

# Relationship between Workplace Incivility, Job Attitudes and Muslim Religiosity Personality among Trade Union Members

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## Abstract

In reality, workplace incivility has its fair share of attention in organizational research dealing with its causes and effect relationships. In Islam, incivility equates the negative character (*akhlak*) of ridiculing others. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and job attitudes as well as the moderating effect of Muslim religiosity personality, which is measured by Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI), on the relationships. In other words, this study plans to analyze whether Muslim employees, who possess religiosity personality would be able to endure workplace incivility experiences. Basically, literature by Al-Ghazali, Al-Attas and Al-Raiya on Islamic personality serve as the main foundation of the study. In addition, the works of Baron and Neuman (1998), Andersson & Pearson (1999) and Schilpzand, et. al (2014) were reviewed and a research framework was developed. The quantitative survey consisted of five sections used to measure the experience of workplace incivility, job attitudes, religiosity personality and demographics. A sample of 163 Malaysian Muslim bank workers completed the survey. Four main variables have been analyzed and their descriptive analyses are as the following. Scores for Workplace Incivility variable (M=3.34, SD=.27); Job Satisfaction variable (M=1.79, SD=.65); Organizational Commitment variable (M=2.74, SD=.34) and

Muslim Religiosity Personality (M=3.60, SD=.42). As for the Pearson's Correlation test, the result indicates that Workplace Incivility variable has inverse correlations with both job attitude variables (Job Satisfaction, R=-.611, p=.01; Organizational Commitment, R=.731, p=.01). Meanwhile, the overall model was significant,  $R^2 = .401$ ,  $F(3, 159) = 24.06$ ,  $p = .01$ . Tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicate that multicollinearity was not a concern (Job Satisfaction, Tolerance = .96, VIF = 1.01; Organizational Commitment, Tolerance = .72, VIF = 1.39, Muslim Religiosity Personality, Tolerance = .72, VIF = 1.39). Conclusively, the results of this study demonstrate a negative relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitude variables. Furthermore, this study shows the moderating effect of an individual religiosity personality trait on the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitudes. Consequently, implications of the research include further contribution to workplace incivility theoretical aspects, Muslim religiosity personality research, managerial decision making and employer - union interventions for workplace incivility.

**Keywords:** Workplace incivility, employment relations, Muslim religiosity personality, trade union, Quantitative

## Introduction

Workplace incivility has its fair share of attention in organizational research dealing with its causes and consequences relationships, in particular. Conceptually, in Islam, incivility equates the negative character (*akhlak*) of ridiculing others and clearly falls in the category as stated in the Al Quran:

*“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one’s] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers”* (Al Quran 49:11)

For that reason, the workplace incivility has an Islamic basis to be studied empirically. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and job attitudes. Also, this study investigates the moderating effect of Muslim religiosity personality on the relationship between them. In other words, this study plans to analyze whether Muslim employees, who possess religiosity personality would be able to endure workplace incivility experiences. In an organizational setting, most of the workplace incivility research is based on the Baron and Neuman’s (1998) work serving as a classic study. These researchers discovered that most violence in the workplace does not take the form of direct and physical assault, but rather operates on a delicate and indirect or direct level of action.

Defined as low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intentions to harm the target, workplace incivility is characteristically rude action. It often displays a lack of regard for others in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Due to both the present interest and the practical restrictions of conducting field

research in the area of management, majority of works related to workplace incivility are theoretical. On the other hand, there are very few empirical studies that report how workplace incivility distorts organizational dynamics and functions. Consequently, very few practitioners have recognized the critical need to manage workplace incivility and to design and apply active prevention efforts in the workplace. Hence, there is a pressing need to conduct an empirical research study on the effects of workplace incivility on organizational functioning, coupled with moderating social aspect that influences the effect or relationship, which is, indeed, significant to organizational survival.

Basically workplace incivility is a string of discourteous behaviours. These behaviours infringe the current manners about common respect in workplace. Such behaviours are clearly impolite and rude behaviours which are surfaced by ignoring others (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). Insolence refers to abnormal behaviours that occur by an indistinct intention and committing shallow behaviours to hurt others. In addition, Schilpzand, et. al (2014) clarified that workplace incivility may comprise some behaviours such as excluding people, gossiping, hostility and aggression. It is then followed by some negative cost such as low satisfaction, high stress, weak performance, low organizational commitment, increasing turnover and inefficiency. Whilst workplace incivility signifies low intensity behaviour, it should not be deemed as harmless or trivial. No matter how low the intensity, workplace incivility can take on an extensive variety of nuanced behaviours and can possibly cause discomfort and anxiety for those targeted. Prevailing incivility first destroys meaningful interactions among people, which can create organizational disasters. Co-workers slowly, but surely do not experience the need for cooperation or cohesiveness. Disrespect, distrust, dissatisfaction, backbiting, character assassination, social alienation, tale bearing and arrogance will reign in the organizational culture, and workers will become familiar with

very unfriendly and unforgiving organizational cultures. Good people who cannot adjust to the aggressive culture will abandon the organization, and those remaining will be miserably unhappy and unsatisfied. As a deviational behaviour, workplace behaviour consists of a voluntary behaviour which infringes organizational manners and imperils both organization and employees' mental health.

As for the job attitudes, the study measured respondents' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. One framework projected to explain factors affecting the relationships between job attitudes and employee behaviour is social exchange theory (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). This theory's basic premise is that individuals feel compelled to respond in some way when others treat them well or reward them. This concept is also contained in the "norm of reciprocity": when an organization treats employees well, the employees reciprocate in the same way. Job satisfaction is most often conceptualized as a positive emotional state relating to one's job (Seashore et al., 1983). Meanwhile, affective organizational commitment is defined as an affective attachment to remain with one's organization (Meyer et al., 1993). Empathizing how these different job attitudes associate to one another and to other constructs will permit researchers to develop more comprehensive theories of job attitudes and their relationships with employee behaviour. Thus, Sliter, Sliter and Jex (2012) consider that there is a relationship between behaviour and job attitude in which one's behaviour does determine the job attitudes one performs.

In Islam, Al-Ghazali (1995) suggested general outlines regarding the Islamic structure of personality, stating that the latter is composed of four constituents or structures: *Qalb*, *Roh*, *Nafs*, and *A'ql* that are translated to English as heart, spirit, psyche, and intellect, respectively. There is no doubt that Al-Ghazali established a sound foundation for a Al Quranic theory of personality (Haque 2004; Yasien 1996). Thus, his analysis revealed eight main concepts that

serve the structures or building blocks of the Al Quranic theory of personality:

i). *Nafs* (psyche) that stands for the whole person, or personality, and thus, encloses all other personality structures. In the Al Quran, *nafs* is clearly depicted as prone to evil.

ii). *Nafs ammarah besoa'* (evil-commanding psyche) that is of devilish nature and the most influential constituent of *nafs*. It is largely unconscious, is composed of forbidden desires and impulses, and governed by the evil pleasure. Because the processes of *nafs ammarah besoa'* are unconscious, we can infer its existence from certain feelings, thoughts, and behaviours that are considered according the Al Quran such as envy, jealousy, lust, vengeance or violence, among all.

iii). *Al-nafs al-lawammah* (the reproachful psyche) that is a moralistic entity and has divine origins and influence. It also resides in the unconscious and behaves as the conscience that directs man towards right or wrong.

iv). *A'ql* (intellect) that is of angelic nature and the mere conscious component of the system. It is the intellectual faculty of *nafs* and responsible for its higher cognitive processes: understanding, knowing, thinking, and reflecting. Its ultimate function is comprehending the essence of God through His manifestations in nature and human beings.

v). *Roh* (spirit) that is a universal entity and resides in the unconscious possibly means the energy of life or the truth and serves as the source of revelation, creation, and inspiration.

vi). *Qalb* (heart) that is the "heart of *nafs*." In *qalb*, inputs and messages from all other structures of *nafs* are processed and integrated and consequently determine the fate of *nafs*.

vii). *Al-nafs al-mutmainnah* (the serene psyche) that is the ultimate desired outcome of the dynamic interplay between the different

constituents of *nafs*.

viii). *Al-nafs al-marid'a* (the sick psyche) that is the ultimate undesired outcome of the dynamic interplay between the different constituents of *nafs*. It is a pathological state that results from a terribly conflicted and troubled *qalb*.

Indeed, according to Al-Raiya (2014), these structures and outcomes are dynamically interconnected. *Qalb* is the core of the system and is linked to all other components. *A'ql* receives its input from the external world, cognitively processes this input, and sends the outcome to *qalb*. *Roh* has two links to *qalb*. One is direct and only a few people (the inspired and prophets) can attain. The other link is indirect (and hence is more readily accessible) and passes through *al-nafs al-lawammah*. *Qalb* and *nafs ammarah besoa'* are directly linked. The integration process happening in *qalb* is fed back into *nafs* and determines its ultimate state- *mutmainnah* or *marid'a*.

Al-Ghazali (1995) further emphasized that the Al Quranic theory of personality is based on a few theological premises. It posits that Allah S.W.T created humans through His *Roh*, injected in them the divine truth and some of His attributes. Also, Allah S.W.T incessantly tests people to see whether they can overcome their devilish tendencies and feed their divine ones. He not only has determined the nature of the test, but also pointed to the desired and undesired outcomes (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah* and *al-nafs al-marid'a*, respectively) and established the reward to those who succeed, and the punishment to those who fail. The Al Quranic theory of personality recognizes that Allah (s.w.t) injects His *Roh* into humans and acknowledges the human potential to reach higher levels of existence embodied in the *al-nafs al-mutmainnah*, which will be "satisfied and satisfying" and eventually attain paradise. It is also largely a non-deterministic theory as it recognizes that humans have a great degree of free-will and thus can choose the direction of their lives. Life is composed of a permanent

battle between *nafs* and its own destructive-devilish tendencies, and only extraordinary efforts can save it from losing the battle. Indeed, according to the Holy Al Quran, only a small minority of people end this thorny battle victorious (Al Quran 56: 14, 40).

Hence, personality includes a person's relatively stable feelings, thoughts, and behavioral patterns. Each of us has an inimitable personality that differentiates us from other people, and understanding someone's personality provides us allusions about how that person is likely to act and feel in a variety of situations. To manage effectively, it is beneficial to understand the personalities of different employees. Having this expertise is also advantageous for coordinating people into jobs and organizations. The rise and fall of civilization relates to its populace personalities. Muslim religiosity personality represents the manifestation of one's religious worldview in the righteous works. It relates to particular ways in which an individual expresses his/her traits or adapts to diverse situations in the worldly world. It refers to the manifested aspects of a personal identity, life definition and worldview. It consists of behaviours, motivations, attitudes and emotions. The concept also embraces personal manifestation of Islamic teachings and commands, and special *ibadat* or formal ritual worship that reflects one's direct relationship with Allah S.W.T. Further, items relating to daily *mu'amalat*, or religiously guided behaviours towards one's family, fellow human beings and the rest of creation, for instance, animals, the natural environment among others, are also included in this concept. Based on Al-Attas (2001), one of key aspects of the Religiosity Personality concept is *akhlaq Islamiyyah*, or the Islamic notion of refined character that bolsters a religious personality. *Akhlaq Islamiyyah* is the manifestation of the *tawhidic* worldview in one's everyday actions, which leads a way of life that requires *al-dunya*, constant and ongoing consciousness of the present, earthly world and *al-akhirat*, constant and ongoing consciousness of the life-to-come. In turn, these personalities

may have some influence on Muslim's attitudes and behaviour, respectively (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). Thus, based on the theoretical perspectives, a research model was formulated as in Figure 1. Hence, two research hypotheses have been put together as the following:

Hypothesis 1: The workplace incivility has an inverse relationship with the job attitude variable

Hypothesis 2: The Muslim Religiosity Personality moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and the job attitudes (job satisfaction and organization)

## Methodology

The sample selected for this investigation included 163 (46% response rate) trade union members of Islamic banks in Malaysia in the age group 25 to 54 years old. The rationale of this sample selection relates to the job nature in the banking sector, which is supposed to have civil and non-hostile job environment. There were 123 males and 40 females. Informed consent was obtained from the participants orally before collecting the data using the questionnaires after briefing them about the objectives and confidentiality status of the study. The normality test was employed and in this case, since there were  $n=163$ , the Shapiro-Wilk test is used. From the test, the  $p$ -value is 0.216. The researchers reject the normality alternative hypothesis and conclude that the data comes from a normal distribution.

The internal consistency of the three scales adapted in this study was tested using Cronbach alpha. An internal consistency greater than .70 was considered adequate (Epps et al., 2003). The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.87. In order to measure incivility in the workplace, the Uncivil Workplace Behaviour Questionnaire (UWBQ) developed by Martin and Hine (2005) was used. The UWBQ exhibits good convergent validity and concurrent validity by measuring multiple dimensions of incivility in the workplace.

According to Martin and Hine (2005), the UWBQ and all of its subscales have Cronbach's alpha of over 0.80, demonstrating internal consistency among the items. Convergent validity, concurrent validity and divergent validity have been tested and supported, too. The dimensions integrated in the questionnaire are hostility, privacy invasion, exclusionary behavior and gossiping. The reliability of the scale itself was 0.83

Meanwhile, job attitude variables were measured by two classical attitude inventories in organizational setting research namely, job motivation scale developed by Schriesheim and Tsui (1980) and organizational commitment scale developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974). For job satisfaction, it is measured based on scale that was developed by Schriesheim and Tsui (1980). Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with six aspects of their job: current job, co-workers, supervisors, current salary, opportunities for promotion, and work in general. The scale ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The reliability of the scale was 0.77. As for the organizational commitment, this very variable was measured by one of the most commonly used attitude instruments, namely, the shortened nine-item version that reflects the definition of commitment suggested by Porter et al. (1974). This definition reflects the three dimensions of commitment: (1) desire to retain membership in the organization; (2) belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization; and (3) willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization. The scale for this measure ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

As for respondents' religiosity personality variable, Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI) was utilized. MRPI has been developed by Associate Professor Dr. Abdul Latif Abdullah @ Steven Eric Krauss and his team at Universiti Putra Malaysia (Krauss et al., 2006; Krauss and Hamzah, 2009). As discussed in Krauss et al. (2006), the MRPI was developed

to meet the need for a Muslim religiosity scale which is based on the philosophical underpinnings covered in the unique *tawhidic* worldview of the Islamic faith and whose items resulting from the two prominent knowledge sources of Islam: the AlQuran and *Hadith* (sayings) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Of the two subscales of the MRPI, one relates to the specific theological pillars of Islam, while the other is representative of general religious behaviour that shares many similarities with other revealed faiths. The former, the “Islamic Worldview” subscale, is unique in its aim of measuring the level of understanding of key theological tenets of Islamic belief. The latter, the “Religious Personality” subscale, though containing several items specific to Islamic religious practice and ritual behaviour, principally comprise items of a universal nature not necessarily specific to Islam but deemed a key aspect of Islamic religiosity. This construct is signified by items relating to ritual worship which reflect one’s direct relationship with God, and *mu’amalat*, or religiously-guided behaviours towards one’s family, fellow human beings and the rest of creation (Krauss et al., 2006). The adapted scale utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Never to (5) Always, to measure respondents’ frequency of behaviours, attitudes, or intention to commit behaviours.

Four main variables have been analyzed and their descriptive analyses are as the following. Scores for Workplace Incivility variable (M=3.34, SD=.27); Job Satisfaction variable (M=1.79, SD=.65); Organizational Commitment variable (M=2.74, SD=.34) and Muslim Religiosity Personality (M=3.60, SD=.42). In order to test the first hypothesis (H1), Pearson’s Correlation test has been employed and the result (Table 1) indicates that Workplace Incivility variable has inverse correlations with both job attitude variables (Job Satisfaction, R=-.611, p=.01; Organizational Commitment, R=.731, p=.01). Therefore, the first null hypothesis is that workplace incivility has a positive relationship with the job attitudes variable being rejected. Specifically, in order to test the second hypothesis (H2) that whether Muslim Religiosity Personality variable moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and job attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment), a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The overall model was significant,  $R^2 = .401$ ,  $F(3, 159) = 24.06$ ,  $p = .01$ . The tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicates that multicollinearity was not a concern (Job Satisfaction, Tolerance = .96, VIF = 1.01; Organizational Commitment, Tolerance = .72, VIF = 1.39, Muslim Religiosity Personality, Tolerance = .72, VIF = 1.39). Therefore, the null hypothesis that the Muslim

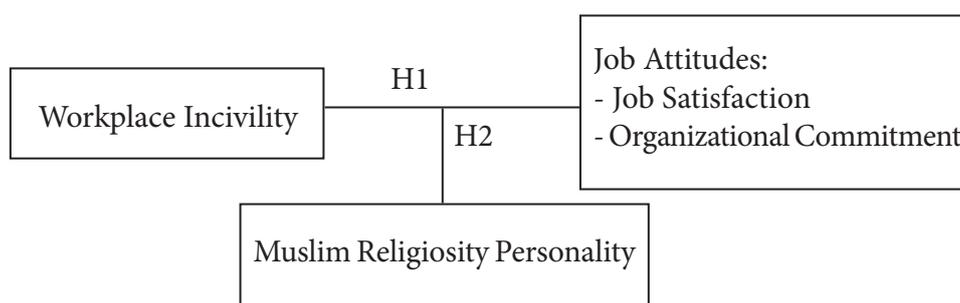


Figure 1: Workplace Incivility, Job Attitudes and Muslim Religiosity Personality

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

		Correlations Matrices		
		WORKPLACE INCIVILITY	JOB SATISFACTION	ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
WORKPLACE INCIVILITY	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1.000  163.000		
JOB SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.611** .007 163	1.000  163.000	
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.731** .005 163	.717** .002 163	1.000  163.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Religiosity Personality does not moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and job attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) is rejected.

The results of this study demonstrated a negative relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitude variables. Furthermore, this study showed the moderating effect of an individual religiosity personality trait on the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitudes. More specifically, religious respondents are more likely to have positive job attitudes in spite of the experience of workplace incivility. These findings imply that respondents should increase their comprehension and commitment to Islamic workplace practices in order to face any deviational practice at work. Indeed, the Islamic personality (Krauss and Hamzah, 2009) represents the manifestation of one's religious worldview or the particular ways that a person expresses his/her traits or adapts to diverse situations in the world. It includes behaviours, motivations, attitudes and emotions that aim to assess personal manifestation of Islamic teachings and command. It includes following rituals and *Mu'amalat*.

Strategically, Muslims have several avenues to solve the incivility by prompting the concept of believing in the hereafter in their convictions, reporting to concerned authority, transcendent decency, forgiveness and reconciling (Hafiz & Hafiz, 2014). Accordingly, implications of the research include further contribution to

workplace incivility theoretical aspects, Muslim religiosity personality research, managerial decision making and employer-union interventions for workplace incivility. The cause and effect conundrums of this relationship show not only the worldly implications at workplace, but also in the Hereafter. This result is parallel with the basic teachings clearly highlighted in these following Al Quranic verses:

*O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. (Al Quran 49:12)*

*And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. (Al Quran 31:18)*

Basically, this study is an academic attempt to analyze these work related variables in light of personality aspects. Knowing that the concept of workplace incivility is still fairly recent, and yet evolving, this research can contribute to further corroborating the importance of understanding workplace incivility. Since workplace incivility is new to the field, there are ample opportunities for academia to develop the knowledge based on this topic. In addition, managerial prerogatives must also practically consider this deviational job practice. Moreover, for the future studies, it is recommended additional research done

in order to expound the organizational cost of workplace incivility, such as turnover intention, employer- employee relationships, employee engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) in diverse organizational settings. Extensive analysis on the moderating as well as mediating effect of demographics should be further considered and facilitated.

## Conclusion

In short, Islam abhors any form of incivility. All Muslims deem that all forms of incivility are invalid due to the immorality of the deed. What is more, all followers of Islam believe that they have a duty to curb all forms of evil. This study shows a negative relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitude variables. As the occurrence of incivility arisen at the workplace, the job attitude means will categorically decrease. Additionally, this study indicates that the moderating effect of an individual respondent's religiosity personality trait on the relationship between the experience of workplace incivility and the job attitudes. More specifically, religious respondents are more likely to have positive job attitudes in spite of the experience of workplace incivility. Notably the most serious problem in workplace incivility is that it is hard to detect because of its low intensity. In addition, incivility is easily overlooked because of a lack of reaction about its potential increasing seriousness. Therefore, in line with the changing work environment, trade union leaders and management must be able to install new programme to revamp their member's perspective and ability to cope and transform along with the ever changing work environment. These findings further disclose a greater necessity for practically managing workplace incivility and undertaking more academic research on workplace incivility among Muslim sample, per se.

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