The Spillover of Incivility From Family to Workplace: The Mediating Effects of State of Self-Control

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ABSTRACT
Based on self-control resource theory, taking a questionnaire investigation of 440 pairs of employees and their leaders, this study explored the effecting process of family incivility on workplace incivility through state of self-control. The results revealed that family incivility positively affected workplace incivility and state of self-control. And state of self-control played a partial mediating role in the relationship between family incivility and workplace incivility.

Keywords: Family incivility, Workplace incivility, State of self-control.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace incivility has been defined as a kind of deviant behavior with low-intensity, ambiguous intention of injury and violation of mutual respect in the workplace [1]. Several recent studies have pointed out that employees who have experienced workplace incivility, such as denigrated or eavesdropped by colleagues, personal belongings were used without permission, will have adverse effects on their mental and physical health, which in turn affects their performance at work [2]. In addition, victims may attribute perceived workplace incivility to the organization's permission and tolerance for incivility, thus committing deviant behaviors such as counterproductive or aggressive behaviors [3]. With more and more people paying attention to the negative effects of workplace incivility, there has been a gradual increase in organizational behavior research that examines workplace incivility and its negative effects on personal and work outcomes in recent years.

Although current research on workplace incivility has made great progress, less attention has been paid to the spillover effects of family incivility to the workplace. Since individuals are not only employees but also family members, they need to change their roles at any time according to their environment. Therefore, the negative impact of workplace incivility on employees' emotions will lead to their poor performance at home. Meanwhile, perceiving family incivility can also cause employees' negative work behavior, such as aggressive behavior toward colleagues or subordinates. Under this

background, this study will explore the spillover of incivility from family to workplace based on the self-control resource theory. The conceptual model we proposed is shown in Figure 1.
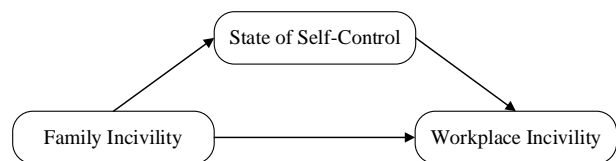

Figure 1 Conceptual model

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

2.1. Family Incivility and Workplace Incivility

In Oxford English dictionary, incivility is defined as deviant behavior toward others that is ill-bred, uncivil, or discourteous. No matter in the workplace or family, incivility often occurs, and has the following basic characteristics. First, incivility violates the norms of interpersonal communication in the workplace or family. Second, the harm intention of uncivil behavior is not obvious. Third, incivility is generally less destructive than aggression or abuse [1, 4].

Research has shown that there is a close relationship between individual experience in the workplace and family. Therefore, it is possible for employees to transfer their negative emotions and negative behavior experiences to the workplace. As a kind of interpersonal conflict behavior, family incivility may not only affect employees' behavior in the family, but also can be brought into the workplace with the employees leaving

the family, which will affect their behavior at work. Research indicates that employees who perceived incivility from family members may create a high level of psychological pressure. This kind of pressure may affect the interaction between employees and their colleagues, making them choose a negative and tense way to interact with colleagues, thus increasing the possibility of workplace incivility towards colleagues.

In addition, as a persistent chronic stressor, family incivility has a cumulative effect that may make the diffusion of negative experience. Therefore, it is conceivable that family incivility may increase the negative interaction between employees and their colleagues, and then induce workplace incivility. Taken together, these arguments suggest that there is a tendency that family incivility spills over from family to workplace. Employees who have experienced family incivility may bring this negative experience and pressure to the workplace and induce their impulse to implement workplace incivility.

Hypothesis 1: Family incivility is positively related to workplace incivility.

2.2. The Mediating Role of State of Self-Control

In the current study, following Rawn and Vohs (2006) [5], we conceptualized state of self-control as the current level of individual' ability to control and regulate his own emotional and behavioral impulse in consideration of long-term interests and goals. According to self-control resources theory, the level of individual self-control is mainly reflected by the ability to follow rules, implement self-monitoring and self-determination [6]. As a kind of interpersonal deviant behavior, family incivility may have a negative impact on employees' state of self-control. First, family incivility such as sarcasm and neglect from family members may cause employees feel that they have been treated unfairly easily, which may threaten their family status and self-esteem. In this case, employees may increase their impulse to break social and self-discipline norms and fall into a state of out of control. Second, to some degree, perceived family incivility might increase employees' emotional distress with worrying about failing to meet needs of family belonging and their contribution to the family cannot be recognized by other family members. Thus, employees in emotional distress often need to expend energy to fight against these negative emotions, which makes them lack enough willpower to self-discipline and control whether their behavior deviates from the standard. Therefore, family incivility may lead to the failure of employees' self-control activities and cause them fall into the state of low self-control.

Self-control resources theory proposes that, not only working in a company but also staying at home, individuals need to maintain a sufficient amount of self-control resources to carry out self-control activities, so as to make their emotional and behavioral performance comply with social norms [7]. Due to the limitation of the amount of individual's self-control resources, the sustained consumption of the resources in the early stage will lead to the failure of the individual's later control activities, and then lead to the occurrence of impulsive behavior. Therefore, employees with the state of low self-control are easy to be interfered by the external environment and ignore the goal of reciprocity in interpersonal communication. Then, it is difficult for employees to restrain their impulse to carry out aggressive or destructive behaviors, while might cause shout or roll eyes at their colleagues in the workplace. In addition, at low levels of self-control, employees may tend to ignore the consequences of workplace incivility to their colleagues, which to a certain extent also increases the possibility of workplace incivility. These considerations combine to suggest that the emotional distress caused by family incivility increases the possibility of employees ignoring rules, inadequate supervision of their own behavior, and dissipation of willpower, which makes them more likely to fall into the state of low self-control. Thus, employees in the state of low self-control have insufficient control resources to control their own subsequent behavior, which will induce them to implement incivility to their colleagues in the workplace.

Combing those expectations, we speculate that state of self-control may play a mediating role in the relationship between family incivility and workplace incivility. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: State of self-control mediates the relationship between family incivility and workplace incivility.

3. METHOD

3.1. Sample and Procedure

We mainly selected the employees of a large food processing enterprise in Shandong Province to collect data. Before the investigation, we conducted in-depth interviews with some employees of the enterprise, and learned that incivility often occurs in their family and workplace, which proves that the research sample meets the requirements of the survey. Finally, a total of 475 questionnaires were distributed, and 440 of them were effectively recovered with a recovery rate of 92.6%, including 246 males and 194 females.

3.2. Measures

A 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) was used for all variables. Family incivility (FI) was measured with Lim and Tai's (2014) six-item scale [4] (α = 0.92). State of self-control (SSC) was assessed with a five-item scale adapted from Twenge, Muraven and Tice (2004) [8], while all items were scored in reverse (α = 0.89). Workplace incivility (WI) was measured with seven-item scale developed by Cortina, Magley, Williams and Langhout (2001) [9] (α = 0.93). Consistent with prior incivility research [10], we included employees' age, gender, education, tenure and position as control variables.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Preliminary Analysis

In order to verify the discriminant validity of our measures, we adopted Mplus 7.4 to perform a series of confirmatory factor analysis (see Table 1). Results showed that the expected three-factor model (family incivility, state of self-control, workplace incivility) demonstrated acceptable fit to the data (CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.03, χ^2/df = 1.51) and displayed superior fit to each alternative model. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among variables in this study.

4.2. Hypothesis Tests

Due to the limitations of ordinary least squares regression and Sobel in mediating effect testing, we using bootstrapping method to test the mediating effect of employees' state of self-control with PROCESS developed by Hayes (2013), which is more accurate in estimating the results. As shown in Table 3, after controlling for demographic variables such as gender, age, education, tenure, and position, family incivility was significantly negatively related to employees' state of self-control (b = -0.57, p < 0.001). Meanwhile, employees' state of self-control had a significant negative impact on their workplace incivility (b = -0.32, p < 0.001). After controlling for the influence of employees' state of self-control, the direct effect of family incivility on workplace incivility was significant (b = 0.22, p < 0.001), within a 95% confidence interval (CI = [0.12, 0.32]) excluding 0. Therefore, Hypothesis 1

was supported. In addition, the results of Bootstrapping test showed that the mediating effect of employees' state of self-control was significant (b = 0.18, p < 0.001), within a 95% confidence interval (CI = [0.12, 0.25]) excluding 0. Thus, state of self-control plays a significant mediating role between family incivility and workplace incivility. Taken together, these results provide support for Hypothesis 2.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on self-control resources theory, this study examined the spillover effects of incivility from family to workplace and the mediating effects of state of self-control, with the leaders and employees of a large food processing company in Shandong province as the research sample. In conclusion, as a kind of negative experience, perceiving family incivility may increase the penetration between family and workplace, and directly lead to employees' workplace incivility. In addition, the spillover process of incivility from family to workplace is also a process of continuous loss of employees' self-control resources. Employees who have experienced family incivility will lose self-control resources because of the negative experience, which may reduce the level of state of self-control, and then more likely to implement incivility to colleagues in the workplace.

Overall, the results of our study confirm the spillover effects of incivility from family to workplace. In particular, our study opens the door to the examination of antecedents to workplace incivility from family perspective. This study extends the literature on incivility by verify the spillover effects of incivility from family to workplace. In addition, this study also holds important implications for managers. Our findings encouraged managers to focus on the changes of employees' psychological state and the influence of employees' family. Therefore, Organization can regularly invite psychological counselors to carry out psychological counseling, help employees identify the pressure sources from the family and other third-party, ease the negative emotions of employees suffering from family incivility, and reduce the occurrence of workplace incivility.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Three-factor expected model	198.82	132	1.51	0.99	0.99	0.03
Two-factor expected model (FI/SSC combined)	876.99	134	6.54	0.86	0.84	0.11
Two-factor expected model (SSC/WI combined)	1128.55	134	8.42	0.81	0.79	0.13

Two-factor expected model (FI/WI combined)	1539.25	134	11.49	0.74	0.70	0.15
One-factor model	2162.37	135	16.02	0.62	0.57	0.19

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Gender	1.44	0.50	—							
2	Age	3.32	1.26	-0.01	—						
3	Education	1.52	0.67	-0.05	-0.11*	—					
4	Tenure	3.10	1.39	-0.12*	0.39**	-0.35**	—				
5	Position	2.24	0.66	-0.09	0.00	0.05	-0.07	—			
6	FA	3.17	1.64	0.03	0.13**	0.14**	-0.01	-0.15**	(0.92)		
7	SSC	4.39	1.46	0.02	-0.07	-0.10*	-0.03	0.02	-0.56**	(0.89)	
8	WI	3.25	1.45	0.03	0.12**	0.11*	0.03	-0.22**	0.45**	-0.46**	(0.93)

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 3. Bootstrapping test of mediating effect

Paths	b	SE	95% CI	
			Low limit	Upper limit
Family incivility→State of self-control	-0.57***	0.04	-0.66	-0.49
State of self-control→Workplace incivility	-0.32***	0.05	-0.42	-0.23
Family incivility→State of self-control→Workplace incivility	0.18***	0.03	0.12	0.25
Family incivility→Workplace incivility	0.22***	0.05	0.12	0.32

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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