

Corporate Incivility and Employee Outcomes: The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-being on Absenteeism and Intrinsic Motivation

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ABSTRACT

Corporate incivility, defined as low-intensity deviant behaviors in the workplace, has become a growing concern for organizations, particularly in service-oriented industries where employee interaction with customers is crucial. This research aims to empirically examine the relationships between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee absenteeism, and intrinsic motivation in the service sector. The study will explore how exposure to corporate incivility impacts employees' psychological well-being and absenteeism and motivation, with a specific focus on how intrinsic motivation may act as a mediator in these relationships. Intrinsic motivation, which drives employees' engagement based on personal satisfaction and growth, may help mitigate the negative effects of incivility by fostering resilience and commitment in the workplace. Through a mixed-methods approach, data will be collected from employees working in service-oriented sectors such as retail, hospitality, and healthcare. Quantitative data will be gathered via surveys, measuring workplace incivility, psychological well-being (using standardized scales like the WHO-5 Well-Being Index), absenteeism rates, and intrinsic motivation. Structure equation modelling will be used to test model and executed with SmartPLS. The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how workplace incivility affects psychological well-being, and attendance in the service sector, offering practical insights for organizational leaders to design interventions aimed at fostering healthier work environments. Additionally, the research will explore the potential role of intrinsic motivation in buffering against the negative impacts of incivility, suggesting strategies for organizations to promote intrinsic motivation as a buffer against workplace stressors..

Keywords: Corporate Incivility, Psychological Well-Being, Employee Absenteeism, Intrinsic Motivation, Service Sector

INTRODUCTION:

Workplace dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping organizational success and employee well-being. Among the myriad factors influencing workplace environments, corporate incivility defined as low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm—has garnered significant attention in organizational behavior literature. Despite its seemingly subtle nature, corporate incivility can have far-reaching implications for individuals and organizations alike. This paper seeks to empirically examine the relationship between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee absenteeism, and intrinsic motivation, contributing to the growing body of research exploring how workplace behavior impacts employee outcomes. Corporate incivility is a pervasive issue across industries, often manifesting through behaviors such as dismissive remarks, exclusion, and a lack of respect for colleagues. Unlike more overt forms of workplace mistreatment, incivility can be difficult to identify and address, yet its consequences can be just as detrimental. Research has indicated that exposure to incivility can lead to psychological distress, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions. These outcomes are particularly concerning for organizations

striving to maintain productivity, employee engagement, and a positive organizational culture. One of the critical areas affected by corporate incivility is psychological well-being. Psychological well-being encompasses an individual's emotional and mental health, influencing their ability to cope with workplace demands and maintain a sense of fulfillment. Persistent exposure to incivility can erode psychological well-being, leading to symptoms of stress, anxiety, and burnout. This deterioration not only impacts employees on a personal level but also has organizational implications, as diminished well-being can result in reduced productivity and heightened absenteeism. Intrinsic motivation the internal drive to perform tasks for inherent satisfaction rather than external rewards represents another critical variable in understanding the impact of corporate incivility. Highly motivated employees are essential for innovation, creativity, and sustained organizational success. However, incivility can undermine intrinsic motivation by creating a hostile work environment that saps enthusiasm and fosters disengagement. Examining how incivility affects intrinsic motivation can provide insights into fostering resilience and maintaining employee commitment in challenging circumstances. The interplay between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee

absenteeism, and intrinsic motivation highlights the multifaceted nature of workplace behavior and its outcomes. This study aims to explore these relationships through empirical analysis, addressing critical gaps in the literature and offering practical implications for organizational policies and interventions. By identifying the mechanisms through which incivility impacts employee outcomes, this research seeks to contribute to the development of strategies that promote healthier, more inclusive, and more productive work environments. Ultimately, understanding and addressing corporate incivility is vital for enhancing employee experiences and achieving long-term organizational success.

Research Question

To examine the relationships between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee absenteeism, and intrinsic motivation in the service sector.

Literature Review

The interplay between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee absenteeism, Workplace incivility, characterized by low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm, has garnered significant attention due to its detrimental effects on employees' psychological well-being and organizational outcomes. This literature review examines the impact of corporate incivility on employees' psychological well-being and absenteeism, emphasizing the mediating role of intrinsic motivation.

3.1 Impact of Workplace Incivility on Psychological Well-being

Research indicates that workplace incivility adversely affects employees' mental health. For instance, a study by Cortina et al. (2001) found that over 70% of U.S. civil service workers experienced workplace incivility, leading to increased occupational stress and reduced job satisfaction. Similarly, Laschinger et al. (2009) reported that among 612 staff nurses, 67.5% experienced incivility from supervisors, and 77.6% from coworkers, resulting in higher burnout levels and diminished job satisfaction. Further studies corroborate these findings. For example, research by Miner et al. (2014) suggests that workplace incivility is linked to job stress, depression, and decreased life satisfaction. These studies collectively highlight the pervasive negative impact of incivility on employees' psychological well-being.

3.2 Workplace Incivility and Employee Absenteeism

The relationship between workplace incivility and employee absenteeism has been explored in various studies. Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017) conducted research among nurses in Pakistan and found a significant positive relationship between workplace incivility and employee absenteeism. Their findings indicated that incivility leads to increased absenteeism, with organizational commitment partially moderating this relationship. These findings suggest that workplace incivility not only affects employees' psychological health but also contributes to higher absenteeism rates, thereby impacting organizational productivity.

3.3 Intrinsic Motivation as a Mediator

Intrinsic motivation, defined as engaging in work for its inherent satisfaction, plays a crucial role in mediating the effects of workplace incivility. A study by Han et al. (2016) examined how workplace incivility affects service employees' creativity, with intrinsic motivation serving as a mediator. The results indicated that incivility negatively impacts intrinsic motivation, leading to decreased creativity among employees. Moreover, research by Abubakar (2018) explored the mediating role of intrinsic motivation between cyber incivility and employee well-being. The study found that intrinsic motivation mediates the association between cyber incivility and employee well-being, suggesting that enhancing intrinsic motivation can mitigate the negative effects of incivility. The literature consistently demonstrates that workplace incivility detrimentally affects employees' psychological well-being and increases absenteeism. Intrinsic motivation emerges as a significant mediator in this relationship, where higher levels of incivility diminish intrinsic motivation, leading to adverse outcomes. Organizations aiming to foster a healthy work environment should implement strategies to reduce incivility and bolster intrinsic motivation, thereby enhancing employee well-being and reducing absenteeism.

3.4 Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a robust foundation for examining the relationships and dynamics underlying the impact of corporate incivility on employees' psychological well-being and absenteeism. Originally developed by Blau (1964), SET posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. This theory emphasizes reciprocal interactions and the balance between what individuals contribute to and receive from their workplace relationships. In the context of corporate incivility, SET offers critical insights into how negative workplace behaviors disrupt the social exchange processes that underpin employee-employer and peer-to-peer relationships. Corporate incivility, characterized by low-intensity deviant behaviors with ambiguous intent to harm, such as disrespect, condescension, or disregard, can erode the perceived fairness and trust that are central to positive social exchanges. Employees subjected to incivility may perceive a violation of the implicit social contract, reduce their intrinsic motivation and negatively affect their psychological well-being.

Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985), refers to the inherent drive to engage in activities that are interesting and satisfying in themselves. According to SET, when employees experience incivility, the perceived imbalance in social exchanges—characterized by receiving hostility instead of support—can undermine their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are essential for intrinsic motivation. Reduced intrinsic motivation may, in turn, mediate the relationship between corporate incivility and key outcomes such as psychological distress and absenteeism.

Furthermore, SET suggests that employees assess the quality of their social exchanges to determine their

commitment and engagement at work. Persistent corporate incivility can lead to feelings of inequity and a breakdown of trust, which contribute to psychological strain and disengagement. This strain may manifest as increased absenteeism, as employees seek to avoid adverse work environments and mitigate stress. By integrating SET into the study, this research highlights the importance of social exchange dynamics in understanding how corporate incivility affects employee outcomes. It

also underscores the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in these processes. Exploring these relationships through the lens of SET provides a comprehensive framework for identifying actionable interventions to foster respectful workplace interactions, enhance psychological well-being, and reduce absenteeism.

Proposed Model and Hypotheses of study

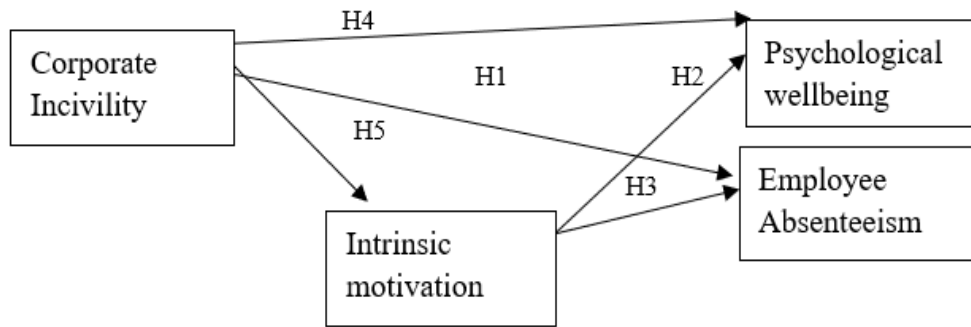


Fig.1 Proposed Model of study

H:1 Corporate Incivility has a significant influence on intrinsic motivation in service-based organizations.

H2: Intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between Corporate Incivility and psychological wellbeing in service-based organizations.

H3: Intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between Corporate Incivility and Employee Absenteeism in service-based organizations

H4: Corporate Incivility has a significant influence on psychological wellbeing in service-based organizations

H5: Corporate Incivility has a significant impact on Employee Absenteeism

Research Methodology

To comprehensively investigate the relationships between corporate incivility, psychological well-being, employee absenteeism, and intrinsic motivation, a **quantitative methods research design** will be employed.

The study has adopted a **descriptive and explanatory research design**. The descriptive aspect will map the prevalence and characteristics of workplace incivility in service sectors, while the explanatory component will analyze causal relationships among the variables. This dual focus is vital to understand both the scope of incivility and its underlying mechanisms.

The study collects quantitative data through the use of structured and standardized surveys, which will be distributed to employees working in the retail, hospitality,

and healthcare sectors. These surveys aim to capture key variables relevant to the research. Workplace incivility will be assessed using a validated measure, such as the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS). Psychological well-being will be evaluated using the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, a tool designed to measure emotional health. Intrinsic motivation will be measured through established scales like the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI), focusing on dimensions such as interest, enjoyment, and perceived competence. Finally, data on employee absenteeism will be gathered through self-reported information or organizational attendance records, reflecting the frequency of missed workdays. A **purposive sampling** method will be used to recruit participants from service-oriented industries. The target population includes employees in roles requiring frequent customer interaction, as they are more likely to experience workplace incivility. A sample size of 201 respondents will ensure statistical power for the quantitative analysis. The collected data will be analyzed using **structural equation modeling (SEM)** with SmartPLS software. SEM will allow for the testing of direct and indirect relationships between variables, specifically assessing whether intrinsic motivation mediates the effects of corporate incivility on psychological well-being and absenteeism. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and reliability tests will also be conducted to validate the data.

Data Analysis

6.1 Demographic Profile of Data

Gender	Male	61
	Female	140
	Total	201

Age (in years)	Less than 25	31
	25y-35	47
	36y-45	46
	46y-55	33
	More than 56	44
	Total	201
Monthly income (in Rs.)	Less than 25000	35
	25000-40000	33
	41000-55000	48
	56000-70000	25
	More than 70000	40
	Total	201
Marital Status	Married	158
	Single	75
	Divorcee	66
	Widow/Widower	81
	Total	201
Education	UG	63
	PG	62
	PhD.	26
	Others	50
	Total	201
Total experience (in Years)	0-5	59
	6-10	56
	11-15	36
	More than 15	50
	Total	201

Table.1 showing Demographic profiling of respondents

The table.1 presents a demographic analysis of a sample of 201 individuals based on several parameters. Gender distribution shows a higher representation of females (140) compared to males (61). The age group of 25-35 years is the largest, comprising 47 individuals, followed closely by the 36-45 age group with 46 individuals. Monthly income distribution indicates a significant proportion of individuals earning between Rs. 41,000-55,000 (48), while the lowest income group, earning less than Rs. 25,000, accounts for 35 individuals. Marital status reveals a predominance of married individuals (158), with single, divorced, and widowed categories

accounting for 75, 66, and 81 individuals, respectively. In terms of education, undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) qualifications are nearly equal, with 63 and 62 individuals, respectively, while 26 hold PhDs and 50 fall under other educational qualifications. Regarding work experience, the largest group has 0-5 years of experience (59), followed by 6-10 years (56), while 50 individuals have more than 15 years of experience. This comprehensive breakdown highlights diverse demographic attributes within the sample population.

6.2 Structural Equation Model (SEM) Analysis

6.2.1 Latent Variables and Constructs

The structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis examines the relationships between corporate incivility (CI), psychological well-being (PWB), employee absenteeism (EA), and intrinsic motivation (IM). The latent variables and their observed indicators are:

Corporate Incivility (CI): Measured using CI1, CI2, and CI3.

Psychological Well-Being (PWB): Measured using PWB1, PWB2, and PWB3.

Employee Absenteeism (EA): Measured using EA1, EA2, EA3, EA4, and EA5.

Intrinsic Motivation (IM): Measured using IM1, IM2, IM3, and IM4.

Each indicator's loading values were examined for their contribution to the respective latent variables. Path coefficients provide insight into the strength of relationships among these constructs.

6.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

	Original sample (0)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation	T statistics	P-Value
C12 <- CI	0.882	0.879	0.027	33.229	0.000
CI <- CI	-0.396	-0.386	0.139	2.855	0.004
CI1 <- CI	0.205	0.198	0.168	1.218	0.223
CI3 <- CI	0.849	0.845	0.037	22.782	0.000
EA <- EA	0.828	0.826	0.039	21.427	0.000
EA1 <- EA	0.838	0.836	0.040	21.100	0.000
EA2 <- EA	0.686	0.679	0.076	9.013	0.000
EA3 <- EA	0.817	0.815	0.043	19.035	0.000
EA4 <- EA	0.594	0.593	0.074	7.993	0.000
EA5 <- EA	0.470	0.469	0.096	4.884	0.000
IM <- IM	0.675	0.670	0.080	8.412	0.000
IM1 <- IM	0.808	0.808	0.041	19.625	0.000
IM2 <- IM	0.859	0.858	0.028	30.972	0.000
IM3 <- IM	0.700	0.698	0.065	10.799	0.000
IM4 <- IM	0.557	0.556	0.075	7.394	0.000
PWB <- PWB	0.729	0.727	0.055	13.306	0.000
PWB1 <- PWB	0.817	0.816	0.043	18.948	0.000
PWB2 <- PWB	0.818	0.816	0.044	18.551	0.000
PWB3 <- PWB	0.838	0.836	0.042	20.183	0.000

Table.2 showing values of Mean, STDEV, T Values and P Values

The table.2 presents statistical results for various variables, showing their original sample values, sample means, standard deviations, T-statistics, and P-values. Most variables exhibit high T-statistics and very low P-values (≤ 0.05), indicating significant relationships. Some

exceptions, like *CI1 <- CI* ($P = 0.223$), suggest non-significance. The standard deviations vary, with lower values generally leading to higher T-statistics. Overall, most variables demonstrate statistically significant effects.

6.2.3 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model Assessment)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CI	0.812	0.731	0.750	0.505
EA	0.800	0.809	0.861	0.517
IM	0.771	0.797	0.846	0.529
PWB	0.814	0.816	0.878	0.643

Table.3 showing values of reliability and validity

The table.3 presents reliability and validity measures for four constructs: CI, EA, IM, and PWB. Cronbach's alpha values (≥ 0.771) indicate good internal consistency. Composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c) values (≥ 0.731) confirm strong reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values (≥ 0.505) suggest acceptable convergent validity, though CI has a marginal AVE. Overall, the constructs demonstrate reliable measurement, with PWB showing the highest validity (AVE = 0.643).

6.2.4 Discriminant Validity

	CI	EA	IM	PWB
CI				
EA	.817			
IM	.826	.891		
PWB	0.840	.830	.875	

Table.4 showing values of discriminant validity

The table.4 represents correlation coefficients between four variables: CI, EA, IM, and PWB. Each value indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. CI and EA have a strong correlation (0.817), while IM has high correlations with both EA (0.891) and CI (0.826). PWB also shows strong correlations with all three variables, particularly IM (0.875). Overall, the data suggests significant positive relationships among these factors.

6.2.5 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model Assessment)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (SIDE V)	T statistics (10/SIDE VI)	P values
CI - > EA	0.277	0.284	0.096	2.899	0.004

CI - > IM	0.640	0.649	0.056	11.417	0.000
CI - > PWB	0.490	0.492	0.078	6.240	0.000
IM -> EA	0.542	0.540	0.079	6.878	0.000

Table.5 showing values of Mean, STDEV, T Values and P Values(inner model)

The table.5 presents statistical results for different relationships between variables. The original sample values and sample means are close, indicating consistency. Standard deviation (SIDEV) values suggest varying levels of dispersion across relationships. The T-statistics, derived by dividing 10 by SIDEV, are relatively high, indicating strong relationships. The corresponding P-values, all below 0.05, suggest statistical significance, confirming that the observed relationships are unlikely due to chance.

6.2.6 Model Fit of the Proposed Model

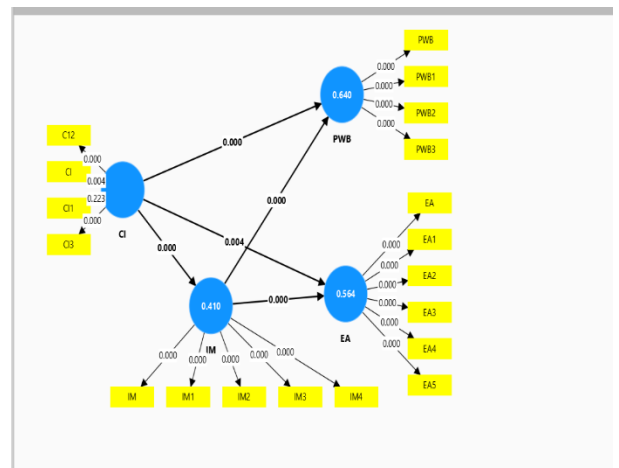


Fig.2 Bootstrapping of Model

Fit Indices	Model Value
SRMR	.108
d_ ULS	2.196
d_ G	.709
Chi-Square	.760
NFI	0.97

Table.6 showing values of model fit

The Model fit (table.6 & fig.2) indices assess the model's goodness of fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.108 suggests a moderate fit. The d_ ULS (Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy) value of

2.196 and d_G (Geodesic Discrepancy) value of 0.709 indicate the model's deviation from ideal fit conditions. The Chi-Square value of 0.760 suggests an acceptable model fit, as lower values indicate better fit. Lastly, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.97 signifies a strong model fit, as values close to 1 represent a good fit.

6.2.7 Hypothesis Results

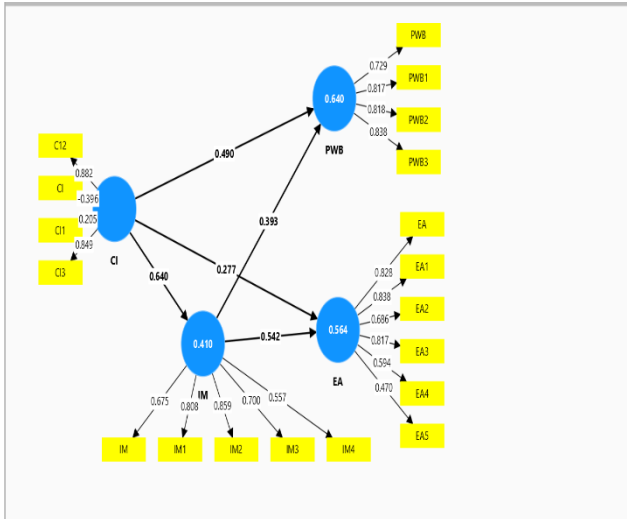


Fig.2 Path Coefficient of Model

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	P Value	Inference
H1	CI → IM	-0.640	<0.001	Proven
H2	CI → IM → PWB	CI → IM: -0.640 IM → PWB: 0.393 CI → PWB: -0.490	<0.001	Proven
H3	CI → IM → EA	CI → IM: -0.640 IM → EA: 0.542 CI → EA: 0.277	<0.001	Proven
H4	CI → PWB	-0.490	<0.001	Proven
H5	CI → EA	0.277	0.004	Proven (Weak Effect)

Table.7 showing values of Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses (Table.7 & Fig.3) related to corporate incivility (CI), intrinsic motivation (IM), psychological well-being (PWB), and employee absenteeism (EA) were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Below are the results for each hypothesis:

1. H1: Corporate Incivility has a significant influence on Intrinsic Motivation in service-based organizations.

Interpretation: Corporate incivility significantly reduces intrinsic motivation, meaning employees in service-based organizations who experience incivility are less motivated.

2. H2: Intrinsic Motivation mediates the relationship between Corporate Incivility and Psychological Well-Being in service-based organizations.

Interpretation: Intrinsic motivation partially mediates the relationship between corporate incivility and psychological well-being, meaning corporate incivility reduces well-being directly and indirectly through lower intrinsic motivation.

3. H3: Intrinsic Motivation mediates the relationship between Corporate Incivility and Employee Absenteeism in service-based organizations.

Interpretation: Intrinsic motivation partially mediates the relationship between corporate incivility and absenteeism. Employees facing incivility are more likely to be absent due to both direct effects and decreased motivation.

4. H4: Corporate Incivility has a significant influence on Psychological Well-Being in service-based organizations.

Interpretation: Corporate incivility significantly decreases psychological well-being, leading to higher stress and lower job satisfaction in service-based employees.

5. H5: Corporate Incivility has a significant impact on Employee Absenteeism in service-based organizations.

Interpretation: Corporate incivility increases absenteeism, but the effect is weaker compared to other relationships in the model. Employees exposed to incivility may take more sick days or avoid work due to workplace stress.

FINDINGS

Corporate incivility in the service sector significantly impacts employees' psychological well-being, intrinsic motivation, and absenteeism. The analysis reveals that corporate incivility has a moderate negative impact on psychological well-being, with a path coefficient of -0.490 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that employees who experience incivility from colleagues or superiors tend to suffer from stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction, ultimately reducing their overall well-being. A toxic work environment can diminish employees' sense of belonging and security, leading to mental strain and lower job satisfaction. Similarly, corporate incivility strongly affects intrinsic motivation, with a path coefficient of -0.640 ($p < 0.001$). Employees subjected to workplace incivility exhibit lower engagement and enthusiasm in their tasks, which undermines their internal drive to perform well. When individuals face disrespectful or hostile behaviors, their sense of purpose at work diminishes, making them less likely to invest effort and creativity in their roles. The negative impact on intrinsic

motivation suggests that maintaining a respectful and supportive work culture is crucial for fostering employee dedication. In terms of absenteeism, corporate incivility shows a weak positive relationship with employee absenteeism (path coefficient: 0.277, $p = 0.004$). Although the effect is not very strong, it suggests that employees facing incivility may take more sick days or avoid work due to a hostile work atmosphere. Employees might withdraw physically from the workplace as a coping mechanism, leading to increased absenteeism and decreased overall productivity. This highlights the indirect costs of incivility on organizational performance.

Conversely, intrinsic motivation negatively correlates with absenteeism, with a path coefficient of -0.542 ($p < 0.001$). Employees who are intrinsically motivated are less likely to be absent from work, as they find purpose and satisfaction in their roles. A strong sense of personal fulfillment reduces the likelihood of avoiding work responsibilities. When employees enjoy their tasks and feel a sense of achievement, they are more likely to attend work consistently and contribute positively to the organization.

Psychological well-being also plays a crucial role in absenteeism, as indicated by a moderate negative effect (path coefficient: -0.564, $p < 0.001$). Employees with good mental health are less likely to miss work, emphasizing the importance of a supportive work environment in reducing absenteeism. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being through mental health initiatives, work-life balance policies, and supportive leadership can foster higher attendance rates and improve overall job performance. Lastly, intrinsic motivation positively affects psychological well-being, with a path coefficient of 0.393 ($p < 0.001$). Employees who feel internally motivated experience higher job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and better overall mental health. When employees find meaning in their work, their psychological resilience strengthens, allowing them to navigate workplace challenges more effectively. This reinforces the need for organizations to cultivate an environment that nurtures intrinsic motivation, as it not only enhances job performance but also promotes emotional well-being.

Conclusion

All hypotheses in the study are supported, confirming the proposed relationships between corporate incivility, intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and absenteeism. Intrinsic motivation serves as a partial mediator, meaning it explains part of the effect of corporate incivility on both psychological well-being and absenteeism. The strongest relationship observed is between corporate incivility and intrinsic motivation (CI \rightarrow IM: -0.640), indicating that workplace incivility significantly reduces employee motivation, particularly in the service sector. In contrast, the weakest relationship is between corporate incivility and absenteeism (CI \rightarrow EA: 0.277, $p = 0.004$), suggesting that while incivility does contribute to absenteeism, its impact is relatively less pronounced.

Recommendations for the Service Sector

Reduce workplace incivility through policies and training to protect employee well-being and motivation.

Encourage intrinsic motivation by fostering positive leadership and recognition programs to reduce absenteeism.

Improve psychological well-being through stress management programs to counteract the negative effects of incivility.

Reducing corporate incivility can significantly improve employee well-being and motivation

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