

Global Trend on Incivility Research

Nurul Ain Hidayah Abas¹, Aidi Ahmi², Mei-Hua Lin³, Asma Perveen¹

¹Department of Psychology & Counseling, Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia; ²TunkuPuteriIntanSafinaz School of Accountancy, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia;

³Department of Psychology, School of Science and Technology, Sunway University, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Violation of workplace norms is perceived as incivility and could potentially bring negative consequences to psychological health and organizational attitudes. Given this, abundant research on incivility is conducted to look at the dynamics, causes, and outcomes of incivility and its negative impacts on employees' well-being. Up until this date, no work of bibliometric study has been carried out and published. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze, and reports published works related to incivility based on the data obtained from the Scopus online database. Using standard bibliometric indicators, this article reports the growth rate of publications, analysis of the citation, global trends and research productivity. A total of 594 valid published documents is retrieved and finalized based on selected keywords search results. The results show that there is an increased growth rate of incivility literature, particularly in nursing and health-related area. The plausible reason for this is the high attention given to organizational change derived from cultural differences, as can be seen from the cluster of countries with high and low interests in incivility research.

Keywords: *Incivility, bibliometric analysis, Scopus Database, mistreatment, health*

Introduction

Literature on incivility, which is also referred to as uncivil or antisocial behavior in the workplace, has received a lot of attention nowadays due to the increasing prevalence of academic incivility and the nature and evolution of organizational culture. The incivility as a form of interpersonal mistreatment where the intention to harm and violate norms of mutual respect are ambiguous³. In an organization, a moral understanding formed by universal norms and culture of respect allows cooperation and collaboration among its organizational members¹⁵. The violation of the norms and code of conduct is a starting point where an act is regarded and is perceived as uncivil.

For incivility to occur, instigators often use subtle and disguised forms of mistreatment in which the

intention is not apparent. For this reason, it is more challenging to attribute the harm caused by instigators to the targets of incivility¹⁶. Similarly¹⁰, argued that some instigators intentionally hide discriminatory intentions behind other forms of mistreatments, like bullying or aggression, to retain an egalitarian image and escape sanctions that are posited to them.

The incivility categorized into three types¹⁷. The first one is top-down incivility, which is an uncivil behavior by a higher-status individual towards someone of a lower status position within an organization. The second category, bottom-up incivility, is directed towards a person in a higher position by someone in a lower position, for example, a subordinate to the supervisor. The third is lateral incivility, which refers to uncivil acts between individuals in positions of equal status within an organization. Most research on incivility focuses on top-down incivility as individuals with power will use their position to mistreat individuals in the lower position. While top-down incivility is the most common type of incivility to occur, bottom-up and lateral incivility could also occur in low rather than high power distance countries.

According to the affective events theory (AET), there is a relationship between employees' internal influences,

Corresponding Author:

Nurul Ain Hidayah Abas
Department of Psychology & Counseling,
Faculty of Human Development,
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia
Email: nurulain@fpm.upsi.edu.my

namely emotions and moods, and their reactions to daily work events²¹. Therefore, it is not surprising that many conceptual and empirical research suggests that any form of incivility is associated with various organizational attitudes and well-being, for example, decreased job satisfaction, burnout, life satisfaction, commitment and turnover intention to other institutions^{1,14}.

Similarly, the study by⁶ extended the literature on interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace by examining the incidents, targets, instigators, and impact of incivility among 1180 public sector employees. They found that uncivil workplace experiences were associated with greater psychological distress from the thoughts of quitting more frequently. In a broader view, this brings a negative impact among the employees in four categories: physical, psychological, economic and social. Distinctively, the physical and psychological impacts are the most prevalent due to its severity that eventually causes financial loss, thus worth to be studied.

As of now, a related study of bibliometric analysis can be found on conflict management research by⁴. It is similar in the nature of violating the common norms by disagreement between two or more employees, and the psychological impacts it has on the victims. The focus of the paper is to propose theoretical foundations of conflict management of the field 2007-2017, specifically on the emerging concepts, themes and relationships of studies by laying out the intellectual structure. The present study, however, explores in wider scope by taking into consideration the geographical relationships, top journals, top authors and the annual growth of incivility. The current paper serves to complement the above-mentioned paper in the understanding of the evolution of interpersonal mistreatment in addition to identifying direction areas of conflict management at the workplace from the identified themes. In general, this study provides a comprehensive review and analysis on all types of publications related to incivility as published in Scopus online databases.

Method

This study used the data obtained from the Scopus database as of 15th April 2019. Considering the fact that Scopus contains high indexed peer-reviewed documents¹⁸, the most effective search engine¹⁹, and the largest scholarly works database as compared to Pubmed or Web of Science, this study employs this database as a

basis to extract published works on incivility. The focus of all the documents that have the word “incivility” in the title of the document for the period until 2018. As such, the following query has been specified in the search process: (TITLE (incivility)AND(EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR,2019))). This query generated a total of 594 documents for further analysis.

Analysis and Findings

Document and Source Type: The first analysis reports document type and source type of data. The document type can be defined as the original type of the published document, while source type refers to the source of that original document. There are 10 document types published on incivility on the Scopus database. Specifically, documents gathered are in the form of journal articles (468:78.8%), followed by book chapter (41:6.9%), review (24: 4.0%), conference paper (17:2.9%), note (13:2.2%) and article in press (12:2.0%), editorial (7:1.2%), letter (5:0.8%), book (4:0.7%) and short survey (3:0.5%).

For the source type of the documents gathered, most of the published documents are journals with 530 documents (89.23%), followed by books with 45 documents (7.58%), and conference proceedings with 12 documents (2.02%), book series (5:0.84%) and trade publications (2:0.34%). Publishing an article in a journal provides visibility, recognition, and as an excellent communication medium among the scientific community in the area of research. Besides, journal article also works as a stamp of approval than any other published documents as it is peer-reviewed, and hence, gives plausible justifications on the top score.

Top Journal: This paper also presents the top journal based on the 530 journal articles retrieved from 1999 to the present. Since the nature of incivility is related to work of organizational psychology, and it impacts the well-being, it is of no surprise that 26 articles are published in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. The second top journals articles are published in is *Journal of Nursing Management* followed closely by *Journal of Nursing Administration*, showing that articles on incivility are many studies on nursing area. There are ten articles published each in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Nursing Education* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Other works of incivility that focus on nursing can be seen from eight publication

in *Nursing Education Perspective*, closely follows by *Nurse Education Today*, *Nurse Educator* and *Nursing Management* with 6 published documents each sharing the same level with *Advances* and in *Developing Human Resources*, and *Work and Stress*.

Publication by Year and Annual Growth: Figure 1 shows the first document published on incivility begin in 1992 and grew steadily until 1999. The trend fluctuated between 2000 to 2006 and grew significantly from 13 documents in 2007 (11.62%) to 111 documents in 2018 (18.69%). Bases on Scopus records, ³is the first published research on incivility. With the growing demands of incivility research, it is expected the number will be increased, aligned with the increasing awareness of mental health among employees.

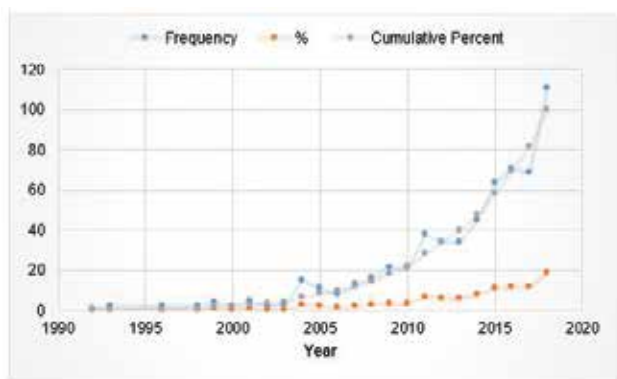


Figure 1: Publication Year and Annual Growth

Subject Area: Table 1 presents the published documents based on the subject area from 1992 until 2018. Most of the documents emerged in the subject area of social sciences with 253 documents (42.59%), followed by psychology with 152 documents (25.59%), and business, management and accounting with 140 documents (23.57%). Other subject areas include medicine, computer science, mathematics, and energy show a diverse range of subject areas. This table also provides an area of subjects that are lacking in incivility research and can be explored more to examine the similarities and differences of findings with another subject area.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage by Subject Area (N = 594)

Subject Area	F requency*	%
Social Sciences	253	42.59
Psychology	152	25.59

Conted...

Business, Management and Accounting	140	23.57
Nursing	122	20.54
Medicine	109	18.35
Arts and Humanities	52	8.75
Computer Science	23	3.87
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	22	3.70
Environmental Science	10	1.68
Engineering	9	1.52
Decision Sciences	8	1.35
Health Professions	6	1.01
Mathematics	5	0.84
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	3	0.51
Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	3	0.51
Energy	2	0.34
Earth and Planetary Sciences	1	0.17
Immunology and Microbiology	1	0.17
Materials Science	1	0.17
Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics	1	0.17
Undefined	2	0.34

*Some documents are categorized in more than one subject area

Keywords Analysis: The network visualization of authors' keywords is demonstrated by color, circle size, font size, and thickness of connecting lines indicate the strength of the relationship among the keywords. The same color is used for related keywords and words that are commonly listed together²⁰. For example, incivility, human, female, stress, interpersonal relations and job satisfaction are usually co-occurred together.

It also can be seen from Table 2 that female, male, adult, article, workplace, psychology, interprofessional relations, and public relations are among the keywords with the highest occurrences compare to the keywords specified in the search query, "incivility". However, if we count "human" as a single keyword by combining the keywords "human" and "humans", this keyword will represent more than 60% of the keywords used in the incivility literature.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage by Top 20 Keywords (N = 1828)

Author Keywords	Frequency	%
Incivility	200	33.67
Human	196	33.00
Humans	161	27.10
Female	125	21.04
Male	119	20.03
Adult	116	19.53
Article	116	19.53
Workplace	95	15.99
Psychology	77	12.96
Interprofessional Relations	73	12.29
Public Relations	73	12.29
Workplace Incivility	66	11.11
Nursing Education	57	9.60
Social Behavior	54	9.09
Middle Aged	53	8.92
Bullying	51	8.59
Questionnaire	51	8.59
United States	51	8.59
Interpersonal Relations	47	7.91
Nursing Student	47	7.91

Geographical Distribution of Publications: Table 3 shows the top ten countries contributed in publishing works on incivility with the highest documents are produced from the United States with a total of 349 documents (58.75%), followed by Canada with 55 documents (9.26%), and the United Kingdom with 31 works (5.22%). With a clear pattern of higher research produced by certain countries, there could be to two plausible reasons. First, the country may be exercising laws on zero-tolerance policy on incivility. Second,

cultural differences in power distance could be a factor. Low power distance, in which power between the employees is viewed similar regardless of the hierarchical positions, could be the cause for incivility to occur more frequently as compared to a country with a high-power distance, in which power between the employees is viewed differently.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage by Top 10 Countries (N = 594)

Country	Frequency	%
United States	349	58.75
Canada	55	9.26
United Kingdom	31	5.22
Australia	30	5.05
South Korea	15	2.53
Singapore	13	2.19
China	11	1.85
Israel	11	1.85
Switzerland	11	1.85
Iran	10	1.68

Citation Analysis: Based on the 594 papers gathered from the Scopus database, there are a total 13663 citations obtained, with 506.04 citations per year. For the past 27 years (1992-2018), 23 citations per paper are reported with h-index of 54. Turning to Table 4 results, the most cited article is “Tit for tat? The spiralling effect of incivility in the workplace” by Andersson and Pearson (1992) with 1034 citations, and with an average of 51.7 per year. For the total of 10 top-cited articles, the total number of citations by Google Scholar is also reported for each of the articles.

Table 4: Top 10 Cited Articles and Citation Metrics

No.	Document title	Authors (Year)	Cited by	Cites per Year	GS Cites	GS Cites per Year
1.	Tit for tat? the spiralling effect of incivility in the workplace	Andersson & Pearson (1999)	1034	51.70	2350	126.5
2.	Incivility in the workplace: incidence and impact.	Cortina, Magley, Williams & Langhout (2001)	636	35.33	1499	83.28
3.	Perceived risk and fear of crime: Role of social and physical incivilities	Lagrange, Ferraro &Supancic (1992)	416	15.41	832	30.81
4.	Job stress, incivility, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB): The moderating role of negative affectivity	Penney & Spector (2005)	326	23.29	784	56

Conted...

5.	The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust	Mutz & Reeves (2005)	306	21.86	653	46.64
6.	Personal and Workgroup Incivility: Impact on Work and Health Outcomes	Lim, Cortina & Magley (2008)	287	26.09	646	58.73
7.	“Incivility, social undermining, bullying...oh my!”: A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research	Hershcovis (2011)	286	35.75	544	68
8.	Unseen injustice: Incivility as modern discrimination in organizations	Cortina (2008)	271	24.64	594	54
9.	Interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace: The interface and impact of general incivility and sexual harassment	Lim & Cortina (2005)	236	16.86	522	37.29
10.	On the nature, consequences and remedies of workplace incivility: No time for “nice”? Think again	Pearson & Porath (2005)	235	16.79	582	41.57

*GS: Google Scholar

Conclusion

The results from the study showed that incivility grabbed the attention of scholars in the field of social sciences, psychology and business, management and accounting. Yet, there are psychologists, for example, social and organizational psychologist, who regard themselves as social science researchers, hence the number of psychology subject area may be bigger than what it is claimed in Scopus. From data generated, researchers would be able to understand the importance of producing quality papers with multiple authors and also, would be able to identify the top authors that have similar interests around the globe. With that information, cross-cultural studies, for example, could be conducted to investigate the dynamic, experience, factors and impact of incivility between two or more cultures.

In spite of the specific nature of the bibliometric analysis, the study also has limitations that should be addressed to improve future research. First, the results only emerged from the specific keyword. The word “incivility” is chosen although there is a possibility that other researchers who use other phrases that carry similar meaning to incivility such as “interpersonal mistreatment” or “subtle aggression/harassment/ bullying”. Therefore, there may be existing studies are excluded due to the specific scope of word used in the search query. It is also worth to note that there is no search query, which is 100% perfect¹⁸. Thus, false positive and

negative results should be anticipated. Thirdly, this study is only focused on the Scopus database as the main source of the documents. Although Scopus is among the largest databases that indexes all scholarly works^{2,18}, it does not effortlessly cover all available sources. Other available databases probably can be included in future research such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. Despite these limitations, this study was among the first to analyze bibliometric indicators of incivility research.

Acknowledgment

This research is supported by University Research Grant (*Geran Penyelidikan Universiti*) Sultan Idris Education University, 2016-0171-106-01.

Ethical Clearance: Taken from the committee

Source of Funding: University Research Grant (*Geran Penyelidikan Universiti*) Sultan Idris Education University, 2016-0171-106-01

Conflict of Interest: Nil

REFERENCES

1. Abas N. A. H, Awang, Marinah. Online Incivility: Exploring from Malaysian Academic Perspective. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*.2018;7(12):1235-1245.

2. Ahmi A, MohamadR. Bibliometric Analysis of Global Scientific Literature on Web Accessibility. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering.* 2019;7(6):250-258.
3. Andersson, L. M. Pearson, C. M. Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of Management Review.* 1999;24(3):452-471.
4. Caputo, A., Marzi, G., Maley, J., Silic, M. Ten years of conflict management research 2007-2017: An update on themes, concepts and relationships. *International Journal of Conflict Management.* 2019;30(1):87-110.
5. Cortina, L. M. Unseen injustice: Incivility as modern discrimination in organizations. *Academy of Management Review.* 2008;33(1):55-75.
6. Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. Incivility in the workplace: incidence and impact. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology.* 2001;6(1):64.
7. Hershcovis, M. S. "Incivility, social undermining, bullying... oh my!": A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior.* 2011;32(3):499-519.
8. LaGrange, R. L., Ferraro, K. F., Supancic, M. Perceived risk and fear of crime: Role of social and physical incivilities. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.* 1992;29(3):311-334.
9. Lim, S., & Cortina, L. M. Interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace: the interface and impact of general incivility and sexual harassment. *Journal of applied psychology.* 2005;90(3):483.
10. Lim, S., Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. Personal and workgroup incivility: Impact on work and health outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology.* 2008;93(1):95.
11. Mutz, D. C., & Reeves, B. The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust. *American Political Science Review.* 2005;99(1):1-15.
12. Pearson, C. M., & Porath, C. L. On the nature, consequences and remedies of workplace incivility: No time for "nice"? Think again. *Academy of Management Perspectives.* 2005;19(1): 7-18.
13. Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. Job stress, incivility, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB): The moderating role of negative affectivity. *Journal of organizational behavior.* 2005;26(7):777-796.
14. Piotrowski, C., & King, C. The enigma of adult bullying in higher education: A research based conceptual framework. *Education.* 2016;136(3):299-306.
15. Porath, C. L., Gerbasi, A., Schorch, S. L. The effects of civility on advice, leadership, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology.* 2015;100(5):1527.
16. Reich, T. C., & Hershcovis, M. S. Observing workplace incivility. *Journal of Applied Psychology.* 2015;100(1),203.
17. Schilpzand, P., De Pater, I. E., & Erez, A. Workplace incivility: A review of the literature and agenda for future research. *Journal of Organizational behavior.* 2016;37:S57-S88.
18. Sweileh, W. M., Al-Jabi, S. W., AbuTaha, A. S., Zyoud, S. H., Anayah, F. M. A., & Sawalha, A. F. Bibliometric analysis of worldwide scientific literature in mobile - health: 2006–2016. *BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making.* 2017;17(1):72.
19. Tober, M. PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus or Google Scholar – Which is the best search engine for an effective literature research in laser medicine? *Medical Laser Application.* 2011;26(3):139-144.
20. van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. VOSviewer manual. Leiden: Univeriteit Leiden. 2013;1(1).
21. Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. 1996;