

# The effect of workplace incivility on service employee creativity: the mediating role of emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to examine how workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) affects service employees' creativity, specifically the way emotional exhaustion at work decreases their intrinsic motivation, and, in turn, damages service employees' creativity. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to show the mechanism by which both coworker and customer incivility at work affects service employee creativity.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Service employees from a hotel in South Korea were surveyed using a self-administered instrument for data collection. Out of 450 questionnaires, a total of 281 usable questionnaires were obtained after list-wise deletion, for a 62.4 per cent response rate. Structural equation modeling analysis provided support for the hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results indicate a serial multiple mediator model in which both coworker and customer incivility increase service employees' emotional exhaustion, which, in turn, reduces their intrinsic motivation at work and ultimately decreases their creativity. That is, the findings of this study reveal a negative relationship between workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) and service employees' creativity that is fully and sequentially mediated by the service employees' emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation.

**Research limitations/implications** – The use of cross-sectional self-reports potentially raises concerns about common method bias. Caution is recommended in reaching conclusions concerning the causal relationships between the variables, as the current study did not capture causality variation. For instance, it may be that emotional exhaustion from incivility gradually compounds over time, leading to a greater negative impact on service employees. In contrast, employees may develop strategies to cope with uncivil behavior over time, which attenuates the negative effects on service employees as time passes. A longitudinal design might offer an alternative to overcome this limitation in future research.

**Practical implications** – Considering the findings about the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between workplace incivility and employee outcomes (i.e. intrinsic motivation and creativity), firms should consider establishing systematic institutional practices and policies to prevent employees from feeling emotionally exhausted from workplace incivility. Executive and senior management teams would benefit by instituting strict policies and regulations which nurture desirable behaviors among organizational members that protect victims of workplace incivility.

**Originality/value** – This study is the first to examine the relationship between workplace incivility and creativity. Moreover, the present study attempts to develop an understanding of the underlying mechanism through which both coworker and customer incivility negatively affect service employees' creativity.

**Keywords** Coworker incivility, Customer incivility, Emotional exhaustion, Employee creativity, Intrinsic motivation

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Recent research has shown that workplace incivility such as rude, discourteous or disrespectful behaviors at work may be the most pervasive form of workplace mistreatment (Cortina, 2008). Workplace incivility is defined as a particular form of

low-intensity deviance at work which is distinguished from workplace aggression by its ambiguous intent to harm targets (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Workplace incivility (e.g. coworker and customer incivility[1]) has detrimental effects on employee and organizational outcomes due to the significant costs it causes to the targeted employees, their coworkers and the organization at large (Cortina and Magley,

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2009; Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Lim *et al.*, 2008; Sakurai and Jex, 2012; Sliter *et al.*, 2012). This is particularly true in the case of service employees, where coworker and customer incivility often produces deleterious work reactions (e.g. retaliatory behaviors, stress and emotional exhaustion, lack of creativity and intention to leave) which may lead to an immediate reduction in task performance (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Grandey *et al.*, 2004; Sliter *et al.*, 2012).

Previous research has demonstrated the negative effects of coworker incivility on the psychological well-being and stress levels of targeted service employees, on workplace satisfaction (Cortina *et al.*, 2001) and on turnover intentions and physical health (Lim *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, customer incivility has been shown to exacerbate emotional exhaustion among service employees (Dormann and Zapf, 2004), which, in turn, adversely affects service employee and organizational outcomes through elevated stress and decreased job satisfaction (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998), increased incidents of withdrawal behavior (Deery *et al.*, 2002), general declines in mental health and the deterioration of customer service quality (Sliter *et al.*, 2010). However, the majority of the existing research has tended to focus solely on the negative impact of either coworker or customer incivility on employee and organizational outcomes (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Cortina and Magley, 2009; Grandey *et al.*, 2004). In doing so, previous research has largely overlooked the simultaneous effects of coworker incivility and customer incivility, the notable exception being the work of Sliter *et al.* (2012) which examines the interaction effects of the two sources of incivility on employee outcomes. However, while acknowledging the findings of Sliter *et al.* (2012) that coworker and customer incivility interact to predict decreased sales performance and increased absenteeism, the present study is the first attempt to delineate a theoretical model of how coworker incivility and customer incivility jointly influence service employee outcomes at the same time. Furthermore, this study explores the mediating mechanisms through which workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) influences employee outcomes (i.e. service employee creativity) in terms of two sequential mediators (i.e. emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation).

Of the various employee and organizational outcomes, creativity, which may be defined as the production of new and useful ideas about products, services and procedures (Amabile, 1988), has recently received particular interest from scholars and practitioners in the context of an increasingly dynamic knowledge-based workplace that can be uncertain and unpredictable (Grant and Berry, 2011). In particular, employee creativity in service-oriented organizations has become more important than ever due to intensified competition among service-oriented organizations for developing their internal capabilities for change and innovation (Barley and Kunda, 2001). In situations where service employees are required to handle a variety of customer demands and requests at work, they need to exhibit creativity in the course of carrying out their daily routines, corresponding to “little-c” (everyday) creativity rather than “Big-C” (eminent) creativity (Coelho and Augusto, 2010; Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009). Because service employees should provide novel and useful ideas to meet current

customer needs, their creative insights and solutions have the potential to significantly impact customer satisfaction (Coelho *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, the current study pays particular attention to creativity as a dependent variable in the context of frontline service work.

Employee creativity can be affected by individual factors (i.e. creative personality and growth need strength) and contextual factors (i.e. job characteristics and relationships at work) (Coelho and Augusto, 2010; Coelho *et al.*, 2011; Shalley *et al.*, 2009). Although a large number of studies have found antecedents for developing employee creativity, an exploration of factors relating to the service context which tend to undermine the creative behaviors of service employees is largely missing from these studies. According to Amabile's (1988) componential model of creativity, the work environment can significantly erode the development of creativity among employees. For instance, a number of factors in the work environment have the potential to undermine creativity in the workplace, including the organizational practice of strongly criticizing new ideas, political problems within the organization, an excessive emphasis on the status quo, conservative, risk-averse attitudes among senior management and abusive supervision (Amabile, 1996; Zhang *et al.*, 2014). The present study contends that workplace incivility represents another source of obstruction in the work environment that blocks the promotion of creativity, as it involves emotional exhaustion which undermines intrinsic motivation, an important driver of creativity (Grant and Berry, 2011; Elsbach and Hargadon, 2006).

Exploring how work incivility diminishes employee creativity is thus an important area of research. Accordingly, this paper sets out to empirically examine how workplace incivility influences service employee creativity. Beyond examining the direct effect between workplace incivility and service employee creativity, the objective here is to develop an understanding of the underlying mechanism through which workplace incivility negatively affects the creativity of service employees. Amabile's (1988) componential model of creativity suggests that intrinsic motivation plays a significant mediating role between the work context and creativity, as it can facilitate creativity by motivating employees to challenge the status quo, make greater contributions toward innovative goals and develop novel and useful ideas. By extension, it is expected that intrinsic motivation will act as an important mediator in the impact of workplace incivility on creativity.

Although intrinsic motivation has been theoretically considered as a mediating mechanism for linking work contexts and creativity (Amabile, 1988), prior studies have produced inconsistent results about its precise mediating role (Shalley *et al.*, 2004). Shalley *et al.* (2004) suggested that the possible reason for these inconsistent findings might be partially due to the existence of other potential mediators. Accordingly, emotional exhaustion is recognized here as another mediating variable which precedes intrinsic motivation, as workplace incivility generally generates emotional exhaustion which directly affects intrinsic motivation (Halbesleben and Bowler, 2007). That is, it is suggested that both emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation may together form a missing link between workplace incivility and service employees' creativity.

In sum, the main contribution of the present study is to offer an empirical framework of how workplace incivility influences service employees' creativity by incorporating mediating mechanisms into a single model that explains how workplace incivility undermines creativity.

## Literature review and hypotheses

### Effects of workplace incivility

The workplace mistreatment literature has provided various constructs of workplace deviance which are similar to workplace incivility, such as bullying (Rayner, 1997), social undermining (Duffy *et al.*, 2002), workplace aggression (Neuman and Baron, 1998) and interpersonal conflict (Spector and Jex, 1998). However, incivility is a particular form of workplace deviance (Andersson and Pearson, 1999) which is distinguishable from these constructs (Hershcovis, 2011) due to its unique characteristic of not having any clear intent to physically or psychologically harm others. Compared with other forms of mistreatment which include clear intentional behaviors (Andersson and Pearson, 1999), workplace incivility may arise through thoughtlessness or a limited appreciation of the unintended impact of some behavior in a particular situation (Hershcovis, 2011; Sliter *et al.*, 2012). Workplace incivility involves the types of workplace mistreatment (Andersson and Pearson, 1999) and daily hassles (Cortina *et al.*, 2001) which are frequently caused by coworkers and customers (Sliter *et al.*, 2012), such as condescension, demeaning or derogatory remarks, showing little interest in an employee's opinion and ignoring a coworker.

Coworker incivility takes place during employee-to-employee interactions between a perpetrator (the person being uncivil) and a target (the person perceiving the incivility), whereas customer incivility is perpetrated by customers with an ambiguous intent to harm an employee. Both types of incivility undermine an employee's outcomes at work (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Cortina and Magley, 2009; Grandey *et al.*, 2004). Coworker incivility decreases the targeted individual's work satisfaction (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Lim and Cortina, 2005; Lim *et al.*, 2008) and increases job stress (Lim and Cortina, 2005), turnover intentions (Lim *et al.*, 2008) and job insecurity (Cortina and Magley, 2009). Coworker incivility also reduces the helping behaviors among coworkers, which results in decreased work performance (Porath and Erez, 2007). Employees who experience incivility do not concentrate on their work, as they are afraid about incivility incidents and attempt to avoid the instigator (Porath and Pearson, 2010), which results in poor job performance. Furthermore, coworker incivility has spillover effects on third parties who observe the uncivil behaviors of their coworkers, ultimately leading to decreased performance on both routine and creative tasks (Porath and Erez, 2009).

Similarly, customer incivility is strongly associated with service employees' emotional exhaustion, a dimension of burnout in which feelings of fatigue increase as emotional resources become depleted (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). In fact, the implications of customer incivility stretch beyond the direct emotional exhaustion of service employees, having a considerable ripple effect on service employee outcomes. Increased emotional exhaustion generally produces a negative

impact on employee and organizational outcomes such as work stress and low job satisfaction (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998), withdrawal behaviors (Deery *et al.*, 2002) and general declines in mental health (Ramirez *et al.*, 1995). Customer incivility not only causes psychological distress to service employees (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Sliter *et al.*, 2010) but also harms their work outcomes (i.e. customer service performance) (Sliter *et al.*, 2010). Some research suggests that customer incivility is more detrimental to an employee's outcomes at work than coworker incivility (Totterdell and Holman, 2003). In sum, prior research studies have shown that both coworker and customer incivility negatively affect employee and organizational outcomes.

### Workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion

The most frequently discovered negative impact of workplace incivility on employee outcomes in the literature is emotional exhaustion, defined as feelings of emotional helplessness and the depletion of an individual's emotional resources (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). In particular, the tolerance service employees have for their coworkers and customers has been found to be strongly linked to their levels of emotional exhaustion (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Coworker incivility becomes a major source of social stress by depleting a targeted employee's emotional energy and cognitive resources (Kern and Grandey, 2009; Laschinger *et al.*, 2009). When coworkers violate work norms such as respecting and helping other employees, and instead commit uncivil behaviors toward those employees by acting rudely and discourteously, the effect is to drain rather than facilitate and provide the emotional resources of their coworkers (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Coworker incivility includes deviant behaviors with ambiguous intent to harm the target, such as neglecting to say "please" or "thank you", ignoring others or raising one's voice (Pearson *et al.*, 2001), which are linked to negative outcomes such as increased emotional exhaustion (Laschinger *et al.*, 2009; Sliter *et al.*, 2011) and decreased psychological well-being (Lim and Cortina, 2005).

Similar to coworker incivility, customer incivility attenuates employees' emotional resources and subsequently leads to emotional exhaustion (Sliter *et al.*, 2011, 2012). Grandey *et al.* (2004) found that employees who often deal with uncivil customers experience emotional exhaustion due to the higher work stress they encounter. Kern and Grandey (2009) and Sliter *et al.* (2011) suggested that repeated occurrences of customer incivility increase work stress, thereby increasing emotional exhaustion. Research has shown that customer incivility produces emotional exhaustion, which then results in negative employee and organizational outcomes (Ferguson, 2012; Sliter *et al.*, 2010). The following hypotheses result from the preceding discussion:

- H1. Coworker incivility is positively related to emotional exhaustion.
- H2. Customer incivility is positively related to emotional exhaustion.

### Emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation

The link between emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation can be explained in terms of the conservation of

resources (COR) theory of burnout that suggests individuals try to obtain, maintain and protect valued resources (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989). Hobfoll (2001, p. 339) defines resources as:

[...] objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued in their own right, or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources.

Specifically, emotional exhaustion significantly depletes employees' emotional resources (Hobfoll, 2001), which makes employees more careful in the way they use their remaining resources (Siegal and McDonald, 2004).

Based upon the COR model (Hobfoll, 1989), loss of resources or inadequate return on those resources which have been invested may lead employees to become stressed. This stress often develops feelings of emotional exhaustion among employees, which subsequently encourages them to look for ways of avoiding these stressors to conserve resources (Hobfoll, 1988). The best way for employees to protect their resources is to have a lower intrinsic motivation for their work or organization (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). Because intrinsic motivation refers to the willingness or desire to increase effort due to the enjoyment of the work (Amabile, 1996), emotionally exhausted employees are less likely to increase their intrinsic motivation by putting more effort into their work to protect their resources. In a similar vein, it is suggested here that employees emotionally exhausted through workplace incivility may reduce their intrinsic motivation to work to protect further depletion of their emotional resources. The preceding discussion prompts the following hypothesis:

*H3.* Emotional exhaustion is negatively related to intrinsic motivation.

### Intrinsic motivation and employee creativity

The majority of the existing research has found that intrinsic motivation is an important variable that stimulates creativity (Elsbach and Hargadon, 2006). Intrinsically motivated employees put in greater effort, as they have a high level of interest, strong curiosity and a desire to learn (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation generates positive affection, cognitive flexibility, openness to risk-taking and persistence, leading to the development of creativity (Shalley *et al.*, 2004). Scholars have identified three possible reasons why intrinsic motivation develops creativity. First, emotion theorists have suggested that intrinsic motivation creates positive affect (Silvia, 2008), which prompts creativity by expanding the volume of cognitive information available, extending the range of attention available for assimilating various ideas and promoting cognitive flexibility for defining patterns and relations between ideas (Amabile, 1988). Second, self-determination theorists have argued that intrinsically motivated employees are more likely to have a higher level of curiosity and a greater interest in learning, allowing them to develop cognitive flexibility, a willingness to take risks and openness to complexity, which ultimately leads to increases in creativity (Amabile, 1996). Finally, both emotion and self-determination theorists agree that persistence plays an essential role in intrinsic motivation, promoting creativity. From the perspective of emotion theorists, intrinsic motivation enhances positive affection which, in turn, develops sustained emotional engagement and a greater time

commitment to work (Fredrickson, 1998). From the perspective of self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation encourages confidence and interest, which allows employees to persist with challenging, complicated and novel tasks (Gagne' and Deci, 2005), and provides them with greater concentration for those tasks (Amabile, 1996). The preceding discussion informs the following hypothesis:

*H4.* Intrinsic motivation is positively related to employee creativity.

### Serial multiple mediators effect of emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation

Most of the existing research supports the notion that intrinsic motivation functions as an important underlying mechanism linking work contexts and creativity (Amabile, 1988; Shalley *et al.*, 2004). Amabile's (1996) componential model of creativity suggested that a negative work context (i.e. abusive supervision and workplace mistreatment) may decrease intrinsic motivation, which in turn undermines creativity. For current purposes, workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) is considered another important negative contextual factor that potentially influences intrinsic motivation and creativity.

As mentioned earlier, there are inconsistent findings in the literature pertaining to the role of intrinsic motivation as a mediator on the relationship between work context and creativity (Amabile, 1988; Shalley *et al.*, 2004). For example, intrinsic motivation has been found to be a full mediator between work environments (e.g. empowering leadership, supportive coworkers and task conflict) and employee creativity (Hon, 2012), whereas it has been found to only partially mediate the relationship between work context (e.g. transformational leadership) and creativity (Shin and Zhou, 2003). Additionally, Shalley and Perry-Smith (2001) found no mediating role for intrinsic motivation between expected evaluation and creativity. Shalley *et al.* (2004) argued that these mixed results can be partially explained by the existence of other potential mediators. Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, emotional exhaustion has been added as another important mediator prior to intrinsic motivation in the theoretical model of work context (coworker and customer) incivility and creativity, it being the most frequently cited negative impact of customer incivility in the literature (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation are therefore considered possible serial-mediating variables between workplace incivility (coworker and customer incivility) and the creativity of service employees. The logic of the current study flows from the serial-mediation effects of emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation on the relationship between workplace incivility and creativity suggested by affective events theory (AET) (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). AET suggests that emotions experienced in the workplace predominantly take the form of emotional responses to incidents at work, which, in turn, influence the motivation, performance, job commitment and long-term job satisfaction of the employees who experience them. In other words, events experienced at work (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) influence employees' subjective emotional reactions, which

then determine their work attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

In line with AET, experiencing incivility from coworkers and customers (work events) may increase the emotional exhaustion of employees, which subsequently undermines their intrinsic motivation and creative behaviors. It is impossible to define the relationship between workplace incivility and the behaviors of employees without considering the process of their emotional involvement in response to uncivil behaviors at work, as employees are required to manage their emotions to display an organizationally desired emotional expression to their colleagues and customers (Sliter *et al.*, 2010). Thus, it is expected that employees who experience workplace incivility may develop feelings of emotional exhaustion (Grandey, 2003) as a consequence of emotional reactions generated by uncivil behaviors from coworkers and customers. This, in turn, results in decreasing intrinsic motivation, which is closely related to employees' creativity.

Along with AET, the serial multiple mediator model in the present study can be explained by Bagozzi's (1992) Reformulation of Attitude Theory, whereby employee appraisal of the work environment leads to affective outcomes which ultimately impact behavior. According to Bagozzi (1992), employees appraise a variety of past, present and future outcomes, which generate particular emotional responses and subsequently result in behaviors at work. Specifically, it is proposed here that both coworker and customer incivility generate affective responses to service employees' emotional exhaustion and then undermine their intrinsic motivation, which, in turn, directly influence their creative behaviors. Drawing upon AET and Bagozzi's (1992) Reformulation of Attitude Theory, the current study proposes that emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation act as serial-mediators between workplace incivility (coworker and customer incivility) and service employees' creativity rather than coworker and customer incivility directly influencing service employees' creativity. Accordingly, the following are hypothesized:

- H5. The negative relationship between coworker incivility and employee creativity is sequentially serial-mediated by emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation;
- H6. The negative relationship between customer incivility and employee creativity is sequentially serial-mediated by emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation.

## Research method

### Data collection and participant characteristics

Frontline hotel employees from three upscale luxury hotels in South Korea were surveyed using a self-administered instrument for data collection. To ensure confidentiality, the respondents were instructed to seal the completed questionnaires in pre-addressed envelopes and return them directly to the researchers by mail. In total, 281 questionnaires were returned (response rate = 62.4 per cent), and a preliminary analysis of which revealed that 66.9 per cent of the subjects were female and the average age was 29.30 (SD = 5.58) years across an age range from 21 to 47 years. A majority

of the participants (nearly 47.3 per cent) had at least a college education, just over 45.6 per cent had a university education, 6.0 per cent had postgraduate education and only 1.1 per cent had a high school education. On average, the respondents had almost 5.61 (SD = 3.84) years of work experience.

### Measurement scales

As the selected scales were English-based, the English questionnaires were translated into Korean, which were checked again by the researchers following the process recommended by Brislin (1970). Five-point Likert-type scales (1 = "strongly disagree"; 5 = "strongly agree") were used to measure all the constructs.

#### Coworker incivility

Coworker incivility was measured with four items adapted from Sliter *et al.* (2012) which drew on the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale developed by Spector and Jex (1998). Sliter *et al.* (2011) defined interpersonal conflict as an umbrella concept of workplace deviances, ranging from low-intensity deviant behaviors, such as incivility, to higher-intensity deviant behaviors, such as verbal aggression. The four-item scale drawn from the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale was modified to focus on coworker incivility rather than overt interpersonal mistreatment ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). Sample items include, "How often do coworkers ignore or exclude you while at work?" and "How often do coworkers raise their voices at you while at work?" Items were rated along a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (less than once per month or never) to 5 (several times per day).

#### Customer incivility

Customer incivility was measured with seven items adapted from Sliter *et al.* (2012), which were based on Burnfield *et al.* (2004). These questions were used to tap the extent of customer condescension (i.e. customers putting down the efficacy of an employee) and displaced customer frustration (i.e. customers taking out their own frustrations on employees) ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Sample items include, "Customers treat employees as if they are inferior or stupid" and "Customers are condescending to me".

#### Emotional exhaustion

Four items based on Maslach and Jackson (1981) were utilized to measure emotional exhaustion, which is understood here to mean the feeling of being used up ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ). Sample items include, "I feel frustrated with my job" and "I feel used up at the end of the work day".

#### Intrinsic motivation

Four items based on Gagné *et al.* (2010) were used to measure the intrinsic motivation of service employees in the workplace ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ). Sample items include, "Because I enjoy this work very much" and "I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals".

#### Employee creativity

Eight items adapted from Liao and Chuang (2004) were used to assess the creativity of service employees ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Sample items include, "I suggest new ways to increase service quality" and "I come up with creative solutions to problems". Some scholars have used self-report methods for measuring employee creativity (Baer, 2012; Coelho *et al.*, 2011;

Agnihotri *et al.*, 2014), and these were applied to this study for the following reasons. On the one hand, the creative ideas of service employees are provided to customers as a form of intangible service (Berry *et al.*, 2006), meaning that their behaviors are not consistently observed by others. For this reason, supervisors may miss most of the genuinely creative activities undertaken by employees (Janssen, 2000; Van Dyne *et al.*, 2002). On the other hand, compared to their supervisors, employees are aware of the subtle distinction that creative decisions make to their tasks in the course of their work (Janssen, 2000).

#### Control variables

In testing the hypotheses, age (in years), gender and job tenure as frontline hotel employees (in years) were controlled for because these variables were found to affect the level of employee creativity in previous research regarding creativity (Amabile, 1988; Scott and Bruce, 1994; Tierney and Farmer, 2002).

## Results

### Reliability, validity and common method bias testing

The resulting measurement scales were subjected to a commonly used validation process to assess their reliability and validity. First, the reliability of the constructs was

evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Table I). The reliability coefficients for the variables ranged from 0.87 to 0.92, which is considered satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). Next, confirmatory factor analysis was used to verify the convergent and discriminant validity of the measures, using M-plus 7.1.1 software.  $\chi^2_{(314)} = 625.98$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; RMSEA equaled 0.06, SRMR equaled 0.06, CFI equaled 0.92 and TLI equaled 0.91. Across the measurement models in this study, all factor loadings exceeded 0.68, with  $t$ -values greater than 2.58, providing evidence of convergent validity among our measures. All measures exhibited strong reliability, with composite reliabilities ranging from 0.76 to 0.92 (Table II). Finally, the condition was checked for discriminant validity among the constructs as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). All AVEs were larger than the squared correlation between the construct and any others. Overall, the constructs therefore exhibited sound measurement properties. Table II shows the descriptive statistics, correlations and discriminant validity analysis for all factors, the results revealing that all constructs in this study fulfill discriminant validity.

Most studies agree that common method variance (CMV) has the potential to cause serious bias when doing behavioral research, especially with single-informative surveys (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). Given the possibility of inflated correlations among variables due to the measurement method, CMV was

Table I Scale items and construct evaluation

| Construct                         | Items                                                                                                     | $\lambda^*$ |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Coworker incivility <sup>a</sup>  | How often do coworkers ignore or exclude you while at work?                                               | 0.79        |
|                                   | How often do coworkers raise their voices at you while at work?                                           | 0.79        |
|                                   | How often are coworkers rude to you at work?                                                              | 0.90        |
|                                   | How often do coworkers do demeaning things to you at work?                                                | 0.75        |
| Customer incivility <sup>a</sup>  | Customers treat employees as if they are inferior or stupid                                               | 0.71        |
|                                   | Customers do not trust the information that I give them and ask to speak with someone of higher authority | 0.73        |
|                                   | Customers are condescending to me                                                                         | 0.77        |
|                                   | Customers make comments that question the competence of employees                                         | 0.84        |
|                                   | Customers make comments about my job performance                                                          | 0.81        |
|                                   | Customers make personal verbal attacks against me                                                         | 0.84        |
|                                   | Internal or external customers make unreasonable demands                                                  | 0.86        |
| Emotional exhaustion <sup>b</sup> | Working directly with people puts too much stress on me                                                   | 0.74        |
|                                   | I feel frustrated with my job                                                                             | 0.73        |
|                                   | I feel used up at the end of the work day                                                                 | 0.85        |
|                                   | I feel like I am working too hard on my job                                                               | 0.83        |
| Intrinsic motivation <sup>b</sup> | Because I enjoy this work very much                                                                       | 0.74        |
|                                   | Because I have fun doing my job                                                                           | 0.85        |
|                                   | For the moments of pleasure that this job brings me                                                       | 0.80        |
|                                   | I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals                                              | 0.81        |
| Service creativity <sup>b</sup>   | I suggest new ways to increase service quality                                                            | 0.68        |
|                                   | I am a good source of creative ideas                                                                      | 0.73        |
|                                   | I promote and champion ideas to others                                                                    | 0.72        |
|                                   | I exhibit creativity on the job when given the opportunity to do so                                       | 0.80        |
|                                   | I develop adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas                                | 0.83        |
|                                   | I often have new and innovative ideas                                                                     | 0.75        |
|                                   | I come up with creative solutions to problems                                                             | 0.76        |
|                                   | I suggest new ways of performing work tasks                                                               | 0.74        |

Notes: \*All factor loadings are significant ( $p < 0.01$ ); <sup>a</sup>items measured on a scale 1: never; 2: rarely; 3: sometimes; 4: quite often; and 5: very often; <sup>b</sup>items measured on a scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"; goodness-of-fit:  $\chi^2_{314} = 625.98$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.06; SRMR = 0.06

Table II Mean, standard deviations and correlations among variables

|                      | 1              | 2              | 3              | 4             | 5    |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------|
| Coworker incivility  | 0.63           |                |                |               |      |
| Customer incivility  | 0.33** (0.11)  | 0.66           |                |               |      |
| Emotional exhaustion | 0.37** (0.14)  | 0.34** (0.12)  | 0.62           |               |      |
| Intrinsic motivation | −0.23** (0.05) | −0.20** (0.04) | −0.36** (0.13) | 0.64          |      |
| Service creativity   | −0.06 (0.00)   | −0.01 (0.00)   | −0.25** (0.06) | 0.49** (0.24) | 0.57 |
| Mean                 | 2.72           | 2.44           | 2.44           | 3.48          | 3.31 |
| SD                   | 0.82           | 0.85           | 0.87           | 0.73          | 0.64 |
| $\alpha$             | 0.91           | 0.92           | 0.87           | 0.89          | 0.91 |
| CR                   | 0.89           | 0.92           | 0.87           | 0.88          | 0.92 |

Notes: Numbers along the diagonal are the AVE (average variance extracted); CR = composite reliability; numbers in parentheses are the squared correlation

tested to establish whether it was a significant threat to the validity of the inferences made in this study. First, a confirmatory factor-analytic approach to Herman's one-factor analysis was conducted. All measures of the goodness-of-fit indicated a worse fit for the one-factor model than for the original measurement model ( $\chi^2_{(324)} = 3,059.96$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , CFI = 0.33, TLI = 0.27, RMSEA = 0.17, SRMR = 0.22) and was indeed significantly worse than the five-factor solution ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(10)} = 2,433.98$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Second, the ex post procedure recommended by Podsakoff *et al.* (2012) was used, in which an additional common method factor is introduced to the measurement model. This factor did not account for any substantial variance in the indicator variables (1 per cent). In line with the empirical findings of Podsakoff *et al.* (2012), it was found that an average of 18–32 per cent of the variance in a typical measure was attributable to method variance, confirming that method bias was not serious. Finally, only 11.1 per cent of the standardized factor loadings were above 0.50 for the common method factor. Furthermore, only 48.1 per cent of the factor loadings of the manifest variables on the latent common method factor were significant at the 5 per cent level, not satisfying the convergent validity criteria. In addition, convergent validity and construct reliability of the common methods factor were not supported (CR = 0.27, AVE = 0.09). In sum, these statistical procedures provided the evidence that a single method-driven factor does not represent the data, meaning that the data are not affected by common method bias.

### Hypothesis testing

In the structural model analysis, all the path coefficients were estimated. In the analytical model, a three-path-mediated effect (Macho and Ledermann, 2011; Taylor *et al.*, 2008; Lau and Cheung, 2012) was tested for. This approach allowed investigation of the indirect effect passing through both of these mediators in a series (H5 and H6). Figure 1 illustrates these models. The results of the entire model test show the direct path coefficients of the relationship between workplace incivility (i.e. customer and coworker incivility), emotional exhaustion, intrinsic motivation and service creativity (Figure 1). The hypothesized model offers an acceptable fit to data ( $\chi^2_{(358)} = 709.78$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.06). Overall, the hypothesized structural model does a good job of explaining variance ( $R^2_{(\text{emotional exhaustion})} = 12.6$  per cent,  $R^2_{(\text{intrinsic motivation})} =$

14.9 per cent and  $R^2_{(\text{employee creativity})} = 32.1$  per cent). H1 stated that coworker incivility is positively related to emotional exhaustion, and this was supported ( $b = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, customer incivility was found to be a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion ( $b = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting H2. In addition, emotional exhaustion was shown to be negatively related to intrinsic motivation, supporting H3 ( $b = -0.26$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation was seen to be positively related to employee creativity, supporting H4 ( $b = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Next, to test the mediation hypotheses, a three-path-mediated model (Macho and Ledermann, 2011; Taylor *et al.*, 2008; Lau and Cheung, 2012) was tested for. The advantage of this approach is that it was possible to isolate the indirect effect of both of the mediators, emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation. This approach also facilitated investigation of the indirect effect passing through both of these mediators in a series. Table III provides estimates of the indirect effects, along with the symmetric and 95 per cent bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals for the path estimates ( $N = 5,000$ , Shrout and Bolger, 2002; Hayes, 2013). Confirmation was found for H5, which stated that emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation sequentially mediates the relationship between coworker incivility and employee creativity ( $b = -0.020$ , 95 per cent CI [−0.054, −0.003]). Furthermore, emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation sequentially was found to mediate the relationship between customer incivility and employee creativity ( $b = -0.031$ , 95 per cent CI [−0.072, −0.011]), supporting H6.

Figure 1 Research model of workplace incivility to employee creativity

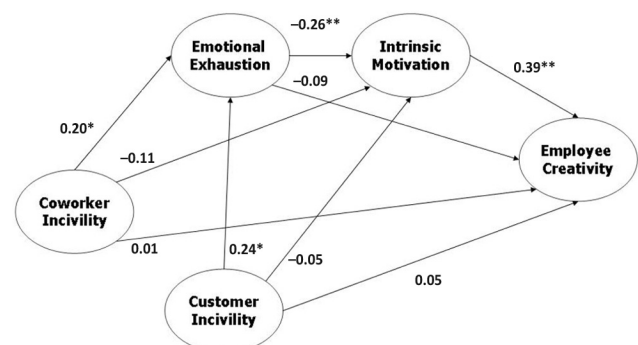


Table III Path coefficients and indirect effects for mediation models

| From → To         | Path coefficient |         |        | Estimate | Indirect effects  |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                   | EE               | IM      | EC     |          | CI <sub>low</sub> | CI <sub>high</sub> |
| EI                | 0.20*            | −0.11   | 0.01   |          |                   |                    |
| CI                | 0.24*            | −0.05   | 0.05   |          |                   |                    |
| EE                |                  | −0.26** | −0.09  |          |                   |                    |
| IM                |                  |         | 0.39** |          |                   |                    |
| Indirect effect   |                  |         |        |          |                   |                    |
| EI → EE → EC      |                  |         |        | −0.019   | −0.063            | 0.000              |
| EI → IM → EC      |                  |         |        | −0.047   | −0.120            | 0.010              |
| EI → EE → IM → EC |                  |         |        | −0.020   | −0.054            | −0.003             |
| CI → EE → EC      |                  |         |        | −0.030   | −0.077            | −0.003             |
| CI → IM → EC      |                  |         |        | −0.018   | −0.081            | 0.039              |
| CI → EE → IM → EC |                  |         |        | −0.031   | −0.072            | −0.001             |

Notes: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; EI = coworker incivility; CI = customer incivility; EE = emotional exhaustion; IM = intrinsic motivation; EC = employee creativity

These results indicate that uncivil communication by coworkers and customers is associated with higher emotional exhaustion and lower intrinsic motivation, which relates to lower employee creativity levels. In sum, it was confirmed that the negative relationship between coworker incivility and employee creativity and between customer incivility and employee creativity was fully and sequentially mediated by emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation.

#### Post hoc analysis of interaction effect

The current study extended Sliter *et al.*'s (2012) existing research by establishing a mediating mechanism incorporating emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation in the effects of both coworker and customer incivility on employee outcomes. Although the interaction effects of both incivilities on employee outcomes were not included as a hypothesis, post hoc analysis of an interactive effect of both sources of incivility on emotional exhaustion was conducted to compare Sliter *et al.*'s (2012) findings that coworker and customer incivility interact to predict reduced performance and increased withdrawal. The significance of the interaction effect of the two types of workplace incivility on emotional exhaustion was tested using the "interaction algorithm function" of M-plus (Muthén and Muthén, 2008). This function utilizes the quasi-maximum likelihood approach in computing interaction

between latent variables (Klein and Muthén, 2007). Such an approach has recently been favorably compared to other methods for estimating latent variables' interactions (Marsh *et al.*, 2004). Table IV shows that the interaction effect of coworker and customer incivility on emotional exhaustion was not statistically significant ( $b = 0.05$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

#### Conclusion

An increasing amount of research has shown that interpersonal interactions in service jobs can generate uncivil behaviors from both coworkers and customers, which can result in negative impacts for employee and organizational outcomes (Cortina and Magley, 2009; Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Lim *et al.*, 2008; Sakurai and Jex, 2012; Sliter *et al.*, 2011, 2012). Prior incivility research, however, has examined the negative effects of uncivil coworker and customer behaviors on employee outcomes separately. Thus, the current study provides a framework for future research by investigating how two types of workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) influence service creativity throughout emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation at the same time. More specifically, this research explores how both coworker and customer incivility influence emotional exhaustion, which decreases intrinsic motivation and in turn diminishes creativity

Table IV Parameter estimates for alternative model

| Path                                                             | <i>b</i> | SE   | <i>t</i> -value   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|-------------------|
| Customer incivility → Emotional exhaustion                       | 0.30     | 0.11 | 2.80**            |
| Coworker incivility → Emotional exhaustion                       | 0.19     | 0.09 | 2.14*             |
| Customer incivility × Coworker incivility → Emotional exhaustion | 0.05     | 0.10 | 0.49              |
| Customer incivility → Intrinsic motivation                       | −0.04    | 0.07 | 0.61              |
| Coworker incivility → Intrinsic motivation                       | −0.11    | 0.07 | 1.54              |
| Emotional exhaustion → Intrinsic motivation                      | −0.26    | 0.09 | 3.07**            |
| Customer incivility → Employee creativity                        | 0.06     | 0.05 | 1.14              |
| Coworker incivility → Employee creativity                        | 0.01     | 0.05 | 0.26              |
| Emotional exhaustion → Employee creativity                       | −0.09    | 0.05 | 1.81 <sup>#</sup> |
| Intrinsic motivation → Employee creativity                       | 0.39     | 0.07 | 5.48**            |

Notes: Tests of path coefficients are two-tailed tests; <sup>#</sup> $p < 0.1$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

in high-contact customer service situations such as those found in hotels.

The results suggest that incivility experienced by service employees from both sources have negative effects on their creativity through emotional exhaustion and reduced intrinsic motivation. That is, the negative relationship between workplace incivility (i.e. coworker and customer incivility) and service employee creativity is fully and sequentially mediated by emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation.

Interestingly, the post hoc analysis showed that the interaction effect of customer incivility and coworker incivility on emotional exhaustion was not significant. These findings were inconsistent with those of *Sliter et al. (2012)* which revealed an interaction effect for coworker and customer incivility on absenteeism and sales performance. The results of the present study indicate that coworker and customer incivility do not interact to predict emotional exhaustion. The reason for the absence of interactive effects of multiple sources of incivility may lie with the issue of job control, which has frequently been studied in the workplace (*Landsbergis, 1988; Van der Doef and Maes, 1999*). In the current research model, the emotional exhaustion experienced by service employees tends to be a product of their job demands and the level of control that they have over their jobs. Service employees have differing amounts of job control over their coworkers and customers (*Sliter et al., 2011*). For example, service employees have few options with regard to the numbers and types of customer they must serve, but they have somewhat more freedom to choose which coworkers they interact with (*Sliter et al., 2011*). In other words, service employees have relatively fewer choices about how to react to and protect themselves from customer incivility as compared to those available to respond to coworker incivility. Thus, service employees who suffer at the hands of uncivil customers are likely to try to avoid interactions with uncivil coworkers to prevent further depletion of their emotional resources. This variance in the level of job control over coworkers and customers might be one reason why there are no interaction effects for coworker and customer incivility on emotional exhaustion.

### Theoretical implications

The results from this research contribute to the existing workplace incivility literature in several ways. First, the current study broadens the conceptual work and empirical studies in the incivility literature by investigating a model centered on emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation which seeks to explain the impact of customer and coworker incivility on service employee creativity. Although there may be other mechanisms by which both coworker and customer incivility negatively affect service employees' creativity (*Amabile, 1996*), the aim of the present study was to provide a mechanism for how both coworker and customer incivility negatively affect service employees' creativity in terms of emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation. In the research model, perceived coworker and customer incivility provide a considerable impetus to increase emotional exhaustion and thereby undermine intrinsic motivation, ultimately damaging the creativity of service employees. The current study is founded on *Amabile's (1988)* componential model of creativity which considers intrinsic motivation as a significant

mediator between work context and creativity. However, the present study extends this model by involving emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation in a sequential manner so that the sequential emotional processes which transform both coworker and customer incivility into lowered creativity among service employees can be better understood.

Second, most of the studies in the incivility literature have concentrated on the impact of uncivil coworker and customer behaviors on employees' psychological well-being, such as stressful feelings (*Penney and Spector, 2005*) and burnout (*Von Dierendonck and Mevisen, 2002*). However, previous research has not paid attention to the cognitive effects (i.e. creativity) among employees which result from workplace incivility. The current study may represent a first attempt to empirically investigate the relationship between workplace incivility and employee creativity. Thus, this study will shed light on future research that concentrates on the outcomes of coworker and customer incivility.

Finally, utilizing COR theory (*Hobfoll, 1989*), the present study provides a theoretical explanation of how both coworker and customer incivility cause emotional exhaustion, which eventually undermines service employees' intrinsic motivation. This study suggests that the more workplace incivility service employees have to deal with, the more likely it is that they will reduce their intrinsic motivation to work to protect further depletion of their emotional resources. Thus, the ideas of COR theory have been extended by suggesting that workplace incivility leads to the depletion and exhaustion of emotional resources, which results in service employees' lowering their intrinsic motivation to protect the further depletion of their resources (*Sliter et al., 2012*). This study also utilized AET (*Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996*) to advance understanding of the serial-mediation effects of emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation on the relationships between workplace incivility and creativity. According to AET, coworker and customer incivility (work events) cause emotional exhaustion among employees, which, in turn, lowers their intrinsic motivation and creative behaviors. By combining the rationales of AET and COR theory, the current study suggests that emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation of service employees act as feasible serial multiple variables between workplace incivility and their creativity.

### Practical implications

Workplace incivility is known to be a common phenomenon in service organizations (*Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Sliter et al., 2012*). However, workplace incivility is complicated and difficult to notice and manage at work, as it is a low intensity form of interpersonal mistreatment, and targeted employees do not always make a formal response or complaint (*Sliter et al., 2012*). Nevertheless, service organizations should seek to recognize and reduce incivility to mitigate its negative impacts.

First, the results of this study show that service creativity can be reduced through negatively affective events (i.e. incivility from coworkers and customers) that influence intrinsic motivation. Thus, service organizations should pay increased attention to mitigate possible instances of incivility. Although the members of an organization and their supervisors may make efforts to prevent workplace incivility at

the individual level, all of their efforts to mitigate workplace incivility might be ineffective without the installation of an adequate preventative system at the institutional level. Thus, service organizations should consider the problem and seriousness of workplace incivility at the organizational level.

Second, this study found that workplace incivility does not directly influence employee creativity. However, emotional exhaustion has been shown to link workplace incivility and employee creativity. Considering the findings here relating to the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between workplace incivility and employee outcomes (i.e. intrinsic motivation and creativity), firms should consider establishing systematic institutional practices and policies to prevent employees from feeling emotionally exhausted as a result of workplace incivility (Ferguson, 2012; Sliter *et al.*, 2012; Hur *et al.*, 2015). For instance, firms might install training and development programs to help victims of workplace incivility such as counseling and stress management training (Ferguson, 2012). Firms can also provide their own fitness centers, human resource hotlines or conflict mediators to raise stress tolerance among their employees (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Executive and senior management teams also have the option of introducing strict policies and regulations aimed at nurturing desirable behaviors among organizational members to protect victims of workplace incivility. Beyond these policies and rules, they would be wise to proactively develop a corporate culture which encourages compassionate acts and guards against uncivil behaviors in the workplace.

Third, the results of this study show that both coworker and customer incivility are a relevant source of emotional exhaustion. Although service organizations have less control over the uncivil behaviors of their customers (Sliter *et al.*, 2012), they still have several options available to protect their sincere employees from customer incivility. For example, service organizations are responsible for providing their staff with proper training to reduce the likelihood of customer incivility, as well-trained and knowledgeable employees are more likely to meet customer needs and conduct customer-oriented behaviors (Sliter *et al.*, 2012). Beyond this, service organizations can provide employees who have been subjected to customer incivility with a short break to attenuate the negative effects of the customer behaviors they have been subjected to (Hur *et al.*, 2015). A short break at the employees' discretion would allow frontline workers to reduce their stress and emotional exhaustion before resuming work (Sliter *et al.*, 2012).

Finally, the findings of this study underline the significant influence of coworker incivility on employees' psychological well-being, namely, through emotional exhaustion. Therefore, service organizations should identify the prevalent types and patterns of uncivil behavior in the workplace and consider how their members feel and react to coworker incivility (Hur *et al.*, 2015). By identifying the characteristics of coworker incivility, employees would better understand the harmful impacts of uncivil behaviors on others in the workplace, and learn the appropriate manners and etiquette to be used at work. Managers, in particular, should be made responsible for carefully monitoring instances of coworker incivility, as it is they who are in the best position to identify the problem and improve the situation. Sakurai and Jex (2012) found that the

contributions made by employees to their firms dramatically increase when managers provide the appropriate support to those subordinates who experience workplace incivility. Because coworkers have the potential to affect their fellow employees in every way, managers should develop a detailed understanding about how and why coworker incivility occurs through interactions among members (Hershcovis and Barling, 2010; Simha and Cullen, 2012).

### Limitations and future research

Although this study has several important theoretical and practical implications, it is important to also mention its limitations. First, the use of cross-sectional self-reports potentially raises concerns about the common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). Caution is recommended in reaching conclusions concerning the causal relationships between the variables, as the current study did not capture causality variation. For instance, it may be that emotional exhaustion from incivility gradually compounds over time, leading to a greater negative impact on service employees (Sliter *et al.*, 2010). In contrast, employees may develop strategies to cope with uncivil behavior over time, which attenuates the negative effects on service employees with the passage of time. Therefore, a longitudinal design could be considered as an alternative to overcome this limitation in future research. Second, future research should elaborate on the causality between workplace incivility experience and perpetration via emotional exhaustion. Recently, Gallus *et al.* (2014) found that experienced coworker incivility has an influence on incivility perpetration. Future studies should consider emotional exhaustion to find out the mechanism between incivility experience and perpetration. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion was affected by several factors (e.g. role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and negative affectivity). To elaborate the causality on the relationship between workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion, the antecedents of emotional exhaustion might be used as control variables. Third, this study identified emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation as a mechanism by which workplace incivility acts on employee creativity. However, the moderators that mitigated the relationship between customer and coworker incivility on emotional exhaustion were not considered. Future studies might usefully include moderators such as personal resources (e.g. emotional intelligence, core self evaluation and self-efficacy) and organizational resources (e.g. supervisor or organizational support) that buffer these negative effects (Sakurai and Jex, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2014). These variables are important personal-level variables related to emotional exhaustion and organizational outcomes, and these moderators could improve the present research model in a more robust way (Hur *et al.*, 2015). Fourth, the sample of frontline hotel employees for this paper was drawn from a specific line of work in a single country (i.e. South Korea), suggesting that the results of this study need to be validated in other countries or industries. Therefore, future studies are recommended to investigate other jobs (e.g. retail sales people, flight attendants, nurses, etc.) to see if coworker and customer incivility have an influence on employee outcomes such as psychological well-being or employee creativity similar to the findings in this research. Fifth, the sample for this study

was predominantly female. In Asian countries such as South Korea, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, similar female-dominant samples have been used in other studies of the hotel industry (Kim *et al.*, 2010: 58.6 per cent; Hai-Yan and Baum, 2006: 64.0 per cent; Chiang and Hsieh, 2012: 67.6 per cent). However, past research has reported a significant gender difference in the frontline service context. For instance, female service employees tend to exhibit more empathy and social competence (Costa *et al.*, 2001; Wellman and Wortley, 1990), and are better at suppressing negative feelings than male employees (Simpson and Stroh, 2004). Given these findings, it is recommended that future research confirm the findings of the current study with a more gender-balanced sample. Sixth, the current study measured coworker incivility by using the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICWS) used by Sliter *et al.* (2012) to capture a wide range of mistreatment behaviors including both overt and subtle workplace conflicts. The ICWS was used here to make a comparison with Sliter *et al.*'s (2012) findings, but future research might usefully use Cortina *et al.*'s (2001) scale that solely measures coworker incivility. A final limitation of this study is that it does not explore ways to reduce work incivility; there is a real need for future research to investigate ways of reducing coworker incivility and defusing customer incivility. One way of reducing coworker incivility is through proper hiring. Employees who are hired for their customer orientation and effective cooperation with coworkers are more likely to understand how to attenuate the impact of work incivility.

## Note

- 1 Coworker and customer incivility are the two major sources of workplace incivility that have been researched to date. Coworker incivility is incivility perpetrated by one's coworkers, while customer incivility is that perpetrated by customers (Sliter *et al.*, 2012).

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