Supervisor Incivility and Employee Defensive Silence: The Role of Depersonalization as Mediator

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Abstract

This study investigates the intricate relationships between supervisor incivility and employee silence, focusing on the mediating role of depersonalization. Drawing on Conservation of Resource (COR) theory, the research examines how low-intensity deviant behaviors from supervisors undermine employees' psychological resources, leading to defensive silence. The findings highlight the critical role of depersonalization in explaining how supervisor incivility exacerbates negative employee outcomes. Depersonalization serves as a significant mediator, linking incivility to defensive silence. Empirical evidence from a quantitative analysis of 224 employees in the Pakistani context supports the hypothesized relationships. Regression and mediation analyses reveal strong positive links between supervisor incivility, depersonalization, and employee silence. Practical recommendations include fostering organizational climates of civility, implementing zero-tolerance policies for incivility. These findings provide valuable insights for organizations aiming to mitigate workplace incivility and its cascading effects on employee behavior.

Key words: Supervisor Incivility (SI), Defensive silence (DS), Depersonalization, and COR Theory.

1-Introduction

Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity rude behaviors in the workplace with an ambiguous intent to harm but violating workplace norms of mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Examples of uncivil behaviors experienced by employees include being ignored, excluded, or spoken to in an unprofessional manner (Cortina et al., 2001). The most recent incivility statistics showed that the frequency of experienced incivility on a monthly basis rose from 55 to 62% across a five-year period (Portal, 2016), and the extant literature has linked experienced workplace incivility to various negative affective, attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes (for reviews, see Cortina et al., 2017; Han et al., 2022; Schilpzand et al., 2016; Yao et al., 2022). In addition, incivility experiences can have monetary costs for organizations because they can reduce employee productivity (Pearson & Portal, 2009). Among behavioral reactions to experienced incivility, previous studies have found that workplace incivility experience is associated with various active employee behavioral reactions such as fewer organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs; e.g.,Porath & Erez, 2009; Taylor et al., 2022) and more counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; e.g., Sakurai & Jex, 2012). Yet, little is known about the effect incivility has on more passive forms of employee behaviors such as employee silence, defined as intentionally withholding of any form of sincere communication about a person's behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective appraisals of their

organizational conditions to individuals who are perceived as capable of implementing change (Pinder & Harlos, 2019) .

In contrast to OCBs or CWBs that require employees to actively engage in a behavior, silence indicates employees' withholding of communications, facts, and opinions that are specific to work-related changes (Van Dyne et al., 2016). Despite being a passive form of employee behavior, employee silence may have detrimental outcomes (for reviews, see Dehkharghani et al., 2022; Hao et al., 2022), meaning it can not only have negative implications for the individual (e.g., Bagheri et al., 2012) but also present high costs for organizations by reducing creativity (Liu et al., 2009) and obstructing learning and reducing the effectiveness of the decision-making process (Beheshtifar et al., 2022). Further, employee silence can impair managerial effectiveness (Ryan & Oestreich, 1991) and may even lead to more extreme behaviors such as illegal activities and unethical behaviors (Premeaux, 2004; Van Dyne et al., 2013). In addition, employee silence may also have negative consequences for employee well-being since employee silence has been found to positively predict employee burnout (Knoll et al., 2019) and stress (Dedahanov et al., 2016; Dong & Chung, 2021). Thus, it is critical to identify potential antecedents of employee silence and supervisor incivility may be such an antecedent. Pinder and Harlos (2001) suggest that silence can be influenced by the quality of interpersonal treatment that one experiences (Hao et al., 2022), and previous research has found that overt forms of workplace mistreatment experiences such as abusive supervision (e.g., Xu et al., 2015) and workplace bullying (Rai & Agarwal, 2018) are associated with increased employee silence. Meanwhile, despite the high prevalence of workplace incivility, whether and how more subtle forms of workplace mistreatment like incivility can also trigger employee silence remains unclear.

Employees are exposed to various inappropriate behaviors in organizations where they spend a long period of their lifetime. These inappropriate behaviors can be exhibited by not only colleagues and guests but also by supervisors (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Among the uncivil managerial behaviors that employees are exposed to are behaviors such as ignoring, humiliating in front of others, saying degrading words, threatening with dismissal (Keashly, 1997). The positive attitudes and behaviors of the employees who feel that they are treated unfairly by the supervisor are also damaged (Tepper et al., 1998). Employees who are exposed to the uncivil behavior of the supervisor feel the sense of injustice (Bies and Shapiro, 1987) and may react to these behaviors by developing hostility (Tepper et al., 2001; Duffy et al., 2002). Empirical research has focused on the relationship with others numerous variables such as depression (Kraaij et al., 2003), anxiety (Garnefski et al., 2002a, 2002b), poor subjective well-being (Kraaij et al., 2008) and negative life events (Garnefski et al., 2003), whereas it has not focused on its premises such as supervisor incivility. Despite all these critical empirical shreds of evidence from past research, psychopath is still relatively understudied. In line with the findings mentioned above, considering the researchers' suggestions and recommendations mentioned above, this thesis aims to extend the extant literature by examining the relationship between supervisor incivility and avoidance-based behavior in the form of employee silence. Employee silence behavior not only because of its potentially severe consequences (e.g., accidents, deaths; Lowy, 2014), but also because the emerging silence literature has repeatedly pointed to dysfunctional relationships with superiors as the cause for employees' decision to withhold organizationally relevant information (Greenberg & Edwards, 2009; Morrison, 2014). A decade of research has shown that targets of supervisor incivility not only experience diminished organizational commitment, psychological well-being, job and life satisfaction but also exhibit increased interpersonally and organizationally harmful behaviors (reviews in Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013; Tepper, 2007). From a theoretical standpoint, it is instructive to consider these divergent attitudinal, affective, and behavioral outcomes through the lens of an approach-avoidance perspective (Carver & Scheier, 1998). Our lack of insight into why subordinates might respond with avoidance is an important omission in light of evidence indicating that individuals do not always engage in retaliation

(Lian et al., 2012) and are less likely to do so against those with authority (Tpper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). A prior study focuses on the supervisor-subordinate relationship, research should compare whether incivility from different sources (e.g., supervisor, coworker, and customer) has any differential effects on silence behaviors. While explored general silence behaviors, it has also been suggested that silence behaviors can be conceptualized into different dimensions based on individual motives (e.g., Brinsfeld, 2013; Van Dyne et al., 2003); thus, align with above findings, research should explore if there are differential effects between supervisor incivility and these silence dimensions. For example, given the negative interpersonal interactions associated with supervisor incivility, it may be more salient in predicting defensive silence (i.e., remaining silent based on fear) in comparison to disengaged silence (i.e., silence based on disengagement; Brinsfeld, 2013).

The study implies that workplace incivility, incivility from supervisors, canpotentially lead to employees engaging in defensive silence. Additionally, the study examines how depersonalization can mediate this link. This work contribute to the incivility literature in three ways. First, the current study focus on supervisor incivility as a predictor because it is the most destructive when compared to other sources of incivility (e.g., coworkers and customers; Schilpzand et al., 2016). One potential reason for this is because supervisors have control over work tasks, promotions, financial well-being, and competition for status and resources (Thompson et al., 2018). Hence, incivility from one's supervisor can be more influential on employee outcomes and investigating silence as an outcome of supervisor incivility is most relevant. Furthermore, this is also consistent with the literature that acknowledges how top management can influence silence norms and the forces that establish and reinforce it (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Supervisor incivility as a low-intensity interpersonal mistreatment may lead to lower level of depersonalization since managerial conduct and attributes can influence subordinate trust (Podsakof et al., 1990; Schaubroeck et al., 2011) and depersonalization has been found to play a crucial role in the quality of relationship that leaders build with their followers (see Dulebohn et al., 2012 for a review).

Depersonalization is more relevant to defensive silence and discretionary work effort because in circumstances of diminished depersonalization, employees are more likely to refrain from sharing work-related opinions or information because they may not feel comfortable in doing so and want to avoid risk facing consequences such as punishment (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015). Taken together, trust in supervisor is likely to explain the effect of supervisor incivility on employee defensive silence and establishing this mediation process can help us understand how workplace incivility affects employee defensive silence and inform organizations how they can prevent the effects of workplace incivility from unfolding. Despite the extensive literature on the effects of workplace incivility on employees' affective, attitudinal, cognitive, and active behavioral reactions, it is unclear whether and how workplace incivility might affect employee silence, a more passive form of employee behavior with harmful consequences. Drawing on conservation of resource theory, the current study demonstrates that supervisor incivility positively predicts employee defensive through depersonalization. The current study endeavors to explain that supervisor incivility as a potential antecedent of employee defensive silence and further explore potential mediator of this relationship.

2- Literature Review
2.1 Supervisor incivility
Although unacceptable and deviant, uncivil behavior has become pervasive in workplaces (Ilies et al., 2020). Although unacceptable and deviant, uncivil behavior has become pervasive in workplaces (Ilies et al., 2020). Of all deviant behaviors (Bowling and Beehr, 2006), supervisor incivility could potentially harm the target employee because of power imbalances in the supervisor-subordinate dyad. Workplace incivility has been considered a significant work environment stressor in sociology and a moderately new zone for academic discussion in the work environment. It is a rising risk for human asset advancement, since it prompts harmful work air. Late examinations depict uncivil conduct as a work environment deviance, frequently

experienced as a working environment abuse, yet recognized from hostility. Incivility seems too mild mistreatment but a significant workplace stressor, negatively affecting employees physically and emotionally (Abid et al., 2015). Incidents of mistreatment impact employees and organizations that may be initiated by any co-worker, boss, or customer. However, among supervisors, an uncivil attitude toward a subordinate proves to be the most alarming form of workplace incivility (Shin and Hur, 2019). Uncivil acts in the workplace are linked to aggressive behaviors, e.g., anger, frustration, and mental stress, that seem minor and may result in disastrous consequences later (Reio and Sanders-Reio, 2011). Scholars shed light on previous studies on supervisor uncivil behavior that can incur an unbearable expense for the organization. It has adverse effects on the employee's quality of work, life, health, and psychological well-being. Thus, this type of uncivil behavior may lead to managerial failure, showing a lack of respect for others and a type of violence that may negatively affect employee outcomes, e.g., job performance, job satisfaction, work engagement, and psychological distress.

2.2 Depersonalization

Depersonalization refers to a response that is callous, negative or detached (Söderlund, 2017) and refers to feeling callous or uncaring (Han et al., 2016). Depersonalization can occur in work settings and is triggered by psychological strain experienced during interpersonal interactions (Leeetal., 2018). While research examines the relationship between burnout and emotional labor (Lee et al., 2018) virtually no research examines the effect of customer incivility on increasing depersonalization of service. Specifically, depersonalization is a critical variable as it erodes the service delivery. The very nature of this business is to be hospitable and caring toward customers (Baker and Magnini, 2016).

The concept of depersonalization is distinguished from the concept of derealization (Fleiss, Gurland & Goldberg, 1975), where the former is a non-delusional belief that one's physical self is no longer intact and latter is a non-delusional belief that one's surroundings are no longer intact. Jacobs and Bovasso (1992) highlighted five different types of depersonalization namely (I) 'inauthenticity' -loss of genuineness or sense of authenticity in experiencing the self and interaction with others, (ii) self-negation or denial that one is performing certain actions or that one is witnessing certain events occurring in the environment which (Myers & Grant, 1972) is referred to as a loss of recognition of personal identity, (iii) self-objectification -a profound sense of disorientation in which the world is experienced as rapidly changing and basic distinctions between self and objects are blurred, and (iv) de-realization - alterations in the perception of people and objects, and body detachment - involves the sense of one's body as strange, unfamiliar, or not belonging to the owner.

With relation to incivility frequency, employees who experience higher levels of incivility are more likely to have coping strategies. This is based on COR theory, whereby employees experiencing difficult situations will have greater coping difficulty because of insufficient resources (Alola et al., 2019) will develop a nonchalant attitude. Extending this logic, when employees experience incivility and difficult customer interactions, they see to protect themselves. When they experience incivility, they distance themselves emotionally and become more depersonalized.

2.3 Defensive silence

Employee silence is an extension of the organization silence. It is widespread in organizations (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Scott, 1993). Organization silence was first proposed by Morrison and Milliken (2000), defined as a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems. Based on the research of (Pinder and Harlos, 2001), they further defined the employee silence as withholding genuine expression about behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective evaluations of organizational circumstances to people who seem capable of changing the situation. Employees become silent and withhold significant information due to the practice of workplace ostracism in organizations. Employee silence is a multi-dimensional construct and has three dimensions, i.e., acquiescent silence,

defensive silence and pro-social silence. Defensive silence as withholding relevant ideas, information or opinions as a form of self-protection, based on fear (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2013). Defensive silence is detrimental within organizational context as it generates negative work-related outcomes. Similarly, when employees feel that their information and opinions will not be appreciated by others or may bring negative or unpleasant results so then they do not express themselves fully and engage in defensive silence.

2.4 Theoretical framework

Conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1998) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of assessment on emotions and performance by focusing on the resources of individuals and groups (Buchwald, 2003). Resource theory is a useful framework for understanding the link between supervisor incivilities, trust in supervisor, core self-evaluation and defensive silence. This theory posits that individuals have various personal and social resources, and their behaviors are driven by the need to protect and preserve these resources. In the workplace, these recourses can include psychological, emotional and social resources. This study argue that employees' exposure to supervisor incivility may generate resource losses, in the form of affronts to their dignity and associated preoccupations about their organizational functioning (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Hershcovis et al., 2017), such that they seek to undo that loss by conserving energy and not caring any more about the well-being of their co-workers (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). Formally, this study propose that an important reason supervisor incivility enhances depersonalization toward co-workers resides in employees' resource loss, as manifest in their job-related feelings (Hobfoll, 2001). Such silence captures the strain that employees experience during the execution of their job tasks, emerging as worries about their organizational functioning and ability to fulfil their job duties (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983; Xie, 1996). To the extent that employees believe their co-workers treat them with disrespect, their resulting concerns about their job situation (Schilpzand et al., 2016b; Sliter & Boyd, 2015) may lead them to dehumanize other organizational members and stop caring for their well-being.

Moreover, COR theory and its underlying notion of negative resource spirals (Hobfoll, 2001, 2011) suggests that the harmful effect of employees' perceptions of workplace adversity is invigorated to the extent that they possess personal characteristics or operate in work conditions that exacerbate their experience of resource loss after such exposures. For example, employees' exposure to unfair information provision diminishes their job performance to a greater extent in the presence of political organizational climates (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2018). Similarly, this propose that the direct effect of supervisor incivility on depersonalization toward coworkers through core self-evaluation.

When employees experience incivility from their supervisor, it can deplete their psychological and emotional resources. The employee encounters supervisor incivility, which represents a threat to these resources. The negative interactions deplete the depersonalization, a key psychological resource (Yu, 2020). As a result of supervisor incivility, the employee experiences depersonalization. This loss is a direct resource loss within the COR theory framework. Faced with a depersonalization and potentially other psychological resources, the employee engages in resource conservation behavior. In this case, the employee chooses to remain silent and withhold feedback or concerns as a means to protect their remaining resources, such as self-esteem and emotional well-being. Employees perceive supervisor incivility as a threat to the emotional wellbeing and self-esteem, and they may view it an attack on their personal resources. Defensive silence is mechanism used by employees to protect them from further harm when they perceive a threat to their resources. When employees experience supervisor incivility, they may respond with defensive silence. Supervisor incivility erodes depersonalization. When employees experience rude or disrespectful behaviors from their supervisor, they become less likely to trust their supervisor's intensions and actions and go for depersonalization. In this model, the COR theory highlights how supervisor incivility, which is a stressor and a resource threat, can lead to a direct resource loss (depersonalization). The

employee's response, defensive silence is a resource conservation strategy aimed at safeguarding psychological resources.

| Supervisor Incivility | → | Depersonalization | → | Employees Defensive silence |
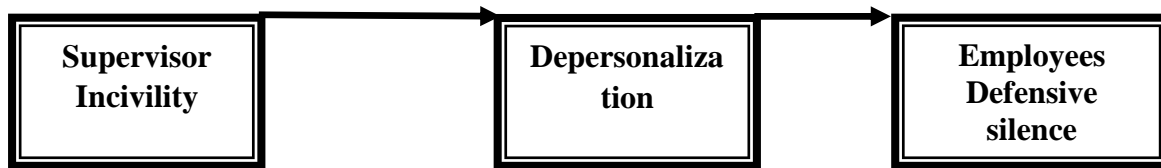
2.5 Hypothesis development

Workplace norms include essential moral values as well as informal policies that are implemented to regulate workplace behaviors (Karatepe et al., 2019). Although workplace norms may differ across organizations, employees share understanding and cooperative behavior (Megeirhi et al., 2020). Therefore, supervisor incivility occurs when some moral norms are violated. The perpetrator might not intend to hurt the victim, but he can still identify with uncivil behavior. Though Vasconcelos (2020) confirmed that supervisor incivility leads to negative results for victims, this mechanism is responsible for the unclear relationship. Employees may have negative reflections on their behavior because of supervisor incivility, resulting in stress and depression (Jawahar et al., 2012).

Supervisor incivility has a spreading effect on those observing the rude behavior among coworkers, which ultimately weakens the creative and daily tasks. Supervisor incivility increases job stress, decreases employee contribution, harms employee performance, increases the intention to leave, and increases employee depersonalization (Dalgiç, 2022). Previous research has shown that an increase in employee turnover usually results from various uncivil activities (Alola et al., 2021). Eventually, stress and depression lead to depersonalization disorder, a psychological condition in which a person feels disconnected from their feelings, thoughts, and body (Chen et al., 2021). Baker and Kim (2021) examined whether there was a significant relationship between customer incivility and an employee's emotional support during depersonalization. This research has concentrated on the factors that gave rise to the initial link between supervisor incivility and depersonalization. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Supervisor incivility positively affects employee depersonalization.

Employee defensive silence is an extension of the organization silence. It is widespread in organizations (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Scott, 1993). Organization silence was first proposed by Morrison and Milliken (2000), defined as a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems. Based on the research of Pinder and Harlos(2001), they further defined the employee defensive silence as withholding genuine expression about behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective evaluations of organizational circumstances to people who seem capable of changing the situation. In this study, prefer to adopt the definition of Dyne and Botero (2003), they regard employee defensive silence as the choice of employees after careful consideration and weighing the pros and cons. Defensive silence refers to withholding relevant ideas, information, or opinions as a form of self-protection for fear. Supervisor incivility, such as public criticism, slander, sarcasm, questioning and so on, can lead to employee insecurity and perceptions of identity threat. The targets would doubt whether their own efforts and contributions may be respected, and whether they have value to the development of the organization (Aryee, Chen, & Sun., 2007), as a result, will advancing employee silence. While suffered from supervisor incivility, as a return, employees would respond to incivility with tending to keep important information which is very useful for organization development (Wang & Jiang, 2015). At same time, fear of being a target again, employees usually fear to express their true thoughts or ideas, which also makes employee keep silence in workplace in order to protect themselves (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). In other words, they will take defensive silence. Therefore, we predict that:

Hypothesis 2: Supervisor incivility has positive relationship with employee defensive silence.

Employees experience stress, leading to physical and psychological effects, due to job demands and required resources. Job demands include sustained physical or psychological effort in various dimensions, including physical, psychological, social, and organizational (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Employees who constantly communicate and interact with supervisor due to their job function are likely to face supervisor incivility when they cannot meet supervisor demands, supervisor are dissatisfied with the service, or there are insufficient business resources. Conservation of resources theory would suggest that the risk of losing valuable resources causes stress for employees (Hobfoll, 2011). This could encourage withdrawal behaviors due to the perception that employees have some resources that they can lose as a result of constantly being rude to supervisor (Boukis et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2017). Indeed, supervisor incivility increases employee stress (Boukis et al., 2020; Porath & Pearson, 2013; Sliter et al., 2010), emotional exhaustion (Alola et al., 2019; Dorman & Zapf, 2004; Sliter et al., 2010; Karatepe et al., 2009; Kim & Qu, 2019; Yang & Lau, 2019), depersonalization (Baker & Kim, 2021), and burnout of hotel employees (Bani-Melhem, 2020; Kim & Qu, 2019; Yang & Lau, 2019). Employees become silent and withhold significant information due to the practice of workplace ostracism in organizations. Defensive silence as withholding relevant ideas, information or opinions as a form of self-protection, based on fear. In line with conservation of resource theory (COR), depersonalized employees at the workplace have a fear of losing valued resources such as social relationship, social support and the opportunity for quick growth at workplace in organizations. Thus, after this unexpected situation employee becomes more proactive and used defensive silence as a strategy for the lost resources. Interpreting previous research findings in terms of the conservation of resources theory suggests the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Depersonalization is positively associated with defensive silence.

Depersonalization is a response that is callous, negative or detached (Soderlund, 2017) and refers to feeling callous or uncaring (Han et al., 2016). Depersonalization can occur in work settings and is triggered by psychological strain experienced during interpersonal interactions (Lee et al., 2018). While research examines the relationship between burnout and emotional labor (Lee et al., 2018) virtually no research examines the effect of supervisor incivility on increasing depersonalization of employees. Specifically, depersonalization is a critical variable as it erodes the service delivery. The very nature of this business is to be hospitable and caring toward customers (Baker and Magnini, 2016). With relation to incivility frequency, employees who experience higher levels of incivility are more likely to have coping strategies. This is based on COR theory, whereby employees experiencing difficult situations will have greater coping difficulty because of insufficient resources (Alola et al., 2019) will develop a nonchalant attitude. Extending this logic, when employees experience incivility and difficult manager's interactions, they see to protect themselves. When they experience manager incivility, they distance themselves emotionally and become more depersonalized. Individuals have negative attitudes toward other people related to his/her work at this process. Morrison and Miliken (2000) emphasized that one of the key factors which presses employees in organization to remain silent is sense of fear. Steadily, defensive silence is considered as decision making not to speak because of employees is afraid of consequences of their word spoken to express their knowledge, opinions and thoughts (Pinder and Harlos 2001). In the light of these, defensive silence as an action to protect themselves from threats associated with expressing their knowledge, opinions and thoughts because of their fears (Dyne et al. 2003).

Hypothesis 4: Depersonalization mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and defensive silence of employees.

3-Research Methodology

A research design refers to the systematic approach and techniques employed together and examine data related to the specific variables identified in the study challenge. It refers to the

design, organization, and methodology developed to address research inquiries (Creswell, 2021). The present study employs a time-lagged design to minimize the common method bias. Data is collected at three different time periods. The dependent variable, defensive silence, is measured based on peer's response. Supervisor incivility and core self evaluation is measured at time one (t 1), trust in the supervisor is measured at time two (t 2), and the dependent variable, defensive silence will measured at time three (t 3) witheach assessment being one and a half months apart.The unit of analysis is a crucial component of research, particularly in the social sciences. It consists of social organizations, individuals, groups, and artifacts. The unit of analysis is one component from the population that we choose for a quick investigation. Since employee attitudes and behavioral responses are the main focus of the current study. Therefore, the unit of analysis in this study is the individual employee.

The study focuses on employees working in the service sector of twin cities, namely Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Specifically, it includes employees from both private and public organizations in sectors such as banking and telecommunications. This choice is based on the fact that in the service sector, leaders and members often work closely together, and their interactions are more prominent compared to the manufacturing industry. The selected technique for collecting responses is convenience sampling. Owing to the presence of multiple headquarters of government and business entities, the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi serve as major hub for the state and corporate service sector. The researcher proposes a minimum sample size depending on the type of research design for moderate to complex research models; 400 sample sizes is suggested by the researchers (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012; Delice, 2010). The study is utilizing a time-lagged design and gather data at three distinct time points. A total sample size of 350 are obtained throughout these time periods, which isdeemed appropriate.

The scales were modified from earlier research. The fact that these scales have demonstrated reliability via prolonged use in the past is one of the primary reasons they are used. All responses were recorded on a 5-point Liker scale across all measures for the sake of standardization. The seven-item scale used in this study for evaluating supervisory workplace incivility was taken from Cortina et al. (2001). My supervisor made fun of me or was condescending to me, (2) ignored my comments and didn't seem interested in what I had to say, (3) made offensive or demeaning remarks about me, (4) addressed me in an unprofessional manner, (5) ignored or excluded me from business networking, (6) doubted my judgment on matters for which I am accountable, and (7) made unwanted attempts to engage me in personal conservation. Each of these items is scored on a five-point Liker scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." Shih et al. (2013) used a five-item measure in their study. Examples include: (1) I feel like I treat people like inanimate objects; (2) I have become more indifferent to people since starting this job; (3) I fear that this job is making me emotionally indifferent; (4) I don't really care what happens with the organization or my supervisor; and (5) I feel like I'm to blame for some of their issues. Each of these items is scored on a five-point Liker scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree."The five items used in this study are based on research by Dyne et al. (2003). Examples include: (1) refraining from speaking out against ideas for change because I am afraid; (2) hiding important information because I am afraid; (3) omitting important facts to protect myself; (4) avoiding expressing ideas for improvements because I am afraid; and (5) hiding my solutions to problems because I am afraid. Each of these items is scored on a five-point Liker scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." The analysis of this study as a quantitative review adhere to quantitative methodology, which is carried out by utilizing various programs such as AMOS and SPSS for the results to aid our main Idea.

Reliability is the ability to yield consistent and exact findings each and every time a test item is utilized for scale testing. How well the scale holds up over time and yields consistent findings is determined by how reliable it is. The Cranach alpha value provides us with knowledge of the scale components' dependability. This figure represents the internal consistency of the

variables. The Cranach alpha value indicates a variable's link to other variables as well as its measurement of one particular construct. The Cranach alpha range is 0 to 1. A higher score indicates that the scale is more dependable in measuring the construct it is meant to examine. Above 0.7, alpha is thought to be a reliable and usual value. Conversely, it is believed that negative values are less reliable for evaluating the selected set of constructs. For every scale used in the data under the specified table 3.1, the Cranach alpha values have been shown.

Table: 3.1 (Reliabilities for scales)

Sr.	Scale	Reliability	No. of Items
1	Supervisor Incivility	0.876	7
2	Depersonalization	0.817	5
3	Defensive Silence	0.883	5

4-Data Analysis and Interpretations

Harman's single factor test technique is frequently used by researchers from a variety of domains to address the issue of Common Method Variance. Researchers can determine the number of factors needed to explain the variance in each study variable by loading each one into an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and looking at the un-rotated result (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Aulakh & Gencturk, 2000; Greene & Organ, 1973; Podsakoff et al., 2003a). The fundamental idea behind this technique is that if there is a significant amount of CMV, either (a) the factor analysis will reveal a single component, or (b) the majority of the covariance between the measures will be explained by a single general factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003a). Moreover, in their study he depicts Harman's Single Factor analysis as a diagnostic technique for CMV and not to control anything about the CMV. In his study, suggested 30% of variance as no issue of CMV in data; if 50% or above variance is found, it should be declared a severe issue of CMB in the data. Based on this threshold, the cumulative percentage of variance shown in table - 4.1 is 38.96%, which depicts that there is no such issue of CMB in the data of this study.

Table: 4.1 (Total Variance Explained)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	C %	Total	% of Variance	C %
1	12.858	38.965	38.965	12.858	38.965	38.965
2	3.878	11.751	50.716	3.878	11.751	50.716
3	3.065	9.289	60.005	3.065	9.289	60.005
4	2.510	7.607	67.613	2.510	7.607	67.613
5	2.126	6.444	74.056	2.126	6.444	74.056
6	1.479	4.482	78.539	1.479	4.482	78.539
7	1.130	3.423	81.962	1.130	3.423	81.962
8	.863	2.616	84.577			
9	.776	2.351	86.929			
10	.649	1.966	88.894			
11	.588	1.781	90.676			
12	.508	1.538	92.214			
13	.444	1.345	93.559			
14	.383	1.161	94.721			
15	.338	1.023	95.744			
16	.305	.924	96.668			
17	.252	.764	97.432			
18	.221	.670	98.103			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Correlation analysis reveals the nature of the information that fluctuation between two variables can provide. Either two variables that vary simultaneously or not at all are the ones under evaluation. As a result, correlation between the -1 and +1 ranges is always present. The main way that this correlation analysis varies from regression analysis is that it doesn't make the assumption that two or more variables are related. The relationship between the components split in terms of affecting in the same or inverse path as the zero association was abolished. Positive correlation is the simultaneous rise and fall of two variables; negative correlation is the simultaneous increase of one variable and the drop of the other. Pearson correction analysis calculates the correlation coefficient to evaluate the reliance between two quantities. The range of values for correlation coefficient limits is -1.00 to +1.00; positive values denote a positive correlation while negative values, like -1.00, imply a negative link among the elements. Nonetheless, the boundaries of strong/high correlation values lie between 0.1 and 0.5, or -1.0 and -0.5. Between 0.3 and 0.5 or between -0.5 and -0.3, there is a substantial association. Additionally, the value falling within the -0.3 to -0.1 or 0.1 to 0.3 weak/low correlation ranges. When the value of association is 0, it is demonstrated that there is no correlation between the variables.

Table: 4.2 (correlation)

		SI	DP	DS
SI	Pear. Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
DP	Pear. Correlation	.983**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
DS	Pear. Correlation	.732**	.691**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000

To find out if there were any noteworthy correlations between varieties of employee variables, a set of Pearson correlations was calculated. The correlation values show the type and strength of the relationship between the variables. Table showing the degree of connection between the variables. This study discovered from the results that supervisor incivility and depersonalization have a very high positive association ($r = 0.983$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, where ($r = 0.732$ and $p > 0.01$), there is a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between supervisor incivility and defensive silence. Depersonalization exhibit a significantly moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.691$, $p < 0.01$) with defensive silence.

4.1 Regression Analysis

Hypothesis - 1

The study's first hypothesis proposes supervisor incivility positively affects employee depersonalization. Regression analysis was employed in this study to assess this hypothesis, and the following conclusions were reached:

Table - 4.1A (Regression Summery)

Step -1	B	R – square	Adjusted R square	Sig.
SI	.983	.866	.966	0.000

Result shows that supervisor incivility has the positive link with employee's depersonalization. The R square = .966 and β = 0.983 with the significant p value 0.000. In addition and R Square tells us that one unit change in supervisor incivility brings 8.66% change in the employee's depersonalization. Hence H1 is accepted.

Hypothesis - 2

In this study hypothesis 2 is there is significant positive relationship between supervisor incivility and employees defensive silence. To test this hypothesis this study utilized the regression analysis and its results are;

Table – 4.1B (Regression Summery)

Step -1	B	R – square	Adjusted R square	Sig.
SI	.732	.536	.534	0.000

In the above table it gives the strong justification. Result shows that supervisor incivility has the positive link with employees' defensive silence. The R square = .536 and β = 0.732 with the significant p > 0.000. In addition R square tells us that one unit change in supervisor incivility brings 53.6% change in the employee's defensive silence. Hence H 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis - 3

In this study hypothesis 3 is there is significant positive relationship between employees depersonalization and employees defensive silence. To test this hypothesis this study utilized the regression analysis and its results are;

Table - 4.1C (Regression Summery)

Step -1	B	R – square	Adjusted R square	Sig.
DP	.691	.677	.675	0.000

Hypothesis 3 enunciates that employee's depersonalization is positive influences on the employee's defensive silence. In the above table it gives the strong justification. Result shows that employee's depersonalization has the positive link with employee's defensive silence. The R square = .677 and β = 0.691 with the significant p < 0.000. In addition and R Square tells us that one unit change in employee's depersonalization brings 67.7% change in the employee's defensive silence. Hence H3 is accepted.

Hypothesis - 4

This study must carry out the mediation analysis in order to evaluate hypothesis 6. For simplicity and suitability, the Hayes (2013) approach was used in this investigation. Hayes (2013) was utilized in this study's mediation regression analysis. In order to investigate how depersonalisation mediates the relation between supervisor incivility and employees' defensive silence, mediation regression analysis was carried out. According to the proposed study, there is dependent variables i.e. employees defensive silence, so this study have regress it, it has been shown in tables below.

Table – 4.1D (Mediation Effects Summery)

	Effects	S.E	P. Value	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total Effect	0.8216	0.0061	0.000	0.0861	0.1103
Direct Effect	0.7320	0.0325	0.000	0.1438	0.2718
Indirect Effect	0.0896	0.0456	-	0.1981	0.3718

The indirect impact of uncivil supervisors on defensive silence is demonstrated in Hypothesis 6 tables, where employees' depersonalisation acts as a mediator. The overall effect shows how the defensive silence of the DV employee is impacted by the incivility of the IV supervisor. The overall impact of rude supervisors on defensive silence among employees is 0.8216, with a significant p-value of 0.000. It shows that 82% of the variance in defensive silence among employees is caused by uncivil supervisors. Zero is not included in the 95% certainty interval, and the bootstrap lower and upper bounds are.0861 and.1103, respectively. This study's direct effect results reveal how IV supervisor incivility affects DV workers' defensive silence and how employee depersonalisation plays a mediation function. Therefore, the results showed that when mediation was present, employees' depersonalisation resulted in a disclosure of variance, which in turn caused 73.20% of employees to remain defensively silent. Additionally, there is no zero between the bottom and higher bounds of the bootstrap limits. Employee depersonalisation mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employees' defensive silence, so demonstrating the existence of mediation. Since the lower and upper limits are 0.1981 and 0.3718 separately, the bootstrap values are forecasting the significant outcomes. Between the bottom and upper boundaries, there isn't a single zero value. As a result, the hypothesis is accepted and the results support H4.

5-Discussion, Conclusion, Research Implications, Research Limitations and Future Directions

5.1 Discussion

Supervisor incivility breaches workplace norms and can lead to stress and depression among employees, ultimately resulting in depersonalization—a state of disconnection from one's thoughts, feelings, and identity (Jawahar et al., 2012; Vasconcelos, 2020). Regression results show a significant positive relationship between supervisor incivility and depersonalization (R^2 = .966, β = 0.983, p < 0.000), suggesting that workplace incivility accounts for an 86.6% change in employee depersonalization. This indicates that incivility from supervisors leads to increased feelings of depersonalization among employees, as employees detach themselves emotionally and psychologically from their work due to resource depletion and emotional exhaustion, which aligns with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Supervisor incivility often triggers defensive silence as employees withhold opinions due to insecurity or fear of further mistreatment (Aryee et al., 2007; Wang & Jiang, 2015). The regression analysis reveals a positive correlation between supervisor incivility and defensive silence (R^2 = .536, β = 0.732, p < 0.000), showing that incivility explains 53.6% of the variance in defensive silence. The results suggest that incivility from supervisors fosters a self-protective withdrawal (defensive silence) among employees. Employees refrain from sharing information or opinions out of fear of further negative interactions. This aligns with existing literature showing that fear of repercussions from incivility can stifle open communication.

Depersonalization may lead to defensive silence as employees withdraw to cope with stress and resource loss (Boukis et al., 2020; Hobfoll, 2011). The analysis found a positive correlation between depersonalization and defensive silence (R^2 = .677, β = 0.691, p < 0.000), with depersonalization explaining 67.7% of defensive silence. Employees experiencing depersonalization tend to adopt defensive silence as a coping mechanism to avoid further psychological strain. This is in line with COR theory, as employees with reduced psychological resources become increasingly withdrawn to protect their remaining resources. COR theory posits that incivility-induced resource loss leads to depersonalization, which may further silence employees (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Mediation analysis shows a significant indirect effect of incivility on defensive silence through depersonalization (total effect = 0.8216, direct effect = 0.7320, indirect effect = 0.0896), supporting Hypothesis. This mediation effect confirms that incivility indirectly increases defensive silence by heightening depersonalization. In this pathway, supervisor incivility depletes employees' psychological resources, leading to depersonalization, which in turn promotes defensive silence as a protective strategy.

5.2 Conclusion

The study thoroughly examined the relationships between supervisor incivility, employee defensive silence and depersonalization. Using Conservation of Resource (COR) theory as the foundation, the research provides insights into the mechanisms and boundary conditions that influence these dynamics within workplace environments, particularly in a Pakistani context. The research established a strong positive relationship between supervisor incivility and employee depersonalization. Incivility acts as a workplace stressor, depleting employees' emotional and psychological resources, leading to detachment from their roles and interactions. A significant positive relationship between supervisor incivility and employee defensive silence was found. Employees resort to silence as a protective mechanism, avoiding the perceived risks of retaliation or further harm from uncivil supervisors. Depersonalization was identified as a critical mediator, explaining how incivility leads employees to withdraw communicative behaviors as a conservation strategy. Similarly, depersonalization mediated the relationship with discretionary work efforts, reflecting that emotionally disengaged employees may still exhibit task effort, albeit potentially for self-preservation rather than organizational benefit. This study highlights the pervasive impact of supervisor incivility on employee behaviors, emphasizing the roles of depersonalization and individual resilience. By addressing incivility and fostering a supportive environment, organizations can protect employee well-being, enhance productivity, and create a more harmonious workplace. The findings provide a strong foundation for both academic discourse and actionable strategies in organizational

management. The findings align with prior research showing that workplace incivility undermines employee motivation and engagement. This study extends the literature by highlighting the unique mechanisms through which incivility fosters passive behaviors (e.g., silence) alongside seemingly contradictory efforts.

5.3 Study Implications

5.3.1 Practical Implications

- Adopting zero-tolerance policies against incivility and promoting workplace civility can mitigate its harmful effects. Interventions fostering trust and respect can reduce depersonalization and its consequences.
- Training programs that enhance interpersonal skills and create psychologically safe environments can diminish the prevalence and impact of incivility.
- Organizations should implement zero-tolerance policies and conduct regular training programs to promote civility and accountability among supervisors.
- Psychological safety should be prioritized by encouraging open communication and addressing concerns regarding uncivil behaviors.
- Resources such as counseling and mentoring programs should be provided to help employees cope with depersonalization and restore trust in their supervisors and organizations.
- Organizations should focus on fostering employees' self-evaluation through developmental opportunities that enhance self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience.

5.3.2 Theoretical Implications

The findings extend COR theory by illustrating how resource depletion (via incivility) manifests in both active and passive employee behaviors.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature by:

- Extending COR theory to examine how resource depletion manifests as defensive silence and discretionary work efforts.
- Identifying depersonalization as a critical mediator in the relationship between incivility and passive employee behaviors.

5.4 Study Limitations and Future Directions

While this study contributes valuable insights, it is not without limitations: The cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality. Data collected within a single cultural context (Pakistan) may reduce the generalizability of findings. The research was conducted within Pakistan's organizational framework, which may limit generalizability. Future studies should explore cross-cultural validations. Additional mediators (e.g., organizational support) and outcomes (e.g., job performance) warrant investigation to further unpack the impact of incivility. Longitudinal studies could examine the enduring effects of incivility and resource depletion over time. Future research might compare the effects of incivility originating from peers or clients against supervisor-induced incivility.Future research could examine the effects of incivility across diverse cultural and organizational contexts. Second, explore longitudinal data to establish causal relationships between incivility, depersonalization, and behavioral outcomes. Last, investigate additional moderating and mediating factors, such as emotional intelligence and organizational justice.

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