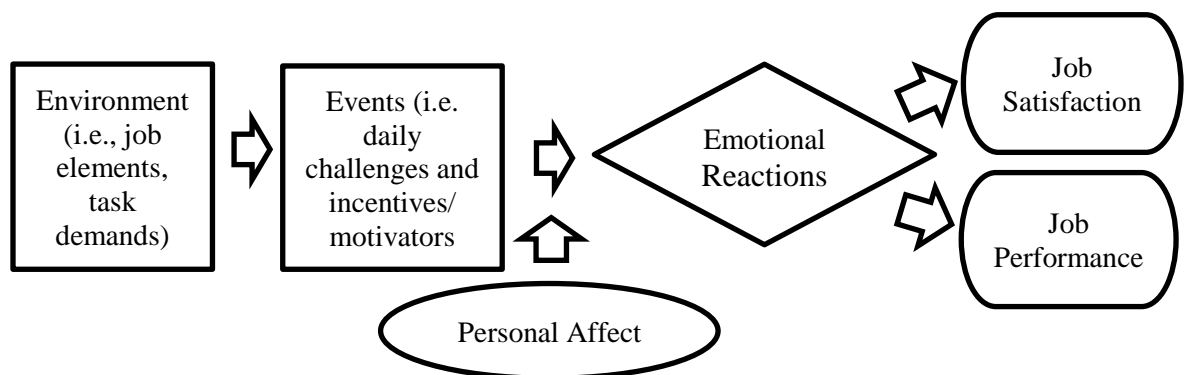


Figure 1. Affective events theory model.. Graphic interpretation based on a review of research conducted by Ashkanasy, Hartel and Daus (2002).

Research has supported the use of the AET for shaping and clarifying the use of an intentional strategy for addressing workplace attitudes and the overall wellness of workers. For example, Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, West, and Dawson (2006) found a significant relationship between workplace elements like supervisory support, worker commitment, job satisfaction, and worker affect. Wegge et al. also reported a connection between emotional commitment, wellness, and job satisfaction. Later research also

revealed a connection between mood, thought processes, and motivation in addition to a connection between affect, the appraisal process, witnessing or experiencing negative actions, and the outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, stress, or in some cases, the desire to leave the organization; Bunk & Magley, 2013; Glasø, Vie, Holmdal, & Einarsen, 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For instance, observing acts of incivility impact perceptions of the victim and may lead to more patterns of disrespect and discord in the workplace (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). The AET highlights the intersect between emotions, moods, job performance, and job satisfaction. The research questions in this study reflect these aspects.

Previous studies have not shown the significant impact of emotions at work (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008), but the AET helps to understand the emotions at work and the types of occurrences that can trigger them. Work events can trigger emotional reactions, which can then affect workplace attitudes and workplace behaviors. Worker affect can impact the level of worker commitment to the organization, the level of engagement, or the desire to leave the organization (Human Resource Management, 2007). Positive effects and negative effects can be indicators of job satisfaction, and incorporating the influence of emotion is a unique component of the AET (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002; Glasø et al., 2011; Robbins & Judge, 2009). The negative actions and outcomes being addressed in this study are not as severe as events that fall under the categories of bullying and harassment (Holm, Torkelson, & Backstrom, 2015; Porath, 2015). Additional details regarding the theoretical foundation of this study are provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The approach to this study was quantitative, and a correlation model was used to examine relationships between the selected variables. The study variables were incivility (independent variable), job satisfaction (dependent variable), and job stress (dependent variable). The target population for this study consisted of female members of the federal workforce, who were selected using a purposive sampling strategy (see Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Affinity groups that serve federal women were targeted. I controlled for demographics (including gender), because some affinity groups have male members. Regression was used to analyze findings, which helped to identify the existence (positive or negative) of a connection between the selected variables (Gordon, 2015; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009; Siddharth, 2011). Survey questions came from existing instruments which have demonstrated validity and reliability (see Appendices B and C). Data were collected using an online survey, which was distributed to affinity groups associated with women working in the federal sector. Several recent studies have explored the impact of civility in the workplace (Hershcovis, 2011; Hershcovis, & Reich, 2012; Miner & Cortina, 2016), but this study was designed to address a gap in the literature concerning the impact of workplace incivility on women working within the federal sector.

Definitions of Terms

Affect: “The conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes” (“Affect,” n.d.).

Affective response: The general psychological state of an individual, which may include emotions and/or mood within a given situation (Haile, Gallagher, & Robertson, 2014).

Affinity group: An organization comprised of individuals who are interested in the concerns and needs of a specific group of people. The existence of affinity groups enhances diversity and inclusion efforts, as they can represent different demographics. Some examples of affinity groups within the federal sector are Blacks in Government, Federally Employed Women, the African American Federal Executives Association, Society of American Indian Government Employees, and the Federally Asian Pacific American Council (EEOC, 2013; National Coalition for Equity in Public Service, 2006).

Counterproductive workplace behavior: Describes employee behavior that is in opposition to interests and benefits of the organization. The behaviors can harm the organization and/or individuals in the organization. Counterproductive workplace behavior is used to capture actions that are deviant, rather than unethical or illegal (i.e., tardiness, gossip, harassment, bullying, etc.; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Penney & Spector, 2005; Welbourne & Sariol, 2017).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): Federal entity responsible for enforcing the federal laws that prohibit discrimination, harassment, unfair hiring practices, and unfair terminations (EEOC, 2017).

Federal government: The federal government consists of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The executive branch includes the cabinet, executive departments, and agencies. For the purposes of the study, the terms federal government

and federal workers are used to identify nonmilitary staff employed by a federal agency (USA.gov, 2017).

General schedule (GS): This term refers to the primary pay scale used within the U.S. civil service. Commonly referred to as the GS, it covers positions that comprise most of the technical, administrative, and clerical positions in the federal government (Office of Personnel Management, 2015b).

Harassment: Overt behavior that can include name calling, the use of racial slurs, and other derogatory comments (EEOC, 2017).

Job satisfaction: This variable was measured using the job satisfaction subscale developed by Clark, Landrum, and Nguyen (2013) as a part of their Organizational Civility Scale (OCS). In the context of this study, job satisfaction includes the level of contentment with coworkers and the existence or perception of growth opportunities (Clark et al., 2013).

Job stress: The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job are not congruent with the abilities, needs or resources of the work. Can lead to poor health and/or injury (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2014).

Micro-aggressions: Daily verbal and nonverbal slights that convey negative or unwelcoming messages communicated to a target, simply because of who they are (i.e., race, gender, ethnicity; Sue, 2010).

Organizational citizenship behavior: Refers to positive, constructive behaviors, exhibited by an employee, which is designed to support colleagues and benefit the

organization. Examples of organizational citizenship behavior include being courteous, being conscientious, altruism, and sportsmanship (Organ, 1988; Turnipseed & Turnipseed, 2013).

Organizational climate: The perceptions and feelings held by members of an organization, regarding the culture of that organization (Difference Between, 2014; Johnson, 2000). Organizational climate has also been described as a construct that links the attributes of an organization to its inclinations and rituals (Benzer et al., 2011).

Organizational culture: Assumptions and norms that govern the workplace behavior. Has also been described as the *why* behind the way things get done (Difference Between, 2014; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013; Watkins, 2013).

Stress: Term used by Hans Selye (1936) during his research on lab animals. He exposed the animals to various physical and emotional stimuli (i.e., lights, loud noises, extreme temperatures, and annoyances). Selye suggested that different offenses could cause the same diseases and discomforts in animals and humans (American Institute of Stress, 2017; Szabo, Tache, & Somogyi, 2012).

Stressor: Any activity or event that results in the release of stress hormones. A stressor may be a physical or psychological stimulus that causes the feeling of stress (Centre for Studies on Human Stress, 2017; TM Blog, 2015).

U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Federal agency tasked with providing policies and guidance on the topics of human resources, diversity, staffing, hiring, etc. (Office of Personnel Management, 2014b).

Workplace civility: Behavior that is in alignment with respectful workplace norms. This includes being courteous, respectful, and considerate of others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Clark et al. (2013) enriched this definition by incorporating a measure to reference a mission and vision statement that reflected the concept of civility as an organizational norm and addressed the likelihood of group members turning to other group members who were violating norms (Clark et al., 2013).

Assumptions

Not every researcher defines incivility, micro-aggression, or worker mistreatment in the same way. In the context of this study, workplace incivility is in alignment with the work of Cortina et al. (2001) and the work of Andersson and Pearson (1999). It was assumed that study participants would be candid and provide honest responses and that the data were accurate. I also assumed that providing a link to an online survey would increase the likelihood of robust participation, due to the ease of accessibility and anonymity (Donnelly, 2010).

Scope and Delimitations

The OCS (Clark & Landrum, 2010) and the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001) were used to capture respondent perspectives regarding the presence of incivility in the workplace and its impact on their job satisfaction, and job stress. The survey also captured control variables like age, gender, ethnicity, tenure, position, and grade. Current and former federal staff at all levels were queried. Surveys were made available to affinity groups which support and/or cater to federal women (e.g., Federally Employed Women, Govloop, and GovExec).

Survey participants were asked to self-report regarding their experience with and perceptions of workplace incivility. Participants were also asked to provide information regarding their ethnicity and other demographic information so that I could examine variances in the perception of incivility, based on those control variables. This study was not directed at specific federal agencies. The survey was accessible through social media and affinity group sites (i.e., Blacks in Government, Federally Employed Women) to protect the identity, and privacy of the study participants. The chosen methodology was quantitative and correlational. Regression was used to analyze findings.

Limitations

The target population was limited to federal, civilian employees in affinity groups that support women working in the federal sector. The authors of the WIS (Cortina et. al, 2001) and the OCS (Clark et al., 2010) developed the instruments by studying populations who were most likely not exclusively federal workers, so there is a possibility that responses could be skewed. The underrepresentation of some groups limited the depth of insight and information received from those unrepresented groups. To counter the impact of that limitation, purposive sampling was used.

Significance of the Study

Workplace incivility is something that can be experienced at every level of the organization (Bartlett, Bartlett, & Reio, 2008; Berenbaum, 2010; Cortina et al., 2001; May, 2015; Porath 2015; Trudel & Reio, 2011). For this study, I examined the impact of workplace incivility on women within the federal workforce. This approach adds to the limited body of research associated with incivility within the federal government among

women, regardless of their position or role within their respective organization (Davenport, 2015; Fischer, 2015; May, 2015; Shim & Chang, 2012).

Incivility in the workplace has a negative correlation to employee well-being (Pearson, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). Bringing more attention to incidences of workplace incivility and filtering these experiences by gender, ethnicity, and other control variables creates an opportunity to identify techniques, practices, or policies that could reduce occupational stress caused by incivility. The findings could also add a meaningful layer to existing research in the following areas: organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), micro-inequities, and unconscious bias (Brogaard, 2013).

Implications for Social Change

Workplace incivility affects targets and observers (Cortina et al., 2001). The resulting positive social change from this study is a deeper understanding of the way tolerated incivilities may impact the social behaviors in organizations at all levels. When incivility goes unaddressed, the organization begins to view that behavior as normal, which can have an adverse impact on employee health, levels of engagement, employee attitudes, and the perception of risk (Frederikson & Dewe, 1996; Holm, 2014; Leiter, 2013; Porath & Pearson, 2013). Social change may be achieved by helping federal staff strengthen their focus on and understanding of workplace incivility. By providing tools to measure the impact of incivility on its most vulnerable populations, organizations can enhance existing efforts to improve the culture of organizations by disrupting existing

behavior patterns which support uncivil behaviors as a routine practice (Cortina et al., 2001; Holm et al., 2015).

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 provided details around the concept and impact of workplace incivility.

Findings from the Office of Personnel Management (Office of Personnel Management, 2014a, 2014b), and the EEOC (2013, 2015, 2017) were introduced to highlight some of the issues impacting federal employees. Although the FedView findings are generally positive, the questions posed did not directly address the topic incivility, as defined by Andersson and Pearson (1999). However, the Veterans Affairs CREW study showed a correlation between decreased incidents of incivility, decreases in absenteeism, use of sick leave and decreases in the number of grievances submitted with the Veterans Affairs system (NCOD, 2015; Osatuke et al., 2009). The goal of the current study was to better understand the impact of workplace incivility among women in the federal workplace, their perceptions of incivility, and how these experiences and perceptions may impact their job satisfaction and job stress. This research contributes to the existing research concerning incivility in the federal workplace.

Chapter 2 contains the theoretical frameworks and concepts that serve as the basis for this study. Key sections address the following: workplace incivility, incivility and women in the federal government, job satisfaction, and job stress. The literature review includes an overview of existing literature on the impact and consequences of workplace incivility. The theoretical section also contains a proposed model of the current study. Chapter 3 provides details regarding the design, sample, survey instrument, and data

analysis to be performed. Chapter 4 contains results and data analyses, and Chapter 5 contains conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Workplace incivility is an issue that is increasing in frequency (Gaines-Ross, 2016; Holm, 2014; Jimenez, Dunkel, & PeiBl, 2015). Workplace incivility is associated with negative outcomes including reduced levels of employee engagement, increased levels of emotional discomfort, and reductions in the overall health of the organization as well as its members (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cook, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2013). However, research focused on strategies to resolve incivility in the federal sector has been limited. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress within the federal sector. I explored incivility and how it may be experienced in the workplace by women working in the federal government. Demographic information was collected from study participants so that feedback could be sorted by gender, race, ethnicity, age, position, grade, and tenure.

Chapter 2 includes seminal and recent literature related to the following constructs: workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. The goal of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the exploration of a relationship between the referenced variables and women in the federal government. The literature reviewed for this study ranges from 1932 through 2017. Referenced research topics include incivility, workplace dynamics, and the constructs of job satisfaction, and job stress.

Literature Search Strategy

Information for this research has been gathered through online searches and databases, including PsychINFO, PsycArticles, Emerald Management, ScienceDirect,

and EBSCO. The literature includes peer-reviewed journal articles, online articles, reports, surveys, and books. Data sources include the Internet, the Office of Personnel Management, the Harvard Business Review, Science Direct, APA psychnet, and a number of peer-reviewed journals (i.e., the *Journal of Applied Psychology*; *Journal of Personnel Psychology*; *Journal of Personnel Management*; *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, the *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*; *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*; *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*; and the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*). The following keywords were used: *workplace incivility*, *incivility*, *civility*, *women*, *job satisfaction*, *anxiety*, *stress*, *coping*, *antecedents to civility*, *organizational climate*, *micro-inequities*, *diversity*, *leadership*, *attrition*, *government*, *women in leadership*, *women in government*, *minority managers*, *diversity in government*, *government leaders*, and *federal managers and attrition*.

Theoretical Foundation

Employee attitudes can shift between negative and positive for many reasons, so I chose the AET as the theoretical foundation to understand the relationship between these attitudes, causes for the attitudes, and job satisfaction. For example, external factors can include marital discord, financial fragility, lifestyle changes, social factors, and cultural shifts (Hersey, 1932; Watson, 2000; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss, Nicholas, & Daus, 1999). Another important factor and the focus of this study is workplace incivility, which induces feelings of stress in those who experience and/or witness it (McFarlin, 2016; Paulin & Griffin, 2016; Schilpzand et al., 2016). Incivility impacts the climate of

an organization, and individuals on the receiving end of incivility tend to experience harmful side effects (i.e., distress, depression, low job satisfaction, anxiety, and burnout; Clark et al., 2013; Reid & Ghosh, 2009; Singh, Chauhan, Agrawal, & Kapoor, 2011).

Origins of the Affective Events Theory

The AET was selected to frame this research because of its underlying premise, which is the tangible connection between emotions, job satisfaction, and other behaviors that sometimes appear in the workplace (Ashton, James & Ashkanasy, 2008; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Although other researchers have examined the impact of stressors like incivility and bullying on the behavior of workers (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Lazarus & Cohen, 1977; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015), Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) were one of the first to examine the connection between job satisfaction, work events, and an affective response.

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) discussed three theories that addressed the construct of affect: cognitive judgement, social influence, and the dispositional approach. The cognitive judgement approach was based on elements of Lawler's (1973) discrepancy theory, which is associated with job satisfaction research. Lawler used the theory to address the difference between actual outcomes and perceived outcomes at work. Fairness was perceived by the worker when there appeared to be balance between amount of effort expended in comparison with other workers in the organization or group (Lawler, 1973; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

The social influence approach is best reflected in the social information processing theory, posited by Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) and updated by Zalesney and

Ford (1990). Zalesney and Ford found a connection between the sociocultural context and the way it influenced how workers are assessed. The social information processing theory was viewed as a credible alternative to the cognitive judgement approach, because it addressed the constructs of cognition and emotion. In contrast, the cognitive judgement approach did not highlight the benefit or impact of affect on shifts in employee attitudes (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Zalesney & Ford, 1990).

Finally, the dispositional approach influenced AET because of its focus on affective elements. The dispositional approach and other dispositional theories typically highlight the influence of personality traits (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Staw and Ross (1985) generated renewed interest in this theory by suggesting that earlier theories may have been too focused on situational elements in the workplace rather than a blend of affective and situational elements.

Other researchers have addressed the value and challenges associated with viewing emotion and incivility as stressors in the workplace (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreine, & Schawfeli, 2001; Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2006; Lazarus & Cohen, 1977; McFarlin, 2016; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Walther, 2015). For instance, Millar and Tesser (1986) suggested that cognitive-based analyses were more effective than affect-based measures when trying to predict organizational citizenship behaviors (see also Organ, 1988). In contrast, McFarlin (2016) stated that stress in the workplace was a significant contributor to worker mistreatment, observing a correlation between the pressure of pending deadlines, unsuccessful projects, extended work days, and the presence of incivility. Further, Watson and Slack (1993) posited that job satisfaction and

personality traits of the individual are reciprocal in their level of influence on each other. Consequently, organizations would likely face legal challenges if they only opted to hire employees who displayed a positive affect (Staw & Ross, 1985).

Sample Application of the Affective Events Theory

Researchers have applied AET in similar ways to the current study. For example, Rodell and Judge (2009) used the AET and transactional stress model to focus on the interrelationships between hinderance stressors (i.e., frustrations, lack of clarity, discord and annoyances) and challenge stressors (i.e., timelines, volume of work, job complexity). Challenge stressors may lead to employee growth and development, whereas hinderance stressors can lead to employee disengagement (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007; Rodell & Judge, 2009). Challenge stressors and hinderance stressors may also impact citizenship and counterproductive workplace behaviors. The AET was used to identify whether emotions resulting from certain events would impact workplace behavior for 112 participants who were recruited online (Rodell & Judge, 2009). The AET helps capture the impact of an individual's disposition and the effect that disposition could have on the level of emotional response to a work event (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). After conducting a series of regressions, Rodell and Judge found positive correlations between challenge stressors and attentiveness as well as hinderance stressors and anger in addition to feelings of anxiety triggered by both challenge and hinderance stressors. There were also indirect correlations between hinderance stressors and counterproductive behaviors but no significant connection between hinderance stressors and citizenship behavior. There may have also been a connection between citizenship

behaviors and anxiety, but the connection was not as apparent. Citizenship behaviors could have been impacted by anxiety because many people avoid scenarios that generate anxiety if they have the option to do so. Avoidance is often used in attempts to cope with feelings of anxiety (Boyes, 2013; Lazarus, 1991).

Similar to Rodell and Judge (2009), I used the AET as the theoretical framework because it facilitates the examination of affect and stressors within the context of a work environment. The current study was also similar to Rodell and Judge’s research in that participants were anonymously recruited online and findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge associated with reducing the incidences of counterproductive workplace behaviors. Figure 2 represents the hypothesis model for this study based on the AET.

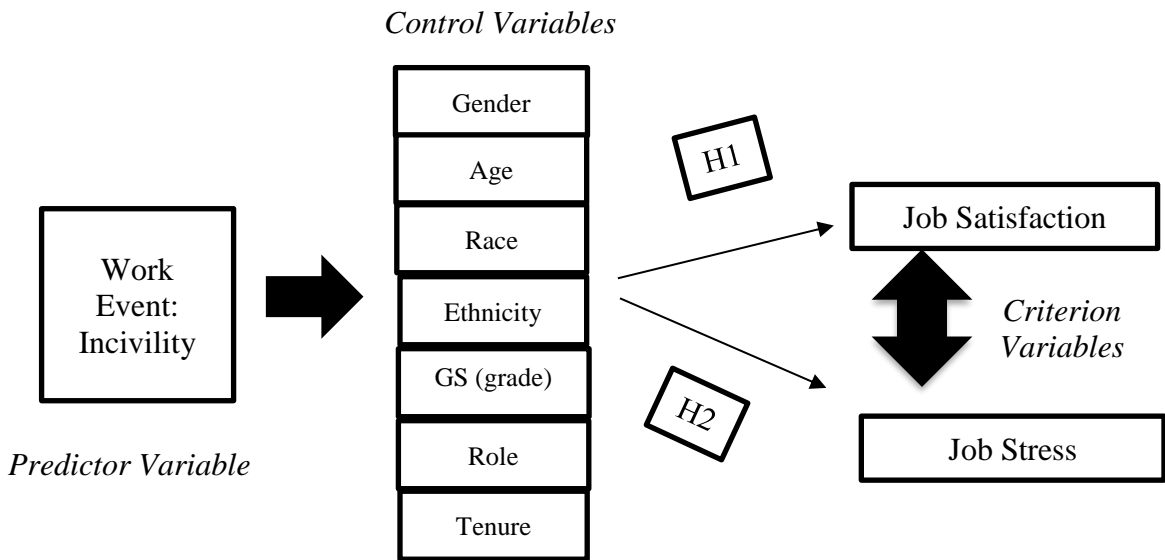


Figure 2. Proposed hypothesis model.

Alternative Theory

The risk management model of incivility, as posited by Leiter (2013), was also considered as a framework for this study. Leiter focused on the impact incivility could have on the sense of security, and belonging among members of an organization. Leiter reported that incivility and civility were styles of behavior that reflect the degree of appreciation, helpfulness, and value that exists in a workplace community. There are three key principles in the context of the risk management model and incivility: (a) fit/acceptance in the organization is important; (b) members of the organization are sensitive to the way others are treated and notice the unspoken messages of acceptance or rejection (i.e., warm, welcoming smiles versus dismissive, rude behavior); and (c) workplace behaviors are perpetual (Leiter, 2013). When members of an organization observe another treated with respect, it sends a message about that person that they deserve respect and acceptance. Conversely, an organizational climate that allows its members to be mistreated sends a negative message about the value of its members. Incivility creates feelings of uncertainty within the organization, which flow back into the organizational culture and climate (Leiter, 2013).

Both the risk management model and AET are in alignment with the purpose of this study, because they both highlight the adverse impact of incivility on employee affect and attitude (Ashkanasy, Hartel & Daus, 2002; Leiter, 2013). Both theories also highlight how small offenses can lead to significant shifts in behavior and engagement on the part of the target. However, in contrast to the AET, the risk management model of incivility emphasizes how incivility impacts the sense of security and belonging among members

of an organization (Leiter, 2013). The AET was selected for this study because it facilitates the examination of job satisfaction and job stress, as both outcomes and affective reactions to the witness or experience of incivility in the workplace (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Glaso et al., 2011).

Literature Review

Workplace Incivility

Interest in incivility has increased over the past 20 years (Schilpzand et al., 2014). Initial studies related to this topic tended to focus on more overtly aggressive workplace behaviors (e.g., bullying, harassment, abusive from supervisors, etc.), but incivility has emerged as a unique category of unpleasant workplace behavior. Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined workplace incivility as: “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard to others” (p. 457).

Much of the current literature on negative behaviors in the workplace is focused on aggressive actions, which can be both overt and direct (e.g., bullying, harassment, physical violence, etc.; Hershcovis & Cameron, 2011; Hershcovis, & Reich, 2012; Miner & Cortina, 2016). On the continuum of bad workplace behaviors, incivility falls at the lower end of the spectrum (see Figure 3), because it is more ambiguous and subtle than other deviant workplace behaviors (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bar-David, 2012; Trudel, 2012; Vickers, 2006), which can make it difficult to identify to true intentions of the perpetrator (Porath & Pearson, 2013; Schilpzand et al., 2014).



Figure 3. Continuum of bad workplace behavior. Graphic interpretation based on “Incivility, Harassment and Bullying: The Business Case,” by S. Bar-David, 2012.

Lower positioning on this continuum does not make incivility any less impactful to the culture of an organization where it is manifested (Medina, 2012; Watkins, 2013). Incivility has been described as a precursor to more significant forms of workplace aggression (Cortina, 2015; Lawrence, 2016). Incivility can impact the health of an organization, and it is associated with increased health problems, declines in performance, absenteeism, and attrition (Lim et al., 2008; Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, 2011). Researchers have also reported links between incivility, decreases in levels of job satisfaction, increases in the use of sick leave, increases stress, and increases in the number of grievances within the context of an uncivil work environment in the United States (Benzer et al., 2011; Miner & Eischeid, 2012; Porath & Pearson, 2010). Further, incivility can lead to increased levels of stress, decreases in job performance, and decreases in employee engagement (Schilpzand et al., 2016).

Workplace aggression and responses to these behaviors are shaped by the social context of the organization (Hershcovis, Reich, Parker, & Bozeman, 2012). Group members who have been recipients of workplace aggression have also the most likely to be perpetrators of workplace aggression on others. The retaliation is more likely to occur when the perpetrators are in positions of power (Hershcovis et al., 2012). Similarly, witnessing workplace incivility is influential (Hershcovis et al., 2010; Porath, 2015). If the observers react negatively to the person displaying the incivility, the likelihood of

future acts are reduced. If the observers respond in a negative way toward the recipient of the incivility (e.g., the target), then it becomes more likely that the perpetrator would repeat the unpleasant behavior (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015; Pearson, 2015). Employees can suffer from its effects, even if the exposure to incivility is only experienced on an intermittent basis. Exposure to incivility at work can lead to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, ulcers and elevated levels of glucocorticoids, which can trigger over eating and obesity (Porath, 2015).

Certain managerial conflict styles could mitigate incidences of workplace incivility (Hershcovis & Cameron, 2011). Research has been focused on the impact of leadership behavior and the role of the leader in the role of instigator and/or victim of retaliation (Reid & Ghosh, 2009). Leaders who seek “win-win” outcomes are less likely to initiate or experience workplace incivility. However, research has not suggested the impact workplace incivility may have on the likelihood of a manager to remain in an environment where workplace incivility is viewed as a workplace norm. Although this study is not focused on incivility between subordinates and supervisors, these findings address how incivility impacts workplace culture and environment.

Workplace incivility is costly to organizations because of its adverse impacts on staff engagement, morale, and productivity (Porath et al., 2015). Conversely, being civil could have a positive impact on the ability to influence and lead others (Porath et al., 2015). Civility seems to be declining in the workplace, but where it is present, the behavior positively impacts the entire organization (Hershcovis & Cameron, 2011; Porath et al., 2015).

Findings from the third annual Civility in America Survey revealed that 70% of American's believed incivility had reached a crisis level in the United States and 26% of survey respondents reported exiting their jobs due to incivility experienced in the workplace (Woody, 2013). Wellbourne, Gangadharan, and Sariol (2015) posited that ethnicity and cultural perspectives may influence the way incivilities are experienced. The researchers suggested that more research was needed to explore how minorities experience workplace incivilities and how they process those experiences of workplace incivility (Wellbourne et al., 2015). Those findings support the inclusion of demographics in the current study (see Appendix A).

Incivility in the Federal Government

In 2005, the NCOD created a “culture change initiative” within the Department of Veterans Affairs. This initiative was called CREW, an acronym for civility, respect and engagement in the workplace. CREW was designed in response to feedback from Veterans Affairs employees. Staff reported that frequent incidences of incivility were creating an adverse impact on their levels of job satisfaction. CREW was created to help staff improve the organizational climate by increasing the frequency of civil interactions. Because of the implementation of CREW, overall job satisfaction has increased for administrators, clinicians, and non-clinical staff. There has also been a reduction in sick leave taken and a reduction in the number of equal employment opportunity complaints, within the Veterans Administration (NCOD, 2015).

In a recent online survey entitled, *Civility in America*, (Weber Shandwick, 2016), feedback from 1,005 adults in the U.S. workforce revealed the following: 70% felt that

incivility in the U.S. was severe; 79% felt that incivility in government was impairing their ability to resolve issues; 61% felt that incivility was discouraging people from seeking positions in the public service (Weber Shandwick, 2016).

Findings from the recent Gaines-Ross (2016) study revealed the following statistically significant differences between male and female perceptions of incivility: 72% of women versus 61% of males viewed incivility as a serious issue in the U.S.; 23% of women versus 15% of male respondents were more likely to exit a job due to the experience of incivility. Although the Gaines-Ross study was not focused specifically on women in the federal sector, the results were relevant for this study because they reflected disparities in the way women and men experienced incivility, in the workplace. Other researchers also found significant correlations between the reported experience of incivility and the reported experience of gender harassment (Chui & Dietz, 2014; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Miner & Eischeid, 2012).

Recently the Office of Personnel Management (2015a) released the results of two surveys: the Senior Executive Exit Survey Results and the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results (this is commonly referred to as the FEDview survey or FEVS). The Senior Executive Exit Survey revealed the perspectives of 221 executives from 24 different Federal agencies. The Office of Personnel Management survey was designed to capture candid responses regarding executive work experiences and how they viewed their respective agencies. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents identified organizational culture as a factor which influenced their decision to exit the federal service. Other studies reveal a negative political climate, low levels of support and

increased scrutiny of government employees also contributed to problems with attrition and recruitment of senior and executive level staff, within the government (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a; Senior Executives Association, 2015; Senior Executives Association, 2015a).

The 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey was designed to measure federal employee's perceptions in eight specific areas: personal work experiences, work unit, Agency, supervisor, leadership, satisfaction, work/life and demographics (Office of Personnel Management, 2015b). Personal work experiences were addressed in the first 19 questions of the survey. Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with statements which addressed training, access to information required to complete tasks, the availability of resources to complete work assignments, how well expectations were communicated, the opportunity to use gifts and talents; physical working conditions; the performance appraisal process; accountability, and whistleblowing. Other sections of the survey addressed communication between staff and management, recognition; respect, trust and confidence (Office of Personnel Management, 2015b). Those questions addressed job satisfaction and (indirectly) organizational climate, but there were no specific references to experiences which could be classified as examples of incivility.

Incivility and Women in the Federal Government

Existing literature which addresses the impact of incivility on women is plentiful, but literature which specifically addresses women in the Federal Government is limited (Cortina, 2008; Cortina, Lonsway, Magley, Freeman, Collinsworth, Hunter, & Fitzgerald,

2002; Gaines-Ross, 2016; May, 2015; Miner & Cortina, 2016). In 2013, the EEOC published a report which addressed that status of women in the federal government. The report was prepared by an internal agency workgroup, which was assembled in 2011 and charged with identifying and the contents were derived from research and feedback from affinity groups representing women. This report is relevant to the current study because negative workplace behaviors (e.g. sexism, racism, disrespect and unconscious bias) can be hidden behind the label of incivility (Cortina, 2008; Schat & Frone, 2011; Porath, Gerbasi and Schorch (2015). Those behaviors can also lead to stress and job dissatisfaction among staff on the receiving end (Cortina, 2008; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001).

Workplace incivility has been defined as a less intense, more ambiguous form of negative workplace behavior (Lawrence, 2016; Porath, 2015). Workplace incivility has also been identified as a factor which can adversely impact employee engagement in a myriad of ways, at every level of the organization (May, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Porath 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Zanderer, 2000). Incivility in the workplace differs from other forms of negative workplace behaviors (e.g., bullying, aggression, or working under an abusive supervisor) because it is less overt, which makes it difficult to determine the true intentions of the person exhibiting rude behavior (Porath, Foulk & Erez, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Schilpzand, De Paer, & Erez, 2014). The following are obstacles that the EEOC faces in addressing incivility:

- Inflexible workplace policies create challenges for women with caregiver obligations in the federal workplace.

- Higher-level and management positions remain harder to obtain for women.
- Women are underrepresented in STEM fields in the federal government
- Women and men do not earn the same average salary in the federal government
- Unconscious gender bias and stereotypical perceptions about women still play an important role in employment decisions in the Federal Government
- There is a perception that federal agencies lack commitment to achieving equal opportunities for women in the federal workplace

The experience of incivility has been shown to adversely impact the moods, emotions, and overall well-being of workers who experience and/or witness it (Pearson, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Porath & Pearson, 2013; Watson, 2000; Watson & Slack, 1993).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined topics in the realm of workplace and organizational literature (Singh et al, 2011; Suma & Lesha, 2013). The construct of job satisfaction has been defined many ways: the way an employee feels about their role in the workplace; the combination of psychological, physiological and environmental elements which generate feelings of satisfaction within the job holder; a combination of positive or negative feelings towards one's work; and an individual's experience of enjoyment, accomplishment, and acknowledgement in conjunction with their work (Herzberg, 1976; Hoppock, 1935; Spector, 1997; Vroom, 1964).

Several researchers identified several measurable dimensions of job satisfaction: cognitive, evaluative, and affective (Bernstein & Nash, 2008; Brief & Roberson, 1989; Motowidlo, 1996; Organ & Near, 1985). While other researchers highlighted other aspects job satisfaction, which included working conditions, co-worker relationships, feedback and social relationships (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Some researchers have also questioned the accuracy of measures designed to capture one aspect over another. Brief and Roberson (1989) suggested that researchers who focused on the affective aspect of job satisfaction, tended to use instruments that were designed to capture the cognitive aspects of job satisfaction.

As job satisfaction research continued to evolve, the language used to identify and measure the affective aspect of job satisfaction also evolved (Motowidlo, 1996; Weiss, 2002). This evolution is important to acknowledge, because researchers have presented different positions when trying to define job satisfaction as an attitude or as an evaluative judgement (Weiss, 2002; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Researchers also found that affective and cognitive measures ultimately have similar predictive value, when used to determine levels of job satisfaction (Millar & Tesser, 1986; Moorman, 1993).

Landy (1978) asserted the existence of a connection between job satisfaction, levels of employee productivity, employee engagement, levels of attendance, punctuality, mishaps, physical health, and mental health. Clark, Landrum and Nguyen (2013) created the OCS, which will be used to collect data for this study. The researchers found a negative correlation between incivility and job satisfaction in the workplace, at staff and leadership levels within the organization (Clark et al., 2013).

Job Stress

Job stress has been defined as a counterproductive corporal and affective reaction to tasks which do not align with the abilities, capacity or requirements of the worker (NIOSH, 2014). Individuals who have experienced incivility also reported increased stress levels, reduced levels of employee engagement, and reported diminished levels of performance (Berenbaum, 2010; Griffin & Clarke, 2011; Hershcovis, 2011; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015; Trudel & Reio, 2011; Woody, 2013). Hunter (2016) reports that the combination of varied individuals in a work setting results in such a unique mix of attitudes and perspectives, that it creates fluctuations which sometimes lead to incivility or more extreme instances of bad workplace behavior. Hunter (2016) also posited a connection between the negative workplace behaviors and the health of members within organization.

Other researchers suggested that workplace incivility may result from operating in a stressful work environment and being swamped by the requirements of the tasks at hand (Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, 2011). Berjot and Gillet (2011) asserted that the use of the transactional model of stress facilitated the ability of the researcher to clarify and anticipate a plethora of responses that people exhibited when dealing with discrimination, prejudice, or other kinds deviant behaviors.

Workplace aggression varies in intensity, and incivility falls on the lower end of an escalating scale of offensive behavior (Bar-David, 2012; Hershcovis, 2011). There is a connection between negative interactions in the workplace, and the experience of stress (Jimenez, Dunkl, & PeiBl, 2015). On the other hand, factors which connect the

experience of incivility, the onset of stress, and workplace issues/outcomes (Miner, Rubio, & Reed, 2010) are not always apparent. Researchers from a variety of disciplines (psychology, sociology, engineering, etc.) have addressed the interplay between stress in the workplace, and the assessment of that stress by individuals working in that setting (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Ganster & Schaubroeck, J. 1991).

Job stress is not viewed as a singular occurrence or a distinct emotional state; instead, it is viewed as a process resulting from efforts to manage and respond to demands in each time frame (Griffin & Clarke, 2011). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) created their Transactional Model of Stress to examine the topic of workplace stress. They determined that stress resulted from the way an individual assessed, and coped with their environment, rather than the environment itself. Alternatively, Karasek (1979, 1989) introduced the Demands Control Model, which focused on the constructs of job stressors, job strains, and the degree of autonomy in decision making. It was hypothesized that higher levels of autonomy resulted in lower levels of strain.

Johnson, Hall, and Theorell (1989) expanded the Demands Control Model by adding the construct of social support. Studies suggested that the social aspect of the work environment may temper or enhance the adverse effects of high job demands, and low levels of autonomy in the workplace (Karasek, 1979; Johnson et al., 1989).

Job Stress and Incivility

Stress has been routinely credited for adversely impacting employee attendance and engagement in the workplace. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that, “psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment

that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19). After experiencing an incident in the workplace, researchers found that the individual goes through evaluative stages: (a) a cognitive assessment or evaluation (also referred to as an appraisal), and (b) coping with the incident. The cognitive assessment or appraisal was defined by the researchers as the “process of categorizing an encounter, and its various facets, with respect to its significance for well-being” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 31). Researchers also stated that an individual must evaluate it an incident to determine whether it is creating stress and to what level, before coping strategies are initiated (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The evaluative or appraisal process includes two stages: primary and secondary. The Primary appraisal stage is an evaluation of the risks and benefits at hand. When risks are perceived, then people categorize the situation as being a threat, a challenge or a loss. In this context, a loss can also be a harmful or difficult scenario that has already transpired. The researchers also defined the secondary appraisal stage as an evaluation of internal coping resources (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Movement at that secondary appraisal stage reflected the individual’s self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In other words, it indicated the level of confidence in one’s ability to cope with the situation.

Regardless of the catalyst, workplace incivility can have a negative impact organizational climate and on the workers who experience it. A few specific coping strategies, which may mitigate the impact of incivilities at work have been suggested by

Pearson (2015). Those strategies included limiting contact with the offender by altering work schedules and raising the issue with a superior in the office (Pearson, 2015).

I explored the relationship between the experience and perception of workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress, among women within the Federal Government. An anonymous, web-based survey was used to gather data from affinity groups associated with female federal employees. Study participants were not required to provide their names, the names of their agency or their geographic location, but they were asked to provide demographic information (i.e. age, race/ethnicity, GS level, role, and tenure), so that variances in the perception of incivility could be explored, based on those variables (see Appendices A and B).

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 provided a review of recent and seminal data, related to the study variables: workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. This chapter included information regarding the AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and the risk management model of incivility, as developed by Leiter (2013). For the purposes of this research effort, the AET will be used to provide the theoretical framework supporting the exploration of incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress, among women in the federal workforce.

Workplace incivility has been defined as a less intense, more ambiguous form of negative workplace behavior (Lawrence, 2016; Porath, 2015). Workplace incivility has also been identified as a factor which can adversely impact employee engagement in a myriad of ways, at every level of the organization (May, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, &

Porath, 2000; Porath 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Zanderer, 2000). Incivility in the workplace differs from other forms of negative workplace behaviors (e.g., bullying, aggression, or working under an abusive supervisor) because it is less overt, which makes it difficult to determine the true intentions of the person exhibiting rude behavior (Porath, Foulk & Erez, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Schilpzand, De Paer, & Erez, 2014).

Researchers have examined the impact of incivility, and the varying ways it can affect the attitudes and behaviors of those who are targets or witnesses of it. This chapter contained information which highlighted challenges faced by women in the Federal Government, which included perception of unfairness and unconscious bias. Although those two constructs are not the focus of this study, they can be viewed as higher points on the continuum of workplace behavior. Incivility is less overt than other deviant workplace behaviors and is typically viewed as a precursor to more overt behaviors (Lawrence, 2016; Porath, 2015).

Increasing an awareness of incivility, and its potential impacts on staff attitudes will allow organizations to create policies and practices which reduce the frequency of those behaviors, by labeling them as unacceptable. Empirical data regarding the impact of incivility within the federal sector is limited. One of the few studies which specifically addressed civility in the federal workforce was (the CREW study) was referenced in this chapter. Researchers engaged in that effort found a correlation between reduced equal employment opportunity grievances, absenteeism and the use of sick leave, with a decrease in incivility (NCOD, 2015). The findings associated with this research effort will reduce the knowledge gap in that area.

Chapter 3 contains details which address the following: the research questions, an overview of the data collection tools and strategies, study variables (incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress), study participant characteristics (including demographic information), sample size, research design, a description of the statistical analysis to be used, recruitment strategies, reliability, validity of the study instruments, and the approach to study confidentiality.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The study of job satisfaction and job stress have been addressed in numerous studies, but research regarding the impact of incivility on those variables within the federal sector is limited. The study of workplace incivility is still evolving, and this research adds to the limited body of civility research, focused on federal employees (NCOD, 2015). Chapter 3 contains an overview of the methodology of the study. The components of this chapter include a detailed description of and rationale for the research design, the data collection strategy, the target population to be queried, the survey instruments to be used, an overview of my approach to data collection and analysis, and information regarding the protection of participant rights to privacy. Two instruments were chosen for this study because they were directly related to the study of workplace incivility.

Purpose of the Study

Workplace incivility can impact employee engagement and cognition in a myriad of ways and at every level of the organization (May, 2015; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Porath, 2015; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Zanderer, 2000). Interest in the impact of incivility on organizations has increased, yet its subtle nature makes it more difficult to understand than workplace behaviors like bullying and harassment (Michigan State University, 2016; Williams, 2016). The ambiguousness of this behavior often makes it difficult to for the person on the receiving end to determine the true intentions of the person demonstrating the less than civil behaviors (Porath, Foulk, & Erez, 2015;

Porath & Pearson, 2010, 2013; Schilpzand, De Paer, & Erez, 2014). When incivility exists in the workplace, it negatively impacts employee well-being and work-life quality (Benzer et al., 2011; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Miller, 2015). Employees who experience incivility (even on an inconsistent basis) have reported increased stress levels, reduced levels of engagement, and diminished performance (Berenbaum, 2010; Porath, 2015; Woody, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to explore the connection between the experience of workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress, among women working in the federal government. Findings associated with this research could be used to provide insight regarding factors that impact organizational climate within the federal government. Findings may also reveal behaviors that contribute to disparities in the advancement and general well-being of women working within the federal government (Reich & Hershcovis, 2015; Wellbourne, Gangadharan, & Sariol, 2015).

Research Design and Rationale

I collected feedback from women working in the federal government to determine whether workplace incivility impacted their levels of job satisfaction and whether it created job stress resulting from the experience of witnessing incivility in the federal workplace. A web-based survey was used to gather data, which addressed the potential connection between workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress, among women working in the federal sector. Two instruments were used to collect feedback from study participants: the WIS (see Table 3; Cortina et al., 2001) and the OCS (see Table 2 and Appendices D & E; Clark et al., 2013).

The survey method was selected for two key reasons: It facilitates soliciting information from a broad audience, regardless of the physical location, and it allows the participant to take more time (if needed) to respond to the questions being posed (Archer, 2007; Trochim, 2006). The study variables were incivility (independent), job satisfaction (dependent), and job stress (dependent). I also controlled for respondent demographics, which included gender, age, race, ethnicity, GS level, role/position, and tenure. The control variables had the potential to impact the direction or strength of the relationship between the predictor variable (incivility) and the criterion (job satisfaction and job stress) variables (see van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

Methodology

For this nonexperimental, quantitative study, I queried members of affinity groups that support and/or cater to federal women. Survey links were posted on affinity group websites. Permission was solicited from the head of each affinity group before the links were posted. The survey was anonymous, and I was not be able to identify study participants or their respective agencies. Demographic information (e.g., race, ethnicity, etc.) was also captured (see Appendix A). Respondents could select more than one option in the category of ethnicity, as applicable. Questions regarding civility, job satisfaction, and job stress were posited using Likert type rating scales.

Population

According to a recent report by the Office of Personnel Management (2014c), there were 1,820,947 women men and women working in the federal sector. Women represented approximately 43% (775,077) of this population at the time of the report

(Office of Personnel Management, 2014c). Participants were recruited from several affinity groups and resources that cater to federal government employees (e.g., Govloop, Blacks in Government and Federally Employed Women). The target population consisted of supervisory and nonsupervisory women working in the federal government. This study did not target active members of the Armed Services (e.g., Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marines), but their responses may be reflected in the summary of findings, because military members were not excluded from participating.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Probability sampling was used during the data collection process, which I selected because it is less likely to produce biased results (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2002). Cluster sampling is the type of probability sampling method used for this study. Clusters are defined as locations within the target population (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, etc.). This methodology supports the process of randomly selecting representative groups that have similar qualities and exist within the selected population (Creswell, 2012; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). The target population was not located in one specific geographic area or agency, so cluster sampling was an effective way to gather data for this study.

Multiple linear regression was conducted to assess the relationship between the predictor variable (incivility) and the criterion variables (job satisfaction and job stress), in the context of this study. Power analysis for a multiple regression with seven predictors was conducted in G* Power to determine a sufficient sample size using an alpha of 0.05, a power of 0.80 and a medium effect size of ($f^2 = 0.15$). Based on these

assumptions, the desired sample size was 109. (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2013; Statistics Solutions, 2013).

A demographic survey instrument was also used to capture the respondents' gender, age, race, ethnicity, position (supervisory/nonsupervisory), grade, and tenure (see Appendix A). Collecting demographic information allowed me to explore any potential disparities in perceptions based on those variables (Cortina, et al., 2001). Aggregate data without any personally identifiable information was used to protect the anonymity of each respondent (see Armerding, 2015; McCord, 2015).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Consent forms were distributed to the principal of each targeted affinity group. Organization heads were asked to allow the placement of a link to the survey to be posted on their respective websites. Site visitors were introduced to the topic of diversity by way of a blog post. At the end of the post, they were invited to participate in the study. Respondents were asked to complete an online survey, which explored their experience with workplace incivility and asked them to identify their level of job satisfaction and job stress. Two weeks after the initial invitation to take the survey, reminder notices were shared with the targeted affinity group members.

I provided a link to the following: background information (stating the purpose of the study) and detailed information regarding the procedures, length of time the survey will take to complete, and sample questions. I also included language that described my role as the researcher to avoid concerns, biases, or risks to confidentiality for affinity

group members who may also work for my agency. Participation was voluntary, and participants who engaged in the study were not at risk in any way.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Permissions were secured to use WIS (see Appendix B), developed by Cortina et al. (2001), and the OCS (see Appendix C), developed by Clark et al. (2013). The primary goal of Clarke et al. was to develop a valid, credible, reliable, quantitative way to measure organizational civility. In support of this effort, the researchers examined predictive relationships between civility, incivility, employee satisfaction, stress, and coping. Originally the researchers were focused on the impact of incivility on workplace cultures in healthcare and referenced the CREW model (Osatuke et al., 2009), which was developed to reduce the impact of incivility within the Department of Veterans Affairs (Clark et al., 2013). This was relevant to the study, because it illustrates one of the few studies linking incivility research to the public sector.

The WIS is a 7-item scale designed to measure how often uncivil behaviors were experienced in the workplace. The researchers aggregated the seven items with an alpha coefficient of .89, which was viewed as very reliable (Cortina et al., 2001). Thus, I used this instrument to identify the frequency women in the federal workplace experience or perceive workplace incivility.

The OCS is 109-item scale that was created to measure civility and incivility in healthcare settings (Clark et al., 2013). I used certain sections of the instrument to measure levels of job satisfaction and sources of job stress. The alpha levels identified in the original study were .88 and .82 respectively (Clark et al., 2013). Although other

instruments were considered, I used the OCS, a quantitative instrument designed to measure perceptions of civility and incivility in the workplace. The OCS was originally developed for use in the health care industry, but it is now available as a commercial product, and Clark et al. have encouraged the use of this instrument in more varied settings.

Data Analysis Plan

To examine the research questions, a multiple linear regression was conducted to assess whether the independent variables predicted the criterion variables (job satisfaction and job stress). In this study, the independent variable was incivility. The control variables were gender, age, race, ethnicity, GS level, role/position, and tenure. The dependent variables were job satisfaction and job stress. The following regression equation (main effects model) was used: $y = b_1*x_1 + b_2*x_2 + b_3*x_3 + b_4*x_4 + b_5*x_5 + b_6*x_6 + b_7*x_7 + b_8*x_8$; where Y = dependent variable, b = regression coefficients, and x = each independent variable (Statistics Solutions, 2013).

Standard multiple linear regression was used, which allowed all independent variables (predictors) to be placed into the model simultaneously. Variables were evaluated by what they added to the prediction of the dependent variable, which was different from the predictability afforded by the other predictors in the model. The F-test was used to assess whether the set of independent variables collectively predicts the dependent variable. R-squared—the multiple correlation coefficient of determination—was used to determine how much variance in the dependent variable could be accounted for by the set of independent variables. The t test was used to determine the significance

of each predictor and beta coefficients were used to determine the magnitude of prediction for each independent variable (Statistics Solutions, 2013).

The assumptions of multiple regression—linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity—were assessed. Linearity assumes a straight-line relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable, and homoscedasticity assumes that scores are normally distributed about the regression line. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed by an examination of a scatter plot. The absence of multicollinearity assumes that predictor variables are not too related, and this was assessed using variance inflation factors. Variance inflation factor values over 10 suggest the presence of multicollinearity. SPSS statistical software was used to analyze findings associated with this study (Statistics Solutions, 2013). A beta test was administered in advance of the full survey launch, to identify any issues or challenges with the instrument.

The OCS contains nine sections which address perceptions of organizational climate, civility, the frequency of incivility, job satisfaction, stress and coping (see *Table 2*). For the purposes of this study, questions associated with organizational climate and coping strategies were factored out during the analysis of findings. The WIS was designed to measure the incidences of uncivil behaviors experienced within the workplace, over a five-year period (Cortina et al., 2001).

Demographic information was collected, but under a cover of anonymity (see Appendix A). Agency and geographic identifiers were not requested in this study. Participants were given the option of discontinuing the study without penalty. Surveys that had a completion rate of 100% were incorporated into the analysis of results.

Questions referenced in Sections 5 and 6 of the OCS (see Table 2; Clarke et al., 2013) and questions from the WIS (see Appendix B; Cortina et al., 2001) were utilized, to avoid having participants answer 109 questions.

Table 1

OCS Sections, Titles, and Alpha Levels

Section	Title	Alpha Level	Scale Used	Query
1	Perceptions of organizational climate	Supervisory relationships and values – $\alpha=.95$ Co-worker relationships – $\alpha=.89$	5-point agreement scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel valued in my organization I have supervisors I trust in my organization
2a	Ratings of civility resources (existence)	Procedures and mechanisms for dealing with incivility ($\alpha=.96$)	5-point belief scale ranging from completely untrue to completely true	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civility is clearly reflected in organizational mission or vision statement Procedures for addressing incivility are publicly available
2b	Ratings of civility resources (importance)		5-point importance scale ranging from not at all important to completely important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civility is clearly reflected in organizational mission or vision statement Procedures for addressing incivility are publicly available
3	Frequency of Incivility	No factors emerged: unidimensional $\alpha=.96$	5-point frequency scale ranging from never to very often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor abused his or her position of authority? Made rude non-verbal behaviors or gestures towards you or others?
4	Feelings about current employment	No factors emerged: items do not comprise a subscale. A-.42	7-point semantic differential scale	How do you feel about the workplace? Unfair: Fair Forgiving: Unforgiving
5	Employee satisfaction	No factors emerged: unidimensional $\alpha=.88$	100-point slider scale in 1-point increments from 0=completely dissatisfied to 100 = completely satisfied	Overall level of satisfaction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My co-workers The workplace environment My company in general My direct supervisor My annual compensation The opportunities for advancement

(table continues)

Section	Title	Alpha Level	Scale Used	Query
6	Sources of stress	No factors emerged: unidimensional $\alpha=.88$	5-point agreement scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult co-workers add to my stress level • Difficult supervisors add to my stress level • Being required to be in contact with people I dislike adds to my stress level • An unsafe work environment adds to my stress level • An intense workload adds to my stress level
7	Coping strategies	Passive coping/ avoidance $\alpha=.73$	5-point agreement scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the problem in an attempt to solve it • Hope the problem will go away by doing nothing
8a	Overall levels of stress	No factors emerge; 1 item only	100-point slider scale in 1-point increments ranging from 0 = no stress to 100 = maximum stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate your overall level of stress • Rate your overall coping ability
8b	Overall levels of coping ability	No factors emerge; 1 item only	100-point slider scale in 1-point increments ranging from 0= coping mechanism working perfectly to 100=not coping with anything at all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate your overall level of stress • Rate your overall coping ability
9	Overall Civility Ratings	$\alpha=.87$	100-point slider scale in 1-point increments ranging from 0=incivility or uncivil to 100=civil or civility	Rate workplace categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My co-workers • My organization in general

Note. (Clark et al., 2013)

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were derived from the review of existing literature in the areas of incivility in the workplace, job satisfaction, and job stress responses, within the Federal Government.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale and job satisfaction, as measured by Section 5 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the federal government, after controlling for respondent demographics?

H_01 : There will not be a relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics.

H_a1 : There will be a relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale, and job stress, as measured by Section 6 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the federal government, after controlling for respondent demographics?

H_02 : There will not be a relationship between job stress and the experience of incivility, after controlling for respondent demographics.

H_a2 : There will be a relationship between job stress and the experience of incivility, after controlling for respondent demographics.

Threats to Validity

External Validity

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) cited several potential threats to the external validity of the research study. Two of those threats had the potential to impact this single group, correlational study:

1. **Generalization of Dependent Variables:** the extent to which one can generalize from the sample to a defined population will only be known after the data collection process is complete. It is hoped that a significant number of federal employees participate in this study, but due to the respondent's right to decline participation, this might not occur.
2. **Truthfulness of Respondents:** it is unknown to what extent (if at all) that respondents will answer the instruments in a truthful manner.

Clark et al. (2010) developed the Occupational Civility Scale (OCS), which was selected for this study. The researchers utilized exploratory factor analysis for each section of the OCS, to establish construct validity. For each exploratory factor analysis performed, the researchers used varimax rotation with eigenvalues more than 1.0, for extracting factors; factor loading is more than .50 were utilized for item retention (Clark et al., 2010). Reliability for the OCS was determined using Cronbach's alpha. I modelled the OCS definitions and measures, to remove concerns regarding the construct validity (Clark et al., 2010).

To determine the validity of the assessment, Cortina et al., (2001) performed confirmatory factor analyses on each of the seven questions which composed the survey.

A single-factor model was used and the goodness of fit, adjusted goodness of fit and non-normed goodness of fit were .96, .93 and .95 respectively. To minimize concerns related to external validity, I avoided generalizing for populations outside of the scope of this study. Threats to the internal validity were minimized by using caution to avoid drawing inaccurate conclusions; assuming causality, or selecting the wrong statistical power (Creswell, 2009).

Internal Validity

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) cited 12 threats to the internal validity of the research study. Given that this is a single group correlational study with all those measurements taken at one point in time, those threats were not applicable to this research effort.

Ethical Procedures

Participants had their privacy protected in two key ways: the survey was anonymous, and no personal identifiers (e.g., name of organization, geographic location) were required. Raw survey data was secured. Study participants received an overview of the study and its purpose. Results are available to respondents upon request.

Risks associated with participation were minimal—responses were anonymous and raw data was stored in a secure manner. Electronic files have been encrypted and stored securely. Final reports contain aggregated data, to avoid the possibility of identifying specific agencies or individuals. Respondents did not receive any compensation for their participation. My contact information was provided, and study participants were encouraged to reach out with questions before, during and after completion of the survey.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a review of the research methodology selected for this quantitative correlational study. The purpose of this research effort was to examine the relationship between incivility (predictor variable), job satisfaction (criterion variable), and job stress (criterion variable), among women working in the federal sector. Demographic information was collected from study participants and will be used as control variables, for this study. Those demographic variables included age, gender, race, ethnicity, grade, position/role, and tenure.

The WIS and the OCS were used to measure the study variables. Questions were delivered via an online survey. Survey links were distributed to affinity groups who consented to participate. Those groups were solicited because they support or cater to women working in the federal sector. To protect the identify of study participants, I did not request names, geographic locations or agency identifiers. Correlation and regression analysis were used to analyze the findings. Chapter 4 reflects detailed results, based on the research questions, methodology, and approach outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and job stress among women working for the federal government. A total of 94 women completed the survey and were included in the study. Table 2 shows the frequency for the demographic variables in the study. Table 3 presents the psychometric characteristics for the three summated scale scores: workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. Table 4 includes the bivariate Pearson correlations for selected variables with workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. Table 5 has the Pearson, Spearman, and partial intercorrelations between workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. Table 6 has the results of the multiple regression model that predicted job satisfaction based on selected variables to answer Research Question 1. Table 7 has the results of the multiple regression model that predicted job stress based on selected variables to answer Research Question 2.

Data Cleaning and Assumption Testing

Initially, 120 people started the online survey. Only those with no missing responses ($n = 107$) and reported being a federal employee were initially kept. Of the participants, only four identified as male. Given the split based on gender (103 women versus 4 men), a decision was made to only keep the 103 women as respondents for the study. Box plots were used to identify univariate outliers. Based on the box plot review, seven participants were identified as outliers and removed. To identify potential

multivariate outliers, the Mahalanobis distance statistic was calculated for each respondent. Two multivariate outliers were also identified and removed, so the final sample was $N = 94$.

Normality was deemed to be acceptable based on the inspection of the final box plots. Independence of errors was not deemed a problem due to the design of the study (each person only completed one survey), and the Durbin-Watson statistic was within normal limits. Multicollinearity was not found based on variance inflation factors and tolerance statistics. The frequency histogram of the standardized residuals from both regression models (Tables 6 and 7) approximated a normal curve with none of the standardized residuals having a z score of ± 3.00 . Both normal probability P-P plots of the regression standardized residuals were within normal limits. The assumption of homoscedasticity was addressed with two scatterplots of the standardized residuals with the standardized predicted values. Both were within normal limits. When the results of the statistical assumption testing were taken together, along with the generally robust nature of multiple regression in larger samples ($N = 94$; see Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009), the statistical assumptions for regression were met. However, as a further statistical verification method, both Pearson correlations and Spearman correlations were used to examine the relationships between the primary variables.

Description of the Sample

Table 2 shows the frequency for the demographic variables in the study. All the respondents were women. Ages ranged from 27–39 years (10.6%) to 60–72 years (13.8%), with a mean age of $M = 51.34$ years ($SD = 8.62$). Most women were either

African American/Black (48.9%) or Caucasian/White (42.6%). GS level ranged from 7 (2.1%) to 15 (12.8%) with a mean GS level of $M = 12.88$ ($SD = 1.58$). Most were staff members (70.2%), with 17 manager/supervisors (18.1%) and 11 team leads (11.7%). Years as a federal employee ranged from 2–9 years (15.0%) to 30–50 years (16.0%), with a mean of $M = 20.67$ years ($SD = 9.74$; Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency of Demographic Variables (N = 94)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Female	94	100
Age		
27–39	10	10.6
40–49	24	25.5
50–59	47	50.0
60–72	13	13.8
Race		
African American/Black	46	48.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	2.1
Caucasian/White	40	42.6
Hispanic/Latino/a	3	3.2
Native American	2	2.1
Multi-Racial	1	1.1
GS-Level		
7	2	2.1
9	4	4.3
11	6	6.4
12	10	10.6
13	45	47.9
14	15	16
15	12	12.8
Role		
Manager/Supervisor	17	18.1
Team Lead	11	11.7
Staff Member	66	70.2
Years as federal employee		
2–9	14	15.0
10–19	28	30.0
20–29	37	39.0
30–50	15	16.0

Note. ^a $M = 51.34$ years, $SD = 8.62$; ^b $M = 12.88$, $SD = 1.58$; ^c $M = 20.67$ years, $SD = 9.74$.

Table 3 shows the psychometric characteristics for the three summated scale scores: workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranged in size from $\alpha = .74$ to $\alpha = .89$ with a median $\alpha = .79$. This suggested that all scales had adequate levels of internal reliability (Creswell, 2009, 2012).

Table 3

Psychometric Characteristics for Summated Scale Scores

Score	# of items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Low	High	α
Workplace Incivility	7	2.31	0.77	1.00	4.43	.89
Job Satisfaction	6	70.38	15.68	30.00	98.00	.79
Job Stress	5	3.53	0.80	1.60	5.00	.74

Note. $N = 94$.

Table 4 illustrates the bivariate Pearson correlations for selected variables with workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. Of the seven Pearson correlations for workplace incivility, two were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Workplace incivility was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = -.59, p < .001$) and positively correlated with job stress ($r = .24, p = .02$). Of the six additional Pearson correlations for job satisfaction, one was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Job satisfaction was negatively correlated with job stress ($r = -.25, p = .01$). Of the five additional Pearson correlations for job stress, one was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Job stress was negatively correlated with age ($r = -.22, p = .04$).

Table 4

Correlations for Predictor Variables with Workplace Incivility, Job Satisfaction, and Job Stress Scales

Variable	Workplace incivility	Job satisfaction	Job stress
Workplace Incivility	1.00****	1.00	
Job Satisfaction	-.59*	-.25**	
Job Stress	.24	-.12	1.00
Age	-.08	.02	-.22*
Black ^a	.05	-.10	.14
White ^a	-.02	.13	-.12
GS-Level	-.18	.01	.03
Years as Federal Employee	-.02	1.00	-.13

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$. ^a Coding: 0 = No; 1 = Yes

Table 5 has the Pearson, Spearman, and partial intercorrelations between workplace incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress. Spearman correlations were included for additional statistical verification purposes. Partial correlations were included to supplement the regression model findings. The partial correlation coefficients controlled for the respondent's age, race/ethnicity, GS level, and years as a federal employee.

Table 5

Pearson, Spearman, and Partial Intercorrelations among Workplace Incivility, Job Satisfaction, and Job Stress Scales

Correlation	Workplace incivility	Job satisfaction	Job stress
Pearson			
Workplace incivility	1.00		
Job satisfaction	-.59****	1.00	
Job stress	.24*	-.25**	1.00
Spearman			
Workplace incivility	1.00		
Job satisfaction	-.55****	1.00	
Job stress	.16	-.20*	1.00
Partial^a			
Workplace incivility	1.00		
Job satisfaction	-.59****	1.00	
Job stress	.25*	-.31***	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$. ^a Partial correlations control for age, race/ethnicity, GS level, and years as a federal employee.

Overall, similarly sized coefficients were found using the three correlational methods. All three Pearson intercorrelations were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, workplace incivility was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = -.59$, $p < .001$) and positively correlated with job stress ($r = .24$, $p = .02$). Job satisfaction was negatively correlated with job stress ($r = -.25$, $p = .01$). Of the three Spearman intercorrelations, two were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, workplace incivility was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r_s = -.55$, $p < .001$). Job satisfaction was also negatively correlated with job stress ($r_s = -.20$, $p = .04$). All three partial intercorrelations were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, workplace

incivility was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r_{ab.c} = -.59, p < .001$) and positively correlated with job stress ($r_{ab.c} = .25, p = .02$). Job satisfaction was also negatively correlated with job stress ($r_{ab.c} = -.31, p = .003$; Table 5).

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1 was “What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale and job satisfaction, as measured by Section 5 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the federal government, after controlling for respondent demographics?” and the related null hypothesis was “There will not be a relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, after controlling for respondent demographics.” To answer this, Table 6 has the results of the multiple regression model that predicted job satisfaction based on selected variables. The final six-variable model was statistically significant ($p = .001$) and accounted for 39.4% of the variance in job satisfaction. Specifically, higher job satisfaction was related to lower workplace incivility ($\beta = -.59, p = .001$). This provided support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Prediction of Job Satisfaction Based on Predictor Variables

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Intercept	109.14	15.15		.001
Age	-0.33	0.18	-.18	.07
White ^a	-5.88	5.19	-.19	.26
Black ^a	-3.54	4.92	-.11	.47
GS-Level	0.63	0.88	.06	.48
Years as Federal Employee	0.11	0.16	.07	.50
Workplace Incivility	-12.05	1.75	-.59	.001

Note. Final Model: $F(6, 87) = 9.42, p = .001. R^2 = .394. \text{Durbin-Watson} = 2.52. ^a \text{Coding: } 0 = \text{No}; 1 = \text{Yes}$

Research Question 2 was “What is the nature of the relationship between incivility, as measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale and job stress, as measured by Section 6 of the Organizational Civility Scale, among civilian women working in the Federal Government, after controlling for respondent demographics?” and the related null hypothesis was “There will not be a relationship between workplace incivility and job stress, after controlling for respondent demographics.” To answer this, Table 7 has the results of the multiple regression model that predicted job stress based on selected variables. The final six-variable model was not statistically significant ($p = .07$) and accounted for 12.5% of the variance in job stress. However, among the individual predictors, higher job stress was related to higher workplace incivility ($\beta = .24, p = .02$). This provided partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 2 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Prediction of Job Stress Based on Predictor Variables

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.03	0.93		.002
Age	-0.02	0.01	-.16	.18
White ^a	-0.10	0.32	-.06	.75
Black ^a	0.13	0.30	.09	.66
GS-Level	0.06	0.05	.12	.27
Years as Federal Employee	-0.01	0.01	-.07	.57
Workplace Incivility	0.25	0.11	.24	.02

Note. Final Model: $F(6, 87) = 2.07, p = .07, R^2 = .125$. Durbin-Watson = 2.52. ^a Coding: 0 = No; 1 = Yes

Summary

In summary, this study used data from 94 federal sector workers to explore the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and job stress among women working for the federal government. Research Hypothesis 1 (job satisfaction and workplace incivility) was supported (Tables 5 and Table 6) and Research Hypothesis 2 (job stress and workplace incivility) was partially supported (Tables 5 and Table 7). The final chapter references these findings in comparison to the current literature. Implications and recommendations are noted.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress among women employed in the federal sector. Data were collected through an online Likert type survey. Participants were recruited through outreach to affinity groups that cater to populations in the federal sector. This chapter includes a summary, an interpretation of key findings, a review of the study limitations, recommendations, and implications for social change. This chapter also includes discussion around the AET and how it was used to frame this study.

Summary of Findings

Responses were received from women who work in the federal sector. After controlling for nonresponse and ineligibility, I had a final sample of 94. Two research questions were at the core of this study:

Research Question 1: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility and job satisfaction, among civilian women working in the federal sector?

Research Question 2: What is the nature of the relationship between incivility and job stress, among civilian women working in the federal sector?

The following control variables were used to provide a better understanding of the relationship between incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress: age, gender, race, ethnicity, role, grade/GS, and tenure. However, gender was removed because of the low number of male respondents. Six control variables were used in the regression model.

A review of the findings revealed a negative correlation between incivility and job satisfaction; a negative correlation between job satisfaction and job stress; a negative correlation between incivility and job satisfaction; and a positive correlation between incivility and job stress. Job stress was also negatively correlated with age. Findings were consistent with the studies referenced in Chapter 2 (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; NCOD, 2015; Osatuke et al., 2013).

Interpretation of Findings

The current study reflects feedback from women working in the federal sector ($N = 94$). An analysis of the findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between the experience of incivility in the workplace, job satisfaction, and job stress. A multiple regression model was used to predict job satisfaction, and the control variables were race, ethnicity, position, tenure, age, and GS/grade. The model was found to be statistically significant ($p = .001$) and accounted for 39.4% of the variance in job satisfaction.

When the six-variable model was applied to Research Hypothesis 2, the results were not statistically significant ($p = .07$) and only accounted for 12.5% of the variance in job stress. However, findings did reveal a relationship between two of the individual predictors. The relationship between higher job stress and higher workplace incivility was statistically significant ($p = .02$). This finding supported the rejection of the null hypothesis for Research Question 2.

The results provide an indication of how women in the federal sector are currently experiencing incivility, and the findings are consistent with existing research. For example, researchers have reported that incidents of workplace incivility are continuing

to increase in the United States (Duff & Lee, 2012; McCorkle, 2010; Weber Shandrick, 2016). Additionally, researchers have indicated that women tend to receive for incivility than men (Chui & Dietz, 2014; Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) also found that women had experienced more incivility from coworkers than supervisors and the male participants had experienced more incivility from supervisory staff (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). The approach used by Reio and Saners-Reio was similar to the current study, which involved the use of a modified version of the WIS and controlling for demographic variables like gender and age.

Other findings of this study revealed a stronger link between incivility and job satisfaction (39.4%) than incivility and job stress (12.5%). Stress is a complicated variable, and can be attributed to many things, including finances and relationships (Centre for Studies on Human Stress, 2017; Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; Nordqvist, 2017). Other studies have shown the connection between incivility and an array of topics like job performance and team work (Paulin & Griffin, 2016), employee engagement (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011), coping skills (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Nicholson & Griffin, 2016), and physical health (Benzer et al., 2003; Porath & Pearson, 2010).

Finally, the findings from this study reveal that incivility can be impactful within the federal sector, and that the impact on stress appears greater for younger staff. However, additional information is required to understand which agencies are experiencing incivility the most or which agencies have successfully addressed the issues and reduced its impact. The current study findings do not offer clarity around the reasons younger staff may be experiencing incivility differently than older staff. Additionally, the

current findings do not indicate whether older staff are tapping into grit (Duckworth, 2016), mental hardiness (Joelson, 2017; Maddi, 2005), or their coping skills that may be absent (or less developed) in younger staff. The findings only indicated that there is a relationship between incivility, job satisfaction, and job stress among women working in the federal sector, which answered the research questions for the study.

Theoretical Framework

The AET was used to frame this study and served as the basis for the hypothesis model. In the context of this study, incivility served as the “work event” and the control variables (gender, age, race, ethnicity, GS/grade, role and tenure) served as filters between the experience of incivility and its impact on job satisfaction and job stress (the criterion variables). This is supported by previous research such as Rodell and Judge (2009), who used the AET and the transactional stress model in a similar manner to link disposition and the level of emotional response to work events. Incivility was not one of the variables they examined, but the stressors they identified could trigger negative interactions between people in the workplace.

Overall, the research findings from this study are consistent with current theories around incivility. The presence of incivility correlates to lowered job satisfaction and increased job stress. It is difficult to assess why incivility created higher levels of job stress for younger staff, because no qualitative data were collected to address their coping skills. It is also possible that the organizational citizenship behavior theory may have been a better fit for this study. The organizational citizenship behavior theory focuses on behaviors that are not critical to the work tasks but are beneficial for the workgroup or

team's effectiveness and function, which may have been a meaningful filter for this research.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations, including the data collection instruments selected, the narrow focus of the sample population, and the sampling strategy. Questions from the WIS (Cortina et al., 2001) and the OCS (Clark et al., 2013) were used to gather data from federally employed women. Analysis revealed the selected questions to be valid and reliable, but the surveys were not designed by comparing raw scores with norms based on the target population (federal women). If the selected instruments had been designed specifically for a federal audience, perhaps the findings would have yielded more details about the way incivility is experienced within the federal sector.

Participants were recruited through a variety of affinity groups that support or cater to women working in the federal sector. Perhaps expanding the demographic focus to include categories beyond age, race and ethnicity (e.g. disabled, veterans or LGBTQ) would have yielded richer data and more clarity regarding the impact of incivility on women working in the federal sector.

A purposive sampling strategy was selected, and efforts were made to connect with an array of affinity groups which service the federal sector (e.g., African American/Black, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics), but most responses were received from White females and Black females. The underrepresentation of some groups limits the depth and context of the data received.

Perhaps a different sampling strategy (e.g., one which included recent retirees) would have resulted in a higher number of responses, and a broader perspective.

Recommendations

This study was designed to examine women in the federal sector. I recommend that future studies take a broader approach and explore the experiences and perspectives of men and women in the federal sector. Expanding the participant pool to include federally employed men or recently retired federal workers would allow for a robust comparative analysis, utilizing the current study control variables.

The current study was quantitative and correlational, but future studies may benefit from a qualitative or mixed method approach. Collecting narrative responses would provide greater context around the relationship between the variables (e.g., job stress and age). Narrative responses would allow participants to explain how they chose to manage their experiences with incivility, and the rationale for those choices. Narrative responses would also allow participants to share the differences (if any) between the experience of observing incivility and the experience of being the target of incivility, within the federal workplace.

Due to the difficulties experienced in seeking study participants, I recommend connecting with organizations early (as appropriate) and often. Build connections within local chapters if possible, as they may facilitate your ability to connect at a national level. Additionally, consider using secondary data, which eliminates the need to solicit feedback from organizations that are not comfortable responding to requests to engage in non-governmental efforts.

Implications for Social Change

Anderrson and Porath (1999) defined workplace incivility as rude, disrespectful acts with ambiguous intent. Incivility carries a risk; its presence indicates the possibility of a downward spiral in workplace behaviors (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Osatuke et al., 2013). Cortina et al. (2001), reported that women tended to experience workplace incivility more often than men, it can have a negative impact on the culture of the entire organization.

Practitioners who work in the areas of organizational health, organizational citizenship behavior, micro-inequities and unconscious bias could use the findings from this study to: (a) create awareness around the impact of incivility in the federal workplace; (b) develop systems to monitor and mitigate levels of job stress; and (c) implement strategies and practices designed to disrupt exiting behavior patterns or norms which support a culture of rudeness and disrespect. Organizations would benefit from creating systems designed to de-escalate or mitigate the impact of offenses and slights. Taking a proactive approach would reduce the frequency of escalation to more egregious workplace behaviors.

Conclusion

The subtlety of incivility allows it to be overshadowed by more overt types of workplace behaviors (i.e., bullying, harassment, etc.), but it is increasing in frequency (Weber Shandwick, 2016). The study results confirmed that workplace incivility impacts women working the federal sector, but additional research is needed to explore why and how. An analysis of findings from this study also revealed a positive correlation

between job stress and age. That finding indicates a need and invitation to further explore the impact of stress and its causes, within the federal sector.

Workplace incivility can impact the health of an organization by eroding the desire and ability to work collaboratively (Weber Shandwick, 2013). The findings from this study can serve as the building blocks for creating healthier work environments, in the context of organizational health and organizational citizenship. The findings could also be used to raise awareness of incivility as entry point for more egregious types of workplace offenses, within the federal sector. Awareness creates a space for acknowledgment, management, change, and choice.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Completion of the demographic question is significant for determining the influence of a variety of factors on the results of this study. These records will remain confidential. Any reports that may be published will not include any identifying information of the participants in this study. Please check the appropriate response.

Gender	
What is your age?	
Ethnicity?	Hispanic Non-Hispanic
Race?	African American/Black Asian/Pacific Islander Caucasian/White Hispanic/Latino/a Native American Multi-Racial
What is your GS level?	
What is your role?	Supervisor Team Lead Staff
How long have you been a federal employee?	

Appendix B: Permission to Use WIS

Thank you for your interest in the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS). You have my permission to use this scale for research purposes. The full text of the scale (both stem and items) is available in articles published in *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* and *Journal of Management*. To download copies of those articles, please visit my lab website and scroll to the bottom:
<http://lsa.umich.edu/psych/lilia-cortina-lab/>

Best of luck with your project,
Lilia Cortina

Lilia M Cortina, PhD
Professor of Psychology, Women's Studies, & Management
Associate Director of ADVANCE for the College of LS&A
Co-Director, ICOS Program

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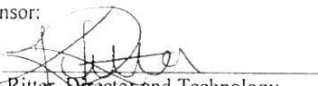
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 Wanda H. Pemberton
 Doctoral Student at
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Date: 7/7/10

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 Katy Ritter, Director and Technology
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Appendix D: NIH Certificate: Protecting Human Research Participants

