Prevalence of Workplace Incivility: Evidence from the Gambia Public Senior Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that workplace incivility is widespread and linked to several negative outcomes. However, people perceive it differently due to cultural variability. The objective of this research is to examine the prevalence of the phenomenon among teaching and administrative staff in the Gambian public senior secondary schools. The focus is on the Greater Banjul Area, comprising two administrative regions, and the West Coast Region. These two regions are the most populous, hence with the highest number of secondary schools in the country. Data was gathered using primary and secondary sources, with a final response rate of about 99% (n = 252). The results obtained showed moderate widespread incivility in public senior secondary schools in The Gambia.

These findings are at variance with conventional assumptions by suggesting that employees may endure workplace incivility without necessarily resorting to other negative reactions, a response that appears to be mediated by culturally embedded norms and values. The study highlights the need for proactive organizational strategies focused on creating a meaningful work environment, a respectful workplace culture, and targeted leadership development in the education sector.

Keywords: workplace incivility, turnover intention, emotional exhaustion, supportive supervision

INTRODUCTION

Workplace Incivility is regarded as a form of anti-social behavior, within an organizational setting, thus reflecting a relatively recent extension to the concept of deviant behaviors, and is "defined as low-intensity deviant workplace behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm the target in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). Examples of workplace incivility include, but are not limited to, the manifestation of disregard for others, the use of degrading remarks, the making of intimidating or threatening verbal communication (e.g., yelling, repeated emotional outbursts, threats, berating, or a harsh tone of voice), and repeatedly interrupting (Schilpzand et al., 2016). According to Rhee, Hur, and Kim (2016). "Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others'' (Andersson & Pearson 1999, p. 457).

Comparing the adverse effects of incivility at the workplace with bullying and violence, the former is underrated owing mainly to its inherent nature of low intensity and ambiguous intent, and the latter involves the desire to hurt the target (Rhee, Hur, & Kim, 2016). However, workplace incivility, as they intimated, may morph into serious disputes and animosity if an individual is subject to recurrent incidences of uncivil behavior at the workplace. Mahfooz, Arshad, Nisar, Ikram, and Azeem (2017) suggest that uncivil behavior may give rise to various outcomes, such as employee turnover intention, mental and physical stress, job stress, reduced job performance, wellness, and heightened turnover intention. Thus, with increased workplace incivility, there is a corresponding increase in turnover intention, a decrease in organizational commitment, a decrease in organizational citizenship behavior, an increase in stress, etc. Cortina et al. (2008) assert that people who face uncivil conduct encounter not only work-related anxiety but also become less satisfied, less creative, mentally

distracted, and emotionally destabilized as well. They further assert that uncivil behavior mars employee-to-employee relations and undermines collaboration.

According to Sharma and Singh (2016) "a little relevant research on workplace incivility has been undertaken in other countries such as Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and in some Asian countries, such as China, Singapore, India, and the Philippines", and most importantly, in most of the African continent (Sowe & Arslan, 2023). Most overwhelming empirical research works available on workplace incivility are those that were conducted in the USA, UK, and Canada, highlighted by (Sharma & Singh, 2016). Furthermore, this is consistent with the claim made by Vasconcelos (2020), who also indicated that the number of countries where studies were conducted on workplace incivility amounts to 18, and that a substantial number of studies on it were done in the United States of America.

According to Mutapi (2021), Africa as a continent constitutes 12.5% of the global population; notwithstanding, research in Africa is made up of just under 1% of the entire research conducted globally, indicating a starkly inadequate representation of the continent. The author further states that Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the poorest and the least researched region in research production and capabilities. According to Sadia and Naveed (2021) not much work on workplace incivility has been done in the Asian context. In The Gambia, according to Sowe and Arslan (2023) there was virtually no prior research conducted on workplace incivility. However, on their part, they attempted to look at the situation and how it relates to counterproductive behavior, focusing on the Gambian and Ghanaian public and private sector institutions.
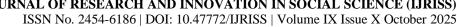
Notwithstanding, there is anecdotal evidence of the existence of incivility in the Gambian schools. For example, headmasters are often heard of harassing junior staff, male staff harassing their female colleagues, and students bullying teachers. In a Facebook post, ChildFund The Gambia (2020) referred to the occurrence of violence in schools, noting that it is on the increase and getting exacerbated by the widespread use of mobile phones. In a similar post, The Gambia Teachers' Union-Official post (2024) also hinted at the existence of violence in the Gambian schools. They intimated that over the previous years, morals in schools were taking a downturn due to an increase in cases of school-related violence. In a separate Facebook post, The Gambia

Therefore, to contribute to addressing this underrepresentation of research in the African continent and, most importantly, The Gambia, particularly in respect to workplace incivility, the objective of this research is to investigate and establish the extent of the phenomenon within public senior secondary schools in and around the Greater Banjul Area and West Coast Region.

Problem Statement

Violence is widely recognized as a pervasive issue within educational establishments across the globe, and The Gambia is no exception. This concern was highlighted by Unicef Gambia (2018) and echoed in a Facebook post, ChildFund The Gambia (2020). They referenced the growing incidence of violence in schools, noting that the problem is intensifying, partly exacerbated by the widespread use of mobile phones. Similarly, The Gambia Teachers' Union–Official (2024) acknowledged the presence of violence in Gambian schools, pointing to a decline in moral standards over recent years due to increased cases of school-related violence. In a separate post, the same union revealed an alleged case of professional misconduct involving an education officer and junior staff, in which the senior officer was alleged to have engaged in sexual solicitation in exchange for a favour. Due to its insidious nature, such incivility can exact a considerable toll, negatively affecting individuals' well-being, disrupting group dynamics, and undermining organizational effectiveness.

At personal level, uncivil behaviors in the organization may result in heightened work-related stress and withdrawal behaviors, emotional disturbance, depression, reduced mental focus, diminished occupational fulfillment, and reduced innovative capacity. Barling, Rogers, and Kelloway (2001) emphasized that abusive behaviors in the workplace contribute to negative mood states, impaired concentration, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and elevated turnover intentions. These issues have significant consequences and costs for organizations, which can become dire and even devastating if proactive measures are not implemented to prevent their recurrence For example, as per Pearson and Porath (2009), the financial impact of workplace incivility is substantial, with an estimated cost of $14,000 per employee annually This figure reflects losses

stemming from project delays, reduced productivity, and cognitive distractions that hinder effective work performance.

Therefore, given the compelling realities stemming from workplace incivility, and the far-reaching consequences it entails - both human and financial - there is a clear rationale and urgent need for this study to investigate the prevalence of uncivil behaviour within the Gambian public senior secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Incivility

The notion of workplace incivility is perceived widely as a pervasive, important, and worthy construct that requires attention (Vasconcelos, 2020). The concept has been derived to a larger degree from studies on counterproductive workplace behavior (Rhee et al., 2016). Thus, as asserted by Mahfooz et al. (2017), significant studies were undertaken to examine the phenomenon. According to Hur et al. (2016), it is broadly regarded as a form of deviant or counterproductive conduct. Rhee et al. (2016) further opined that such conduct encompasses a host of discretionary behaviors that hurt or undermine the well-being of both the organization and employees. These conduct may include molestation, threats, hostility, aberrancy, harassment, and unethical behaviors (Jackson, Clare, & Mannix, 2002). In their study, Koon and Pun (2017) observed that since the 1990s, scholars have proposed various definitions of workplace incivility. However, a prevailing consensus among scholars centered on the definition offered by Andersson and Pearson (1999, p. 457), who described incivility as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect." Another widely recognized definition is the one provided by Rau-Foster cited in the work of Riasat and Nisar (2016), who defined it as being "subtle, rude, or disrespectful behavior that demonstrates a lack of regard for others".

This showed that uncivil acts in the workplace can be perceived differently by different people, whether the instigator, target, or observer, given their ambiguous intent. Although the precise cause of incivility may not be clear, its negative consequences could have a devastating ripple effect. For example, Sassi et al. (2015) contended that workplace incivility adversely affects organizational performance and work environments. Koon and Pun (2017) noted that perceived uncivil conduct gives rise to reduced contentment, dwindling organizational involvement, and elevated intent to leave the organization, thus impacting efficiency and corporate profitability.

For example, studies have established that 98% of the workforce had encountered uncivil behavior, thus, midway through, the number of those sampled had encountered it once every week (Raza, Imran, Rosak-szyrocka, Vasa & Hadi, 2023). The reported incidences of workplace incivility are so alarming since they show a phenomenal adverse effect on several workers, and the resulting serious monetary impact on the business (Namin, Øgaard, & Roislien, 2022). It is projected that the annual monetary cost associated with project delays and mental distractions for each employee due to workplace incivility stands at $14,000, highlighted by (Namin et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is a human cost element of uncivil behavior borne by targeted employees due to mental fatigue, anxiety, heightened levels of timidity, sorrow, and fury (Namin et al., 2022).

Consequences of Workplace Incivility

Studies have indicated recently that among the greatest types of abuse and mistreatment in contemporary businesses is incivility at work, described by Loh, Thorsteinsson, and Loi (2019). They cited that, for instance, a total number of 800 workers were surveyed by Pearson and Porath (2009), 96% of respondents claimed to have undergone workplace incivility. According to Smith (2023), the chief science officer of meQuillibrium "Workplace incivility creates a toxic work environment that undermines team cohesion and collaboration, erodes trust between employees and their managers, and can ultimately damage the organization's reputation," He further stated that "When employees are subjected to rude, disrespectful or aggressive behavior in the workplace, it can lead to decreased job satisfaction, increased stress and decreased productivity, which can result in higher rates of absenteeism, turnover, and decreased organizational performance." Uncivil conduct

tends to negatively impact the victim's cognitive well-being, leading to feelings of discontent, nervousness, adverse emotional experience, as well as despondency (Doshy & Wang, 2014). Uncivil conduct leads to the target experiencing psychological and psychosomatic illnesses (Cemalo, 2012). According to Hur et al. (2016), uncivil act leads to job dissatisfaction, heightened work anxiety, increased intent to quit, and reduced work security. They further highlighted that uncivil behavior creates an atmosphere where employees' support for each other gets reduced, leading to lower productivity. For their part, Alola, Avcı, and Öztüren (2021) an environment characterised by incivility leads to a heightened level of turnover intention, thus endangering the image of the organization and its future.

Sources of Incivility

According to the literature, incivility emanates from various sources. As per the work of Jackson et al. (2002) workplace violence can emanate from service recipients, clients, or customers. For example, they further cited the work of O' Connelle et al. (2000) who claimed that in the hospital context, patients are the most prevalent source of verbal and physical violence to healthcare providers. Similarly, they further opined that family and loved ones of service recipients are key sources of violence for healthcare providers. In addition, they further revealed that violence can be perpetrated against nurses by doctors or vice versa and that nurses can be against other nurses. Orunbon and Ibikunle (2023) posit that sources of incivility could be viewed broadly from two perspectives, namely, "top-down incivility and lateral incivility". He described top-down incivility as dishonorable conduct or attitude by a superior. In the context of school, whether private or public, a superior is anyone who supervises a classroom teacher and could be a senior master, stream head, deputy or headmaster. The lateral incivility, he referred to as unkempt conduct or attitude of a peer or co-worker towards another peer or co-worker. Relating this to the school context, peers or co-workers are individuals at the same level, that is to say, teacher to teacher, senior teacher to senior teacher or stream head to stream head. In short, according to Orunbon and Ibikunle (2023), within the work environment, sources of incivility are many and varied, including peers, heads/managers/supervisors. Within a school environment, one may also include parents and students as sources of workplace incivility. In his work, Cemalo (2012) suggests that antisocial conduct may be meted out to subordinates by a head teacher, or to the latter by the former, that is to say, subordinates to a head teacher, and that it may be perpetrated amongst subordinates. He further asserted that the angle from which harassment takes place gets altered based on the position of the instigator. He further cited the work of Vandekerckhove and Commers (2003, p. 41), suggesting that antisocial behavior has three directional constituents; namely, "downward (e.g., teacher) harassment", "peer harassment", and "upward (principal) harassment".

Teacher Incivility

Faculty board members or teachers can be sources of incivility. Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010), reported that "Clearly, teachers were the most crucial initiators of classroom incivility". Conducts highlighted by Braxton and Bayer (1999) as precipitating or depicting the occurrence of incivility by teachers or faculty board members include "condescending negativism, inattentive planning, moral turpitude, particularistic grading, personal disregard, uncommunicated course details, and uncooperative cynicism".

Head Teacher Incivility

Leadership in the school, such as the headmaster or principal, is also considered another source of workplace incivility. For example, Cemalo (2012) noted that one of the reasons for antisocial behavior at work is a result of the conduct of its leadership, that is, the principal or head teacher. Blase and Blasé (as cited in Cemalo, 2012) suggested, as part of a head teacher's act of uncivil conduct, include the head teacher's bias as it relates to hiring, advancement of status, enforcement of standards, assessment and compensation, abuse and deception, as well as the way educators respond to such action

Empirical Review

Hur et al. (2016) undertook research to determine the effect of uncivil behavior emanating from both colleagues and clients on staff creativity, with emotional exhaustion and self-motivation as intervening

variables. The findings revealed that both sources of workplace incivility, particularly in high-contact customer service institutions, increase employee emotional exhaustion. Similarly, their findings revealed that uncivil behavior reduces employee creativity and intrinsic motivation. Both emotional exhaustion and reduced self-motivation were found to totally and chronologically mediate between workplace incivility and employee creativity.

The author's results also revealed that both worker incivility and client uncivil behavior were inversely linked with employee creativity via emotional exhaustion and decreased self-motivation. With increased workplace incivility, there is reduced creativity of staff via emotional exhaustion and reduced self-motivation. In other words, both emotional exhaustion and reduced self-motivation entirely and chronologically mediate between workplace uncivil conduct and staff creativity. However, with post hoc examination, it was found that, relational impact of both client and colleague uncivil conduct on emotional exhaustion was insignificant. In other words, there is no relational influence of colleague and client uncivil conduct on emotional exhaustion. The result revealed was at variance with a similar study conducted by Rai Sahputri, and Ahyakudin (2023) showing a strong association between customer and coworker incivility with staying away from work and the performance of the business.

For their part, Mahfooz et al. (2017) tried to examine the impact of workplace incivility and ostracism on employee intent to quit. Additionally, an effort was made to examine the intervening contribution of mental fatigue and work-related strain and the buffering effect of cognitive reserve between uncivil conduct and ostracism and intent to quit in the health sector. The outcome of the studies revealed a significant inverse association between uncivil conduct and ostracism and intent to quit. Furthermore, the outcome showed that burnout has a strong partial mediating role between uncivil behavior and intent to quit. By extension, the findings showed an intervening effect of work-related strain between social exclusion at work and intent to quit and that cognitive reserve strongly buffers the association of social exclusion at work, work-related strain and intent to quit.

Namin et al. (2022) performed research examining the association between employees' perception of uncivil conduct and their turnover intentions. Data was drawn from existing work on the subject from articles in various search engines, namely, Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald etc. The findings revealed that there is a strong association between perceived uncivil conduct and intent to quit among staff. This reflects what is obtained across several sources regarding uncivil behavior. Results also revealed that there was relational influence of superior with colleague uncivil behavior and that the influence of workplace incivility on academics seemed stronger than it is in other sectors, and greater in USA than many nations around the world.

Sowe and Arslan (2023) conducted research to determine the effect of uncivil behavior on counterproductive attitude among staff in both private and public institutions in Ghana and Gambia, with turnover intention as an intervening variable, using structural equation modelling among a population of 504 employees. The results indicated a strong link between uncivil conduct and counterproductive behavior. Similarly, intent to quit was found to have a partial intervening contribution between uncivil behavior and counterproductive behavior.

A separate study conducted by Sisawo, Yacine, Ouédraogo, and Huang (2017) aimed at examining the pervasiveness of workplace violence and those who instigate it against employees or medical practitioners in public hospitals in two administrative areas in The Gambia, using an experimental group of 219. The findings revealed that out of that number, 62.1% disclosed having experienced one form of violence or another at least one year before conducting the research. Being subject specifically to words of threats, 59% of respondents indicated, they have experienced it; bodily assault, 17.2% and sexual harassment 10%.

In their work to assess emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction as sequential intervening variables of the relationship between job demands and instigated workplace incivility within the integrative framework of affective events theory and the job demand–control model, (Koon & Pun, 2017). The results revealed that a high job demand gives rise to emotional exhaustion, which, in turn, gives rise to a reduction in the degree of job satisfaction and, as a result, gives rise to instigated workplace incivility.

In their study, embracing the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and national culture as a theoretical basis, Loh et al. (2019) assessed a moderated mediation model linking manifestation of workplace uncivil act, burnout/exhaustion, work fulfilment and job disengagement among Australian and Singaporean white-collar workforce with data gathered via a web link questionnaire of 301 Australian and 303 Singaporean individuals. It was found that an uncivil work environment plays a significant role in burnout/exhaustion and that burnout/exhaustion also influences workers' level of job discontentment and job disengagement. It was also revealed that there is a need to factor in national culture or race of individuals anytime one is investigating the connection regarding maltreatment across various organizations.

Yin, Ji, and Ni (2023) conducted a study and attempted to investigate whether uncivil conduct at the workplace by a manager with the associated adverse consequences is detrimental to staff's emotional wellness, by extension, whether it can lead to durable growth of the hotel industry. The research further sought to investigate the medium via which uncivil behavior influences workers' desire to quit in the Chinese hotel sector, hence providing a potential mechanism for alleviating the phenomenon. Uncivil behavior of managers was found to have an influence on people's turnover intention via individual ego depletion. The detrimental impact of uncivil behavior on turnover intent can be reduced by institutional support was further revealed by the study. Nonetheless, organizational support may alleviate the impact a manager's uncivil behavior has on a person's ego depletion. This was found not to be consistent with research carried out in the past.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Appraisal Theory

According to Moors (2017), **"**appraisal theory of Lazarus suggests that when people encounter a potential stressor, a cognitive emotional process unfolds to evaluate the stressor". Individuals evaluate the event to establish the extent of anticipated risk, danger or difficulty upon oneself (Bippus & Young, 2012). With respect to incivility, this theory argues that appraisal triggers a psychological response that directs the victim's reactions in terms of conduct (Bippus & Young, 2012). The response could be either positive or negative. According to Zhang and Provost (2018) "Appraisal theory forwards the notion that emotion is not purely reflexive, but rather responses result from appraisals of perceived events or situations and that, it is an evaluation of a stimulus with respect to an individual's well-being". It is further asserted by them that in this context, "well-being refers to the satisfaction or obstruction of everything that an individual cares about, including needs, attachments, values, goals, and beliefs".

Applying appraisal theory, when an individual appraises an event or behavior of a colleague and perceives that it is hurting to self but in a mild or subtle manner, the individual may decide to overlook the said event or behavior. However, with repeated occurrences of such behavior from the perpetrator, the likelihood is that he or she may reciprocate with equal behavior or even more intense ones, which may spiral out of control or get transferred to other members within the organization or even people outside the organization that have daily interactions with the organization, for example, customers.

Theoretical Framework

The research utilizes appraisal theory to expound and use it as the basis to advance or provide discussions on how uncivil behavior can influence turnover intention. Appraisal theory of Lazarus (1991) suggests that when people encounter a potential stressor, a cognitive-emotional process unfolds to evaluate the stressor cited by (Bippus & Young, 2012). In other words, "Appraisal is an evaluative process that serves to 'diagnose' whether the situation confronting an individual has adaptation relevance…and [to] produce an appropriate emotional response", (Smith & Kirby, 2009). Therefore, appraisal theory involves emotions being triggered by assessment or evaluations of a given encounter or event within the work environment. The work environment constitutes all that surrounds the job; thus, it is the work environment that gives rise to events. Some of the events are desirable while others are characteristically acrimonious.

Therefore, during an interpersonal encounter, an individual, for instance, a classroom teacher or a senior teacher, may experience hurtful feelings at some point in time. His or her conversational counterpart may have

the likelihood of talking or acting in a manner that may not augur well with him or her, or may be construed after appraising the situation as demeaning or uncivil, and that it is injurious to self. Tokunaga (2008), posited that "hurt feelings are experienced by one or both partners at a given point in any meaningful relationship". He further opines that "hurt can be the outcome of a thoughtless comment, an inconsiderate question, or a careless joke". For his part, Koerner (2022) asserts that hurt is aroused when expectations of politeness and cooperativeness are violated. With the persistent occurrence of hurtful encounters among relational counterparts, be it teacher and teacher, teacher and senior teacher, head teacher and teacher, or head teacher and senior teacher, they can trigger emotions. Continuous strain on emotions can lead to emotional drainage or burnout. Ultimately, this can result in differing adverse effects like dissatisfaction, decreased commitment, as well as other withdrawal behaviors like absenteeism and intention to quit.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret data to generate results. In terms of sampling, the tool used was probability sampling, which was based on randomization, so that schools within the target area were given the same opportunity of being selected. In view of the fact that injustices faced or meted out at the workplace impact on individuals' overall well-being (Rai, 2015) this research sought to examine the prevalence of workplace incivility in the Gambian public senior secondary schools. The research applied online surveys where it was possible and provided a hard copy printout where online surveys were not possible. The research provided prior notice to all public senior secondary schools identified to participate in the research; thus, written letters were dispatched in advance to that effect. Of the targeted 254 schools, 252 ultimately participated in the survey. Consequently, the sample was drawn using convenience sampling, guided by pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria aligned with the study's objective.

In administering the questionnaire at the schools, convenience sampling was the preferred choice, as it's often difficult to obtain public servants who are readily available to participate in research endeavors. In The Gambia, the hesitancy or inability of public servants to participate in research initiatives is often attributed to the fear of being victimized or reprimanded by authorities. The apparent explanation in most cases is that, in the execution of the research, vital information about the public sector may be inadvertently disclosed to the researcher.

Area of Study

The areas of interest were Regions One and Two West. Region, One stretches from Banjul to Abuko, comprising the combined administrative regions of Banjul St. Mary Division and Kombo St. Mary Division, while Region Two extends from Kartong to Kalagi. The researcher chose the study area based on its strategic geographical significance within The Gambia, as well as its demographic prominence and diversity. Region One and Region Two collectively represent the largest concentration of both students and staff in the country's education sector. These regions also host the highest number of private schools and are uniquely privileged, as the only areas that benefit from the national school bus services. Notably, Region Two is divided into two administrative areas, namely, Region Two East and Region Two West. The researcher has chosen to concentrate specifically on Region One and Region Two West, which are juxtaposed, hence the rationale for focusing on them.

Population of Study

The target population for the research involves strictly the workforce from schools within Region One and Two West. It encompasses classroom teachers and school administrators operating in schools considered public and owned by the government, numbering 751. The researcher applied Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula to determine the sample size of 254. To determine the proportionate-to-sample size, the researcher applied Rankan Kamiasa sample method. The researcher obtained

Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

The research employed a probability sampling technique in which the principle of randomization was used. Nine schools were randomly selected from the two regions, that is, Region One and Region Two West. The research then applied stratified sampling by dividing the study area into zones of two, which are Region One and Region Two West. Thereafter, each zone is further divided, thus creating a total of five strata or zones, encompassing two from Region One, that is, Banjul St. Mary Division and Kanifing St. Mary Division; and each district in Region Two West represents a stratum. Region Two West has three districts, namely, Kombo Central, Kombo South, and Kombo North, thus making a total of three strata. The researcher selects three schools randomly from Region One and six schools from Region Two West, with two schools from each stratum.

The research employed multistage sampling techniques to arrive at a sample size. Once a participant pool of the research was established, the study applied random sampling to determine schools within the sample frame that had to participate in the research then "Krejcie and Morgan (1970)" was used to establish the population subset (sample size). Ensuring there was proportionate representation of the schools, the Ranga Kamaisa sampling technique (which ensures proportionate to size sampling method) was used. The table below shows schools in the sample frame, which comprises nine schools in the target area. There are 721 teaching and administrative employees within the sample frame.

Types and Sources of Data

In this study, a mixed-method approach was employed using both primary and secondary sources of data. Some data sets were acquired through existing publications, the internet, research works of others, and books, while others were acquired through surveys and interactions with public officials. For example, the research instrument was administered at schools where head teachers, senior teachers, and classroom teachers could not access the internet or where internet facilities are poor; otherwise, electronic means were the most desired mode of data collection. However, a prior notification was sent to identified schools. A letter was dispatched to head teachers and principals formally requesting permission for the conduct of research, and that their staff were informed accordingly. The letter explicitly indicated the purpose for which the study was to be conducted. In addition, the confidentiality of research participants was vividly highlighted. A self-completed questionnaire was used for data generation, which took a time frame stretching over two months through an internet link, where applicable or physical administration through distribution of questionnaires. The research proceeded with procedures recommended by (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff, 2003) with a view to mitigating social desirability bias before the dissemination of the questionnaire.

Definitions and Measurement of Variable

Workplace Incivility

The working definition of workplace incivility in this study, as cited by Namin et al. (2016) is a "subtle, rude or disrespectful behavior that demonstrates lack of regard for others". Workplace incivility was measured using the seven items of the Workplace Incivility Scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001), adopted and modified by Blau and Andersson (2005). The researcher utilized a 5-level point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1(strongly disagree to 5(strongly agree). Sample indicators are as follows: "Put you down or was condescending to you in some way", "Paid a little attention to a statement you made or showed little interest in your opinion", "Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you", etc. The remaining indicators for workplace incivility are captured in Appendix One, a table in Section B.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Out of a total sample size of 254, 252 completed and returned the questionnaire, yielding a remarkable response rate of 99.2%. The demographic analysis revolves around five key variables: sex, age, marital status,

status/position, and educational qualifications of staff in a public senior secondary school in The Gambia. The demographic data indicates that among the 252 employees sampled from public senior secondary schools in the targeted area of The Gambia, 183 were male, constituting 72.6% of the total, while 69 were female, representing 27.4%. The employees were divided into five age categories. Those aged 18-25 years, numbering 23, accounted for 9.1%, while 108 employees (42.9%) were within the 26–35-year range. Additionally, 103 employees (40.9%) belonged to the 36–45-year age group, whereas 15 employees (6%) fell within the 46 – 55 year bracket. The remaining 3 employees (1.2%) were 56 years and older. Regarding marital status, 75 employees (29.8%) were single, whereas 177 employees (70.2%) were married. In terms of educational qualifications, 149 employees (59.1%) hold a High Teacher Certificate (HTC) or a Higher National Diploma Certificate (HDC). Those with a bachelor's degree amounted to 94 employees (37.3%), while 9(3.6%) hold a master's degree. The data indicate that the age group 26–35 years constitutes the largest proportion of teaching staff, followed by those aged 36–45 years. This suggests that the majority of public senior secondary school teachers in The Gambia in the sample are in their mid-youthful years, reflecting a predominantly young workforce. In addition, the Greater Banjul Area and the West Coast Region collectively constitute the cosmopolitan centre of The Gambia, characterized by a higher concentration of public senior secondary school staff. As such, the findings derived from this study, based on data collected from schools within these regions, hold considerable generalizability to the broader population of public-school teachers in the country. A detailed breakdown of these demographic attributes is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Information

N			252	
Variables	**Mean**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	1.27	Male	183	72.6
		Female	69	27.4
Status/Position	1.91	Senior Master	30	11.9
		Classroom Teacher	215	85.3
		Head Teacher	7	2.8
Age	2.47	18-25	23	9.1
(Years		26-35	108	42.9
		36-45	103	40.9
		46-55	15	6
		56-Above	**3**	**1.2**
Marital	1.7	Single	75	29.8
Status		Married	177	70.2
Qualification	2.44	HTC/HND	149	59.1
		BSc/B. ED	94	37.3
		MBA/MSc	9	3.6

Source: Field work (2025)

Descriptive Analysis of Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility comprises seven indicators. They are as follows, "put you down or was condescending to you in some way", "Paid a little attention to a statement you made or showed little interest in your opinion", "Make a demeaning or derogatory remarks about you", "Addressed you in an unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately", "ignored or exclude you from professional camaraderie (e.g. social conversation)", "doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility" and "made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters". The indicator items were assessed utilizing a Likert scale where 1 indicates strongly disagree, and 5 indicates strongly agree. The means scores of all the indicator items ranged between 2.15 and 2.68, with item 2, "paying a little attention to one's statement or making or showing little interest in one's opinion," registered the highest mean score, while item 5 - ignoring or excluding one from professional camaraderie scored the lowest. This suggests that many teachers in Gambian public senior secondary schools perceive a lack of attentiveness and interest in their opinions and statements within the workplace. Such perceptions of workplace incivility may provoke negative behavioral responses, thus likely affecting morale, work engagement, and professional relationships.

Table 2. Indicator items of workplace incivility (WI)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Put you down or condescending to you in some way **(WI1)**	2.47	1.120
"Paid a little attention to a statement you made or showed little interest in your opinion" **(WI2)**	2.68	1.222
Make demeaning or derogatory remarks about you **(WI3)**	2.44	1.278
"Addressed you in an unprofessional term, either publicly or privately" **(WI4)**	2.21	1.275
Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie (e.g., social conversation) **(WI5)**	2.15	1.157
Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility **(WI6)**	2.23	1.069
Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters **(WI7)**	2.20	1.143

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

Table 3 below presents the first indicator of the variable, workplace incivility, which reads as follows: "Put you down or was condescending to you in some way". Staff's response rate to this item ranged from 11 to 96, with 11, representing 4.4%, constituting the lowest response rate recorded. This indicates the number of staff who strongly agreed with the statement. In addition, 42 staff, representing 16.7%, responded that they agreed with the statement, suggesting that a good number of teachers experienced the condition of being put down or being shown condescending conduct of some sort at the workplace. The combined scores of strongly agree and agree add up to 53, representing 21.1%, thus implying that out of the population of 252 staff who responded to the item, 53, representing 21.1% agreed and affirmed to have experienced being treated in a condescending manner at work. Conversely, the number of response rates for strongly disagree and disagree for the same indicator item were 51 and 96, reflecting 20.2% and 38.1% respectively. The combined response of staff who disagreed with the item numbered 147, representing 58.3%. A total of 52 respondents account for those who were undecided, representing 20.6%, meaning these were staff who neither agreed nor disagreed with experiencing condescending conduct at work.

Table 3. WI1

	Frequency(**F**)	Percent(**P**)	Valid Percent (**VP**)	Cumulative Percent (**CP**)
Strongly Disagree (**SD**)	51	20.2	20.2	20.2
Disagree (**D**)	96	38.1	38.1	58.3
Neutral (**N**)	52	20.6	20.6	79.0
(A)Agree	42	16.7	16.7	95.6
Strongly Agree (**SA**)	11	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	252	252	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

Table 4 below shows the response of staff relating to the second item of workplace incivility that seeks to assess the perception of teachers regarding whether attention or interest was given to their statements and opinions. Just like before, a Likert scale was used to assess. The response rate ranges from 94, being the highest score and 21, the lowest score. 94 and 42 accounts for 37.3% and 16.7% respectively, representing strongly disagree and disagree. The response rate for strongly agreed and agreed numbered 21 and 55, representing 8.3% and 21.8% respectively. The combined scores for strongly agree and agree add up to 76, reflecting 22.1%. This shows that a quarter of the teacher population that were studied in The Gambia public senior secondary schools confirmed being given little attention or interest in their statements and opinions at their workplaces. A total of 40 staff responded neither agree nor disagree, representing 15.9%

Table 4. WI2

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
Disagree	94	37.3	37.3	54.0
Neutral	40	15.9	15.9	69.8
Agree	55	21.8	21.8	91.7
Strongly Agree	21	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

Below is Table 5 showing responses relating to the third indicator item of workplace incivility. The item examined the perception of teachers regarding their experience of demeaning or derogatory remarks from their colleagues, supervisors, or heads using a Likert scale from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). The number of respondents who indicated their rejection of the statement of facing demeaning or derogatory remarks about them at work was 84, representing 33.3% of the total respondents in the survey, which was the highest, while the lowest was strongly agreed with a total number of respondents amounting to 21, representing 8.3%. Combining the number of respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement, 70(27.8%), with those who disagreed, adds up to 154, representing 61.1%. A total of 41 respondents, representing 16.3%, and 21, representing 8.3%, reflect those who agreed, and strongly agreed to experiencing

demeaning conduct at the workplace. 36, representing 14.3%, indicated they neither disagreed nor agreed to experience demeaning or derogatory conduct at work.

Table 5. WI3

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	70	27.8	27.8	27.8
Disagree	84	33.3	33.3	61.1
Neutral	36	14.3	14.3	75.4
Agree	41	16.3	16.3	91.7
Strongly Agree	21	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

Regarding respondents' perception of being addressed privately or publicly in an unprofessional manner, the number of respondents who agreed to facing such conduct numbered 31, representing 12.3%, and those who agreed strongly numbered 18, representing 7.1%. Therefore, the combined response rate for those who agreed facing being addressed in an unprofessional manner, either privately or publicly, stands at 49, representing 19.4%. In contrast, a total of 98 staff members across the target schools, representing 38.9% and 70, representing 27.8%, strongly disagreed and disagreed with the indicator item that they were addressed in unprofessional manners, privately or publicly. Those who didn't agree or disagree with the indicator item numbered 35 respondents, representing 13.9%

Table 6. WI4

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	98	38.9	38.9	38.9
Disagree	70	27.8	27.8	66.7
Neutral	35	13.9	13.9	80.6
Agree	31	12.3	12.3	92.9
Strongly Agree	18	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

The table below indicates the perception of teachers on whether they are excluded from professional camaraderie within public senior secondary schools in the Greater Banjul Area and the West Coast Region. They were assessed using Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. A number of 10 teachers representing 4% responded that they agreed strongly with the perception of being excluded from professional camaraderie, while 33 respondents representing13.1% indicated that they agreed with the statement. Therefore, the number of respondents who affirmed exclusion from professional camaraderie for both agreed and strongly agreed amounted to 43, representing 17.1%. On account of the number of

respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed with their exclusion from professional camaraderie, 89 for both, representing 35.3% while those who neither agreed nor disagreed numbered 31, representing 12.3%.

Table 7. WI5

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	89	35.3	35.3	35.3
Disagree	89	35.3	35.3	70.6
Neutral	31	12.3	12.3	82.9
Agree	33	13.1	13.1	96.0
Strongly Agree	10	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

On account of being doubtful about one's judgment on matters over which one has responsibility, 96 respondents representing 38.1% disagreed with the statement, and 72 representing 28.6% said, they strongly disagreed; thus, combining the two amounted to 168, representing 66.7% for disagreed with the statement that they doubted about their judgment on matters over which they have responsibility. However, those respondents who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement numbered 43, representing 17.1%, with an agreed score of 40 representing 15.9%, and a strongly agreed score of 3 representing 1.2%. The number of respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed stands at 41(16.3%).

Table 8. WI6

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	72	28.6	28.6	28.6
Disagree	96	38.1	38.1	66.7
Neutral	41	16.3	16.3	82.9
Agree	40	15.9	15.9	98.8
Strongly Agree	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

Below is Table 4.9 showing the perception of respondents regarding the 7th indicator item of workplace incivility, which reads "Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters". Out of 252 respondents, 172 representing 68.2%, constituting more than half of the sampled population of public senior secondary schools, indicated that they disagreed with the statement that their colleagues, seniors, or headteachers made unwanted attempts to draw them into discussions of personal matters. Conversely, the total number of those who agreed to unwanted attempts being made to draw them into discussions of personal matters was 48, representing 29.1%, of which 42 constitute agreed, representing 16.7% and 6 strongly agreed,

representing 2. 4% respectively. The number of respondents who could neither agree nor disagree amounted to 32, representing 12.7%.

Table 9. WI7

	F	P	VP	CP
Strongly Disagree	84	33.3	33.3	33.3
Disagree	88	34.9	34.9	68.3
Neutral	32	12.7	12.7	81.0
Agree	42	16.7	16.7	97.6
Strongly Agree	6	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	252	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

The table below provides a summary of the situation of workplace incivility in the Gambian public senior secondary schools. The aggregate responses to all the workplace incivility items or statements confirming experiencing the phenomenon are 374, while the number rejecting experiencing it is 1123. The aggregate response rate of staff who indicated that neither agreed nor disagreed numbered 267. The table below shows the summary

Table 10. Data summary of workplace incivility

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	**TOTAL**
SD	51	42	70	98	89	72	84	**506**
D	96	94	84	70	89	96	88	**617**
N	52	40	36	35	31	41	32	**267**
A	42	55	41	31	33	40	42	**284**
SA	11	21	21	18	10	3	6	**90**

Source: primary data, June 2025 SPSS Output

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

 Determine the prevalence of workplace incivility in public senior secondary schools in The Gambia.

The objective of the study was to determine the prevalence of workplace incivility in the Gambian public senior secondary schools. From the total sample of 254 staff surveyed using a seven-item incivility scale, ranging from "has someone put you down or was condescending to you in some way", to "has someone made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters", 252 responded, resulting in a response rate of 99.21%. Based on the experiences of those surveyed, measured through a five-point Likert scale, as shown in Table 10 above, the combined responses of "strongly agree" and "agree" totalled 374, accounting for just over 20% of the respondents. This indicates that approximately one-fifth of participants had confirmed experiencing some form of workplace incivility. A combined total of 1,123 staff members rejected having experienced incivility, as reflected in their "disagree and strongly disagree" responses.

While the data confirmed that workplace incivility does occur within these institutions, its incidence appears moderate when compared with findings from other contexts. For example, according to Hur et al. (2016), workplace incivility is widespread. This assertion aligns with the findings of Vasconcelos (2020), who, in a literature review of workplace incivility, intimated that the phenomenon is prevalent in organizations. However, this relatively moderate prevalence of workplace incivility may be shaped by cultural factors unique to The Gambia, such as the strong societal emphasis on respect, tolerance, and social harmony, which could buffer against more frequent occurrences of uncivil behavior in professional settings such as schools. This is consistent with Hofstede's framework of culture, in which he argued that there are individualistic and collectivistic cultures. There are also countries that are high on power avoidance, while others are low on power avoidance. Those countries with individualistic cultures, people attached a strong emphasis upon preservation of individual liberties, autonomy, as well as relational equity. They tend to play down power inequality, meaning they subscribe to equal power distribution. However, those with collectivistic cultures, communal interests, and values are given precedence over those of personal ones; thus, people give endorsement for inequality and are awful as well as fearful of authority, meaning they respect and are submissive to those in authority. In the context of schools, headteachers and senior teachers embody that authority. This may explain why incivility is moderate in The Gambia's public senior secondary schools as opposed to other contexts. For example, according to WorldAtlas (2019), "Gambians are soft-spoken and gentle individuals who seek to lead peaceful lives and avoid conflicts. People love to socialize and are not individualistic in nature, with values being more communal." However, more study needs to be done by expanding the scope to include schools in rural communities. In addition, comparative studies could be done to explore the prevalence among female teachers versus male teachers. Alternatively, a longitudinal study of the phenomenon could be done, which may produce different outcomes from this study

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research contributes meaningfully to the scholarly discourse regarding workplace incivility by providing a contextualized perspective from The Gambia, which stands starkly divergent from what obtains in other parts of the world. The findings of this study revealed that approximately one-fifth (20.2%) of respondents from the targeted senior secondary schools in The Gambia reported experiencing workplace incivility. This figure, while notable, is significantly lower than rates observed in other international contexts. For instance, Loh et al. (2019), referencing Pearson and Porath's seminal work, reported that 96% of a sample of 800 individuals had encountered workplace incivility, highlighting the global prevalence and severity of the phenomenon.

Notwithstanding, given the fact that there is a presence of workplace incivility in the Gambian public senior schools, though moderately, initiative-taking strategies should be developed to mitigate, curb, and prevent its occurrence by policy makers, teachers, and authorities. This will ensure that educational establishments are protected and preserved. If left to fester without attention or redress, workplace incivility may lead to undesirable consequences that may spiral out of control. Extensive research has been done on the subject, establishing that workplace incivility may lead to a host of detrimental outcomes for both individuals and organizations. At the individual level, it may lead to outcomes such as psychological burnout, cognitive distraction, reduced job satisfaction, and turnover intention. By extension, these negative outcomes may lead to productivity being compromised in the organization.

On these bases, it is paramount that school authorities create an environment that would buffer against workplace incivility, thereby fostering conditions congenial to the manifestation of positive behaviours by staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the outcome of the research, some practical policy recommendations or strategies that could be implemented for public senior secondary schools to ensure the efficiency and morals of teachers are never compromised are as follows:

Creating and nurturing a culture of civility anchored on creating a meaningful environment and mutual respect among teachers.

Device policies that encourage civility and discourage uncivil behavior through the establishment of a code of conduct.

Institute a monitoring and accountability system such that uncivil behaviours are not left unnoticed or overlooked.

Specialized coaching for senior masters and head teachers can be very helpful in detecting and identifying early symptoms of workplace incivility before they manifest, aggravate, and spiral out of control in schools.

School-based ethics training and conflict resolutions are vital in identifying, preventing, and dealing with workplace incivility.

Provide rewards or incentives that recognise and honor staff members' cooperation, civility, and emotional support. A mutually respectful mindset can be strengthened through positive reinforcemen

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