



Exploring The Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Productivity: SME's Perspective

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Abstract

Increased productivity in SMEs in terms of quality service delivery is crucial for economic growth and development. Most SMEs are bedevilled with destructive workplace deviant behaviour, particularly the incivility of owners/managers and employees towards customers, which have different consequences for workplace performance parameters such as a decline in sales, low patronage, and by extension, weak gross domestic product contribution. Using the social exchange theory, this cross-sectional study examined the influence of workplace incivility on productivity among 365 owners/managers, supervisors, and employees of SMEs in the liquefied petroleum gas sub-sector in Lagos State. Stratified proportionate sampling was utilized to select the respondents. The outcomes revealed that workplace incivility in the form of rudeness, discourteous disposition, and derogatory remarks predicted productivity in terms of an interaction between customers and employees and the capacity of the service process. Also, our findings accentuated the essence of avoiding direct and indirect costs that are linked with workplace incivility. The study recommended the communal and positive interpersonal relationships between owners/managers, employees, and customers and suggested training on emotional intelligence as a panacea for behavioral responses.

Keywords Behavior, deviance, employees, incivility, productivity, workplace, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

Following an ostensible increasing concern with rudeness and discourteous behavior within workplaces, businesses and traditional popular culture (Clay, 2013; Feintzeig, 2013; Turabik & Baskan, 2020) the nature and corollaries of workplace incivility have elicited consideration across disciplines (Taylor, Bedeian, Cole, & Zhang, 2017). Within a workplace, incivility may entail putting down contemporaries, making debasing comments to subordinates, excluding fellow employees from interpersonal networks, and addressing customers in a rude or unprofessional manner. Literature reveals that 98 percent of workers have encountered rude conduct on a regular basis in the workplace, while 50 percent have experienced it at least once each week (Ugwu & Nnamah, 2022). Again, a study conducted



by Porath (2016) revealed that the percentage of employees who reported coworkers' negative behaviors at least once per month climbed by 13 percent between 1998 and 2016, reaching 62 percent.

This destructive behavior is more subtle than any other workplace negativity (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Tricahyadinata, Hendryadi, Zainurossalamia & Riadi, 2020) which is associated with purposeful exclusion, amplified depression, anxiety, and work-to-family conflict (Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Gilin-Oore, 2011; Lim & Lee, 2011; Porath & Pearson, 2013). The mild, and often ambiguous, the character of incivility also makes it complicated for organizations to generate policies barring uncivil acts or to punish employees who exhibit them. Further, this negative behavior hurt employees and potential and existing customers by violating the custom of mutual respect, sexist comments, and racial affronts, among others.

Geldart *et al.* (2018) study on workplace incivility in the Canadian public sector suggested further studies in the private sector. In the same vein, Torkelson, Holm, Backstrom, and Schad (2016) surveyed incivility for temporary agency employees in a Swedish municipality and submitted that further studies should examine the same in developing countries. In terms of lost productivity, workplace incivility is assumed to cost U.S. SMEs millions of dollars annually (Porath & Pearson, 2013), due to the resulting decline in performance, attendance, and even health among targets and witnesses of incivility. Hence, this study investigated the effect of workplace incivility on the productivity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs') in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sub-sector in Lagos State Nigeria.

SMEs in the Nigerian liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sub-sector

An enormous investment potential exists in the Nigeria LPG sub-sector of the oil and gas industry. Kalejaye (2013) observed that despite the government's incapacitating outlook towards the LPG sub sector's growth, private investors have insistently pursued the development in the sector by investing over \$400 million, which covers the construction of terminals, depots and bottling plants. A large percentage of Nigerian middle and upper socio-economic groups of individuals, industries, government establishments, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, bakeries, among others, depend on LPG, otherwise known as cooking gas for cooking purposes. In contrast to neighboring countries such as Ghana and Cameroon, per capita LPG use in Nigeria is quite low (World Bank/ Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme, 2007).

Nigeria's per capita consumption is little around 1 kilogram, which is much less than other West African nations like as Ghana (4.7 kilograms) and Senegal (9 kilograms) per capita (WLPGA, 2016). According to Kelly (2015), Nigeria produces 12 percent of the LPG consumed in Sub-Saharan Africa, but just 1 percent of the LPG consumed in the West Africa area. Several reasons have been cited for the low usage of LPG in Nigeria, including protracted logistics challenges (Alike, 2017), a lack of marketing resources to market products (Asikhia, 2010), insufficient public awareness on safety and high costs of LPG cylinders (Obi, 2015), and inconsistent government policies on value-added tax and duty



(Alike, 2017; Asikhia, 2010; Obi, 2015; Obi, 2017). (Kalejaye, 2013; Ogbuanu, 2016). In addition, the sporadic incidence of gas filling plant explosions and the resulting avoidable fatalities in Nigeria during the past several years may have contributed to a fall in sales. This repeating decimal might be attributed not just to noncompliance with industry operating regulations and standards, but also to the poor workplace conduct of employees and owners/managers of SMEs (Asu, 2018; Ugwuanyi, 2013).

Researchers have asserted that the effectiveness of decision-makers is premise on their behaviors, and a positive link exists between human capital competence and SMEs' sustainability (Garavan, Watson, Carbery, & O'Brien, 2015; Jansen, Curseu, Vermeulen, Geurts, & Gibcus, 2013). Accordingly, SMEs' sustainability in the LPG sub-sector is somewhat predicated on deviant behavior such as workplace incivility of its human capital. To reinforce this, Asikhia and Jansen Van Rensburg (2015) noted that different scholars have pointed out personal characteristics and competencies of owners/managers of SMEs as one of the drivers of performance. The paucity of positive attributes or resources at the workplace could result in exhibition of behaviors or actions that range from the commendable to the morally contemptible. Therefore, low-intensity rude and discourteous behaviors such as workplace incivility of employees and owner/managers may impede the growth of SMEs in the Nigerian LPG sector.

Postulated pretext for the intensification of rudeness at the workplace or workplace incivility could be cited to greater workplace diversity leading to more misconstruction; greater perceived job insecurity as SMEs mostly engage in precarious employment; more considerable anxiety on employees, including being overworked; and lower general employee job satisfaction, partially as a function of workers' perceived entitlement (Buhler, 2013). Without a doubt, workplace incivility is a snowballing challenge for SMEs in this current era of rapid globalization (Reio, Jr., & Sanders-Reio., 2011). Besides, 98 percent of employees are estimated to experience incivility, with 50 percent undergoing such negative behavior at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2013).

Further, Doshy and Wang (2014) suggested future empirical research should utilize diverse research approaches in the study of workplace incivility. Sharma and Singh (2016) indicated that future research should deliberate other dependent variables besides job satisfaction and employee turnover that would extend workplace incivility scope beyond Indian workplace settings. Apart from the incessant delay of work activities as a result of mental distractions from work, the financial cost of experiencing incivility is projected at \$14,000 per employee annually (Pearson & Porath, 2009). Although several studies have investigated the prevalence of incivility in Nigerian workplaces (Abubakar, Yazdian, & Behraves, 2018; Arogundade, Arogundade, & Gbabijo, 2016; Etodike & Ezech, 2017; Ugwu, Okafor, Onyishi, Casimir, & Chinedu, 2018), research is still sparse on the effect of workplace incivility on the productivity of SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, Nigeria.

This study adopted social exchange theory as its theoretical foothold fundamentally due to its ability to elucidate social change as a progression of interactions between parties. To reinforce this, previous studies have utilized the social exchange theory to link



interpersonal aggression and workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Glomb & Liao, 2003). As well, Bunk and Magley (2013) found a linkage between experienced incivility and emotions that emanates as anticipated reciprocation of the behavior toward the perpetrator.

Social exchange theory was postulated by George Homas in 1958 to help explain and predict how individuals and social groups interact with one another in the course of exchanging goods or services. Social exchange theory assumes that individuals rationally seek to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs in any social interaction. During the communication between individuals or parties, resources are traded through a process of reciprocity, wherein an individual or party tends to reimburse the good (or occasionally bad) deeds of another party (Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). Besides, Crossman (2018) opined that human interactions are determined by the rewards or punishments that are expected from an exchange, which is evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis model (whether intentionally or subconsciously). The quality of these exchanges is often affected by the association between the perpetrator and the victim (Blau, 1964).

In the context of this study, the social exchange process begins when personnel working in SMEs treat employees or customers constructively or destructively. Constructive workplace behaviors such as courtesy, civility, politeness, organizational support, collective decision making, could elicit positive reciprocating responses such as increased patronage, goodwill, whistleblowing, social capital, increased productivity, work engagement, innovation, creativity and feedback from customers and employees. Conversely, destructive workplace behaviors such as workplace incivility could incite negative consequences like sabotage, industrial espionage, employee silence, absenteeism, psychological trauma, depression, work-life conflict, a decline in service delivery, among others.

Employees and customers in the LPG sub-sector would prefer to be in a work arrangement that exhausts their possibilities for quality products, effective service delivery, career advancement, adequate remuneration, self-actualization, health, safety, and wellness. Also, employees would prefer to avoid the emotional depression that may arise as a result of the high-power distance display of owner/managers of SMEs and some defiant customers.

Research Question Development can we state our research question in the paper here below is an empirical review

i Does workplace incivility have a significant effect on the productivity of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, Nigeria

Workplace Incivility

In recent years, workplace negativity such as incivility has appeared as a critical topic in the organizational behavior literature as thousands of studies have examined how several types of destructive workplace behaviors affect organization level, group-level, individual-level productivity and organizational sustainability (Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). A positive social relationship is an advantage for the smooth running of society in general (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Tricahyadinata, Hendryadi, Zainurossalamia & Riadi, 2020).



Hence, failure to perceive the intricate rules of interpersonal demeanor and to act with social intelligence could produce a toxic work environment (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). Within a workplace, incivility may involve pulling down colleagues, making undignified remarks to subordinates, excluding fellow employees from interpersonal networks, and addressing others in a rude or unprofessional manner.

At the outset, preceding studies have concentrated on negative workplace behaviors such as mobbing, abusive supervision, bullying and aggression, and their detrimental effects on targets and organizational outcomes. On the contrary, after an ostensible increasing concern with rudeness and discourteous behavior within politics, workplaces and conventional popular culture (Clay, 2013; Feintzeig, 2013), the nature and corollaries of workplace incivility have stimulated consideration across academic disciplines (Taylor, Bedeian, Cole, & Zhang, 2017). Without a doubt, workplace incivility is an increasing challenge for SMEs in this current era of rapid globalization (Reio, Jr., & Sanders-Reio., 2011).

Speculated reasons for the rise of rudeness at the workplace or workplace incivility could be deduced to greater worker diversity leading to more misunderstanding; greater perceived job insecurity as SMEs mostly engages in precarious employment; more significant stress on employees, including being overworked; and lower general employee job satisfaction, partially as a function of workers' perceived entitlement (Buhler, 2013). Likewise, stress is capable of causing an individual to be uncivil; consequences of being uncivil could elicit more stress, which could trigger further uncivil behaviors. Similarly, downsizing, reengineering, budget cuts, precarious employment, competition, autocratic leadership, and toxic work environment have been identified as potential reasons for the perennial occurrence of workplace incivility (Porath & Pearson, 2010).

Workplace incivility, a comparative addition, has been introduced to the sphere of negative workplace behavior. Accordingly, workplace incivility is described as low-intensity deviant workplace behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This unambiguous definition has been utilized extensively by a number of scholars (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001), as cited in (Bartlett, Bartlett, & Reio, 2008). Additionally, Andersson and Pearson (1999) refer to workplace incivility as a mild, yet prevalent, form of interpersonal deviance that violates norms in the workplace, thereby creating a work environment characterized by rudeness and disrespect.

Fundamentals of workplace incivility which help to distinguish it from other negative interpersonal workplace behavioral variables are its low intensity (aggression, violence, and bullying are more severe) and it is unclear (rather than overt or diagnosable) intent to harm (Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). The seemingly related constructs of aggression, bullying, and abusive supervision are more observable, and for that reason, potential victims of these behaviors interpret them as purposely intended. Hence, the intentionality of incivility is more complex to determine. Also, incivility may be performed not only by individuals in managerial jobs or supervisory roles but also by employees or clients. Workplace incivility is inclusive of talking down to others, making undignified remarks, and



not paying attention to someone (Porath & Pearson, 2009). These rude and discourteous behaviors could manifest in the form of derogatory comments and actions that promote social posturing, such as seizing an item out of a co-worker's hand or shoving in front of another person. Also, common illustrations of incivility include answering the telephone in an impolite manner, using the last of something without replenishing the supply, talking negatively about another employee, and sending a rude e-mail to a fellow employee (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Martin & Hine, 2005).

Workplace incivility is acknowledged as problematic, and it is affecting employees in a wide range of jobs and professions (Schilpzand *et al.*, 2016). Most studies in workplace incivility have deliberated its growing effect (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Fox & Stallworth, 2003; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). The snowballing effect describes clearly how incivility can spiral into progressively intense behaviors with a starting point and tipping points (Andersson, 1999). In this regard, some outcomes could become antecedents to continue the cycle of incivility. In recent times, researchers have found that workplace incivility is linked with amplified depression, anxiety, and work-to-family conflict for the target (Lim & Lee, 2011).

Furthermore, workplace incivility undercut social interactions, as they not only violate norms for mutual respect but also clash with the basic human need for positive social bonds (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). These results infer that incivility experience negatively influences the victims' work productivity and, by extension, emasculates organizational sustainability. Incivility hurts employees and customers by violating the custom of mutual respect, sexist comments, and racial affronts, among others. Moreover, workplace incivility is associated with greater levels of job burnout and inclinations to leave the workforce (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009).

In a similar vein, scholars have discovered that incivility is associated with a decline in job satisfaction, willingness to remain in the organization, prejudiced performance, and lower productivity (Cortina *et al.*, 2001), lower job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, and Gilin, 2009), lost enthusiasm to work, decreased loyalty to the organization (Pearson *et al.*, 2005), and lower job satisfaction with managers and peers, a sense of injures, and (Lim & Lee, 2011).

The victims of incivility exhibit mental discomfort, decreased levels of energy and motivation, and more intents to leave their jobs (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Giumetti *et al.*, 2013; Lim & Lee, 2011). In addition, victims of incivility have difficulties in task performance (Chen *et al.*, 2013; Giumetti *et al.*, 2013) and citizenship performance (Taylor *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, workplace incivility has been linked with amplified levels of stress (Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, & Brady, 2012), emotional exhaustion (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010), employee turnover intentions (Lim & Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010) and counterproductive work behavior (Taylor & Kluemper, 2012), as well as decreased job satisfaction (Lim & Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010), creativity (Porath & Erez, 2009), and consequently organizational productivity and performance (Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012).



Even though these acts are essentially mild, they cost businesses millions of dollars per year due to the resulting decline in performance, attendance, and wellness among targets and witnesses of incivility (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Pearson & Porath, 2005, 2009). Estimates suggest 71 to 96 percent of employees are exposed to workplace incivility (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013). Additionally, research estimated that 98 percent of employees' experience incivility, with 50 percent experiencing such behavior at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2013). The monetary cost of experiencing incivility is approximated at \$14,000 per employee per annum, due to project delays and cognitive disruption from work (Pearson & Porath, 2009). These worrisome statistics denote that incivility influences a lot of employees and has a sizeable financial effect on organizations. More so, the individual costs borne by employees include withdrawal from work activities, disappointments, and frustrations that could reflect in their dealing with customers (Porath & Pearson, 2013).

Businesses that crave for sustainability must diagnose the causal antecedents that give rise to incivility to trim down its manifestation. If not inhibited, workplace incivility has been revealed to negatively influence significant organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction (Reio & Ghosh, 2009), organizational commitment (Lim & Teo, 2009), task and citizenship performance (Jawahar & Schreurs, 2018), and job performance (Porath & Pearson, 2010). Likewise, a previous cross-sectional study found a negative linkage between undergoing incivility and behavioral work outcomes, such as job performance (Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012), and decreased sales performance and absenteeism (Sliter, Sliter & Jex, 2012). In light of the above issues, it is astonishing that studies on workplace incivility are relatively sparse in Nigeria. Hence, the research question: *To what extent does workplace incivility affect the productivity of SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State Nigeria.*

Workplace Incivility and Productivity

Using a survey methodology and subsequent hierarchical regression analysis, Sharma and Singh (2016) examined the effects of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and employees' intentions to leave their jobs in Indian work settings and concluded that workplace incivility is negatively associated with job satisfaction and positively associated with employee turnover. According to Anjum, Ming, Siddiqi, and Rasool (2018), toxic work environment dimensions such as ostracism, incivility, harassment, and bullying have a direct negative significant effect on job productivity, whereas job burnout was found to be a statistically significant mediator between ostracism and job productivity. Taylor, Bedeian, and Kluemper (2012) discovered, based on matched data from 190 job incumbents and their supervisors, that workplace incivility had a detrimental impact on citizenship performance. In addition, Sliter, Sliter, and Jex (2012) examined 120 bank tellers about experienced incivility and attained performance, and the results suggested that incivility led to lower sales performance and higher absenteeism. Consequently, Bartlett, Bartlett, and Reio (2008) found that an employee's desire to quit would be triggered by a fall in production.



Scott, Restubog, and Zagenczyk (2013), while conducting studies of co-worker dyads with the social exchange model, examined reactions to co-workers who instigated co-worker incivility and found that employees who exhibit workplace incivility are mistrusted and as a result are victims of workplace exclusion. In another vein, and emanating from a different source of workplace incivility, Van Jaarsveld, Walker, and Skarlick (2010) survey scrutinized the consequences of customer incivility on call center workers, and results revealed that customer incivility toward employees is linked to employee incivility towards customers through job demands foremost and afterward emotional exhaustion. Accordingly, Sliter, Jex, Wolford, and McInnerney (2010) explored with data from 120 bank tellers, and results revealed that customer incivility was positively linked to emotional exhaustion and negatively associated with customer service performance.

A survey conducted with data from 192 employees by Lim and Teo (2009) showed that cyber incivility was negatively linked to employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. That is, employees who are challenged by cyber incivility at the workplace are more likely to quit their jobs or engaged in deviant behaviors, which is inimical to organizational productivity. Porath and Pearson (2010), in a survey, demonstrated that encountering uncivil behavior was linked to lower work quality and performance, as well as less effort, commitment, and time at work. Also, the scholars established that 12% of those facing uncivil behavior had left the workplace. Similarly, a health care survey by Hutton and Gates (2008) revealed that supervisor incivility focussed toward direct care staff was expensive as such behavior cost US\$1,235 per nursing assistant and US\$1,484 per registered nurse in lost productivity.

Demsky, Fritz, Hammer, and Black (2018) investigation that examined the linkage between non-work outcomes and workplace incivility hinted that increased insomnia, which impacts on employee productivity, is a corollary of increased negative work stress. Also, Ferguson (2012), using a matched data set of 190 job incumbents and their partners, demonstrated that incivility does not only affect victims' productivity at work but also work-life balance. To substantiate the relevance of stress caused by incivility as an impediment to productivity, Beattie, and Griffin (2014) study hinted that higher levels of stress are as a result of more incivility, but top supervisor support reduced this effect. The study was embarked on to provide palliatives and curative interventions aimed at ameliorating the adverse effects of workplace incivility. This is pertinent due to evidence which suggests that if incivility is left unchecked, it may incur the cost of legal actions against organizations (Bandow & Hunter, 2008). Consequently, workplace incivility has several adverse effects, such as higher levels of job burnout and turnover cognitions cost U.S. businesses millions of dollars annually (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Wang, & Chen, 2020). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that: *Workplace incivility has no significant effect on the productivity of the SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, Nigeria*

METHOD

A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this paper, which is superlative for gathering of descriptive data at one point in time across the selected SME's



in the LPG sub-sector. A valid membership directory as at 2017 of Nigerian Association of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers (NALPGAM) comprising 1043 owners/managers, supervisors, and employees working in the selected SME's was used as the target population. With the aid of a Rao soft sample size calculator, a sample size of 281 respondents was arrived at. In order to compensate for non- response and ambiguous filling of the questionnaire, the sample was enlarged by 30%, which amounts to 84 of the calculated sample, as suggested by Zikmund (2000), thereby arriving at 365.

According to the NALPGAM membership directory, the study area, which is Lagos State, is stratified into five (5) divisions, namely Badagry, Epe, Ikeja, Ikorodu, and Lagos Island. Hence, stratified random sampling was adopted for this study. Proportionate distribution was embraced as it is crucial to draw samples that represent larger groups in a satisfactory manner and also due to variations in the number of registered SME's in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State divisions.

A self-designed questionnaire consisting of indices that are capable of measuring the constructs effortlessly was generated from literature (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Porath & Pearson, 2013; Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). The self-developed questionnaire helped instil cultural necessities, ensure adequate reliability and validity, enrich the zeal of the respondents, mitigate respondent errors in the understanding of the questions, and coding of answers. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions and different sections which made it easier for the generation of quick responses from respondents, in a six-point Likert type ranging from various degrees of highness and lowness such as very high (V.H.), high (H), moderately high (M.H.), moderately low (ML), low (L), and very low (V.L.).

The research instrument was subjected to content validity as the opinions of experts were sought. Also, construct validity was conducted using analytical test- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett to determine the ability of research instrument to measure abstract concepts and confirm the quality too. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was above the threshold of 0.70. Descriptive statistics as conducted with the aid of percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation settled in tables while inferential statistics were carried out using simple linear regression to test the hypothesis. Simple linear regression was used to determine the effect of workplace incivility on productivity in the selected SMEs at a 95 percent confidence level (level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 1.1 Descriptive Statistics on Workplace Incivility

Workplace Incivility	N = 365 (%)								
	VH	H	MH	ML	L	VL	MS	Mean	S.D.
Derogatory comments to subordinates	1.1	5.7	24.5	43.1	18.1	7.0	0.5	3.06	1.02
Display of unprofessionalism when addressing subordinates and co workers	4.3	11.9	32.6	25.1	20.8	5.4	0.0	3.38	1.21



Rude and discourteous behavior	1.9	9.2	24.3	36.9	19.4	8.4	0.0	3.12	1.14
Disrespectful behavior	0.3	4.6	26.1	37.7	21.3	10.0	0.0	2.95	1.04
Undignified remarks	2.2	9.2	35.8	32.1	12.4	8.4	0.8	3.32	1.13
Grand								3.16	.88

Source: Field Survey Results, 2021

Interpretation

Table 1.1 put forward the descriptive statistics of respondents' view on workplace incivility. Taking note of the answers comprising very high, high, moderately high, moderately low, low, and very low scale, results in Table 1.1 specified that 31.3% of the respondents recognized a hint of derogatory comments to subordinates in their workplaces, with 1.1% signifying very high, 5.7% high and 24.4% moderately high. Also, a larger 68.7% of the respondents had varied views, with 43.1% being moderately low, 18.1% low, and 7.5% very low, and 0.5% were missing. On average, the respondents established that derogatory comments to subordinates is moderately low (mean= 3.06, SD=1.02). Furthermore, 48.8% of the respondents indicated that display of unprofessionalism when addressing subordinates and co-workers is on the high side, as 4.3% indicated very high, 11.9% high and 32.5% moderately high, even though a slightly higher 52.2% of the respondents varied in their estimations, with 25.1% reporting moderately low, 20.8% low and 5.4% very low. On average, the respondents noted that display of unprofessionalism when addressing subordinates and co-workers is moderately low (mean = 3.38, SD= 1.21).

For the item on rude and discourteous behavior, 35.4% of the respondents accepted there is a high existence of rude and discourteous behavior, with 1.9% indicating very high, 9.2% high and 24.3% moderately high. However, a greater 64.6% of the respondents differed in the opinions, with 36.9% indicating moderately low, 19.4% low and 8.4% very low. On average, the respondents posited that rude and discourteous behavior is moderately low (mean= 3.12, SD=1.14). In addition, of the 31% respondents who gave their views on disrespectful behavior within the margin of very high to moderately high, 0.3% indicated very high, 4.6% high and 26.1% moderately high. In contrast, a larger 69% varied in their opinions, with 37.7% indicating moderately low, 21.3% low, and 10% very low. On average, the respondents noted that disrespectful behavior is moderately low (mean= 2.95, SD= 1.04).

Finally, 47.2% of the respondents stated a hint of undignified remarks within the margin of very high to moderately high, with 2.2% indicating very high, 9.2% high and 35% moderately high, while 52.8% of the respondents thought otherwise, with 31.3% reporting moderately low, 12.4% indicating low, 8.4% indicating very low and 0.8% were missing. On average the respondents agreed that undignified remarks are moderately low (mean=3.32, SD= 1.13). The grand mean of workplace blowing scale was 3.16, which denotes that the respondents' views is affixed on moderately low, and the standard deviations of 0.88 was moderately varied.



Table 1.2 Descriptive Statistics on Productivity

Productivity	N = 365 (%)								
	VH	H	MH	ML	L	VL	MS	Mean	S.D.
Customers demand for product	11.3	31.3	47.2	9.7	0.5	0.0	0.0	4.43	.84
Customers satisfaction	2.7	12.1	44.5	35.3	5.4	0.0	0.0	3.71	.85
Customer retention	1.6	7.3	37.2	34.2	15.4	4.3	0.0	3.33	1.02
Capacity of service process	3.2	19.7	30.5	30.2	12.4	4.0	0.0	3.59	1.15
Ease of getting the products to the customers	0.8	6.5	24.3	36.4	20.8	9.7	1.6	2.99	1.08
Complaint management response	2.4	14.3	38.8	32.9	10.5	1.1	0.0	3.62	.97
Interaction between customers and employees	13.2	19.1	36.7	25.9	4.6	0.5	0.0	4.09	1.10
Grand								3.68	0.79

Source: Field Survey Results, 2021

Interpretation

Table 1.2 indicates the descriptive statistics of respondents' valuations to productivity in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos. Taking cognizance of the responses comprising very high, high, moderately high, moderately low, low, and very low scale, results in Table 1. 2 stated that 89.8% of the respondents' agreed that there is a high customer demand product in their workplaces, with 11.3% signifying very high, 31.3% high and 47.2% moderately high. Also, 10.2% of the respondents had diverged opinions, with 9.7% indicating moderately low, 0.5% low, and 0% very low. On average, the respondents established that customers' demand for products is moderately high (mean=3.68, SD=0.79).

Further, 59.3% of the respondents accepted that there is a high level of customers' satisfaction, with 2.7% suggestive of very high, 12.1% high and 44.5% moderately high, even though 40.7% revealed their contrary views, with 35.3% reporting moderately low, 5.4% low and 0% very low. On average, the respondents agreed that customer satisfaction is moderately high (mean=3.71, SD=0.85). For the item on customer retention, 46.1% of the respondents acknowledged customer retention, with 1.6% suggesting very high, 7.3% high and 37.2% moderately high, while a slightly higher 53.9% decided that customer retention is low, with 34.2% indicating moderately low, 15.4% low and 4.3% very low. On average, the respondents agreed that customer retention is moderately low (mean= 3.33, SD=1.02).



Also, of the 53.4% respondents who accepted that is a high capacity of service process in their workplaces, 3.2% reported very high, 19.7% high and 0.5% moderately high, while 46.6% agreed that capacity of service process is low, with 30.2% indicating moderately low, 12.4% low and 4% very low. On average, the respondents agreed that the capacity of service delivery is moderately high (mean=3.59, SD=1.15). On ease of getting the products to the customers' item, 31.6% of the respondents acknowledged ease of getting the products to the customers, with 0.8% asserting very high, 6.5% indicating high and 24.3% indicating moderately high. However, a greater 71.15% of the respondents disagreed in their opinions, as 36.4% were moderately low, 20% low, 9.7% very low, and 1.6% were not filled out. On average, the respondents agreed that the ease of getting products to customers is moderately low (mean= 2.99, SD=1.08).

Moreover, of the 55.5% of the respondents who gave their views on complaint management response, 2.4% indicated very high, 14.3 high and 38.8% moderately high, whereas 44.5% disagreed in their opinions, with 32.9% indicating moderately low, 10.5% low and 1.1% very low. On average, the respondents concurred that management complaint response is moderately high (mean=3.62, SD=0.97). Finally, 69% of the respondents inferred that there is a high level of interaction between customers and employees in their workplaces, with 13.2% indicating very high, 19.1% high, and 36.7% moderately high. However, a significant 31% reported low supervisory controllability, as 25.9% were moderately low, 4.6% low, and 0.5% very low. On average, the respondents' averred that interaction between customers and employees is moderately high (mean= 4.09, SD= 1.10). The grand mean of accountability scale was 3.68, which denotes that the respondents' views are affixed on moderately high, and the standard deviation of 0.79 was moderately varied.

Relating the results in tables 1.1 and 1.2 in respect to respondents' views of workplace incivility on productivity in SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State. According to the findings, hostile attitude, public criticism, and silent treatment are reported as moderately high, although not as high as threats of job loss, this may negatively affect employees' responsiveness to service delivery. The findings also revealed that whereas customer demand for LPG product is high, getting the LPG products to the customers is quite difficult. Also, the study showed that interaction between customers and employees is high, which is supposed to enhance information dissemination, customer retention is still moderately low.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): Workplace incivility has no significant effect on the productivity of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 1.3a. Summary of Simple Regression Analysis for the Effect of Workplace Incivility on Productivity

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.504 ^a	0.254	0.252	0.67989

a. Predictors: (Constant), WKI



ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.217	1	58.217	125.943	0.000 ^b
	Residual	170.570	369	0.462		
	Total	228.788	370			

a. Dependent Variable: PROD

b. Predictors: (Constant), WKI

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.107	0.132		38.711	0.000
	WKI	-.451	0.040	-0.504	-11.222	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: PROD

Table 1.3a highlights the summary of the results of regression analysis on the effect of workplace incivility on productivity in the selected SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State. The findings on table 1.1a shows that workplace incivility had a significant negative effect on productivity ($\beta = -.451, t = -11.222, p < 0.05$). The outcome indicates that workplace incivility and productivity have an inverse relationship, which denotes that as workplace incivility increases, productivity decreases with the same magnitude and vice versa. However, there could be variations over time in the way the two variations are negatively linked. In addition, F-statistic of $F(1, 369) = 125.943$ and p -value of 0.000, which is less than the assumed level of significance 0.05. The model R^2 (that is, goodness of fit for the regression between workplace incivility and productivity) was 0.254, which indicates that 25.4% of the variations in productivity are described by workplace incivility. The p -value equals to 0.000 illustrates that workplace incivility significantly affects the productivity of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State. The null hypothesis, which states that workplace incivility has no significant effect on the productivity of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, is hereby rejected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of workplace incivility on the productivity of SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State, Nigeria. The observations and outcomes established there is a linkage between workplace incivility and productivity, deducing challenges for decision-making policy towards improving constructive workplace behaviors and proficiencies. To buttress this, extant literature has shown that workplace incivility has the propensity of mitigating the capacity of quality delivery service process (Porath & Pearson, 2010; Wang, & Chen, 2020) and is associated with organizational and individual costs. Considering the



findings of this study through the lens of the social exchange theory, employees working in SMEs in the LPG sub sector will prefer to be a workplace that is capable of attracting positive instigating activities such as empowerment, interpersonal-level support from colleagues, social networking, transparency, autonomy and work flexibility. Negative initiating work activities such as derogatory comments to subordinates, display of unprofessionalism, rude and discourteous behavior are capable of leading to poor quality service delivery.

Hostile attitude, inconsistent orders, public criticism, and undignified remarks which are hallmarks of SMEs owner/managers may increase productivity in a short run, but this can hardly be sustained in a long run as it could result in a decline in employee commitment, activate employee silence, and increase intention to quit. Hence, accomplishing the aim of positively swaying customers' expectations and patronage in the LPG sub-sector entails shaving talented, competent, and highly motivated employees with the requisite constructive workplace behavior.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend a continuous evaluation of information flow, which is the sine quo non for detecting workplace incivility due to its low intensity. To achieve this, there should a communal and positive interpersonal relationship between owner/managers, employees, and customers. Investigation on complaints should be carried out immediately, and owners/managers should watch out for instigators inclusive of hostile customers. Also, to mitigate workplace incivility, which may arise as a result of work-life balance, job insecurity, and stress, training should be provided on emotional intelligence due to its ability to read, assess, and comprehend humans and their emotions accurately. This would enhance productivity by taking cognizance of the ever-changing taste and preferences of customers in terms of quality of the gas cylinders' ease of getting LPG products to customers and the availability of information on safety and health issues.

This research contributed to the body of knowledge by carrying out an empirical investigation of SMEs in the LPG sub-sector in Lagos State. Some owner/managers may be insensible of how their conformist characteristics of rudeness affect the victim's psychological wellbeing.

Limitations of the Study

An individual research level was applied (Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie, & Einarsen, 2003). Respondents were requested to respond to solicitous questions in the questionnaire, such as if they have been exposed to incivility, or if they have acted as aggressors. Hence, the result of the study could be binding to the extent that the respondents responded to the questions in a straightforward way and in agreement with their intimate, subjective understanding. For easy comprehension, items were constructed with the indices of the variables after an extensive review of interrelated literature.

The study is cross-sectional, which implies that causality cannot be drawn. Accordingly, interfaces among variables must be inferred with caution. This is essential for a construct like workplace incivility since it can be affected by factors that are not organizational related and consist of rudeness and discourteous behaviors that can change



over time. Causality can only be drawn using longitudinal data. Hence, further research should exploit longitudinal data since it allows for more generalization. Also, the sample size did not capture all the registered SME's in the LPG sector, and this inhibited the opinions of those not selected and limited effective decision making. Future research should use a larger sample frame to include gas filling plants in and outside Lagos State for generalization.

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