

The Effect of Customer Uncivil Behavior on Counterproductive Work Behavior and Quit Intention of Airlines' Frontline Employees: Emotional Intelligence as a Moderator

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Abstract

The main philosophy of most service-oriented organizations is 'the customer is always right'. Organizational regulations ask employees to delight customer even in cases including customer uncivil behaviors, which in turn pay employees to show negative work outcomes. This research aims to examine the relationships between customer incivility, counterproductive work behavior (CWB) (e.g., verbal and physical abuse, withdrawal behaviors and production deviance) and intention to quit of frontline employees in airline industry. Furthermore, the moderating effect of emotional intelligence (EI) in the previous relationships is also examined. Using a structured questionnaire, a randomly sample of frontline employees working in airlines were invited to participate in this research. A total of 406 questionnaires were analyzed using smart PLS 3.21 for regression-based Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that customer incivility positively affects (CWB) and quitting intention of Egyptian frontline employees in airline industry. Moreover, it was found that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between customer incivility and CWB. In addition, EI was also emerged as a moderator among customer incivility and intention to quit. Implications of the findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Customer incivility, Counterproductive work behavior, Intention to quit, frontline employees, airlines.

1. Introduction

The front-line service business is characterized by a frequent and direct interactions with customers (i.e., face to-face or voice-to voice) (Zhang et al., 2016). Service-oriented companies, including airlines, often train their frontline employees according to the principle of "the customer is always right", and employees should "always provide service with a smile" (Han et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2019). Most retailers and service organizations (banks, airlines, railways, etc.) report a continuous increase in customers' "misbehavior" and "inappropriate" behaviors (Nzengue, 2012). For many service firms, frontline employees are commonly the punching bags of the dissatisfied and angry customers and become targets of customers' impoliteness and uncivil handling (Sliter et al., 2012; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013). Customer incivility is considered one of the most repeatedly workplace hassles that service employees faced everyday (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Zhu et al., 2019). Customer incivility means treating an employee in an uncivil manner (e.g., impoliteness, speaking in an offensive way) (Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010).

Tolerating such these stressful working circumstances could lead to increase psychological and job-specific strain (Wilson & Holmvall, 2013). It causes significant harmful influences on both the service employees and business in general (Sliter et al., 2012). Particularly, prior studies confirmed that experiencing customer incivility lead to CWB in the workplace (i.e. deliberately working slow, verbal and physical abuse, withdrawal behaviors) (i.e. Penney & Spector, 2005; Bibi et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2014; Torres et al., 2017), and further associated with quitting intentions (i.e. Bamfo et al., 2018; Alola et al., 2019). CWB of employees leads to several economic and social damages for the organizations, as well as, it can harm the company and its members (Galperin & Burke, 2006; Raman et al., 2016). The quit intentions have become a critical issue in the airline industry in which human resources are the most important factor (Shehawy et al., 2018). Indeed, high employee quitting intentions increase the cost of employee recruitment and training (Chen & Wang, 2019). According to Waldman et al. (2004), the minimum expense of staff turnover constitutes 5 % of the overall yearly revenue loss.

Several scholars have assumed that emotional intelligence is regarded as a major moderator and protective element against work stress (Lopes et al., 2006; Chen & Wang, 2019; Kim & Qu, 2019). Previous studies also revealed that emotional intelligence has moderating impacts on the attitude and behaviors of employee after negative situations (Jordan et al., 2002; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010). Therefore, it can be anticipated that employees' emotional intelligence might act as a moderator to decrease the effect of customer-related stressors. Consequently, EI is expected to be one of the vital moderating factors influencing the relationship between customer incivility and CWB (or quit intention). Although the interest in workplace incivility, less attention has been devoted to customer incivility and its effects, despite the continuous increase in customer incivility has been reported (Torres et al., 2017). Clearly, the possible harmful impacts of customer incivility on organizational and personal outcomes show a real necessity for additional study this construct (Alola et al., 2019). Furthermore, the moderating impacts of emotional intelligence on the relationship between customer incivility and CWB intention to quit is still lacking and need to be further researched (Chen & Wang, 2019; Kim & Qu, 2019). Working in an airline is stressful. It may induce uncivilized manners which lead to CWB and quit intention. Although customer incivility has been discussed in the last ten years in different industries like retail sales service (Hur et al., 2015; Wilson and Holmvall, 2013), insurance (Walker et al., 2014), banking (Sliter et al., 2010, 2012; Bamfo et al., 2018), hotels (i.e. Arici et al., 2016; Kim & Qu, 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Yang & Lau, 2019) and restaurants (Han et al., 2016).

However, for the researcher knowledge, there is no studies have explored the relationships between customer incivility, CWB and quitting intention among frontline employees in airlines context. As such the purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between customer incivility, counterproductive work behavior and intention to quit of frontline employees in airlines.

Moreover, the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the previous relationships will also assess. The results of this study will develop our understanding of customer incivility topic and participate in the incivility management literature. To achieve the previously mentioned aims, a moderated model was used in the current research (figure 1). The supposed relationships are discussed in the next section.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 Customer incivility

The most widely reported definition of workplace incivility comes from the work of Andersson and Pearson (1999). They defined incivility as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999: 447). Typically, the previously incivility researches were focused on incivility from the point view of employee to employee interactions in the workplace (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005; Reio, 2011). However, uncivil behavior also occurs during customer to employee interactions by customer as the perpetrator of the incivility (Sliter et al., 2010; Alola et al., 2019). Customer incivility constitutes the most repeatedly experienced type of workplace mistreatment (Sliter et al., 2012). Previous studies shown that employee experiencing incivility more often from customers than from their coworkers (Grandey et al., 2007; Sliter et al., 2012). Therefore, recently the construct of customer incivility has received an increasing attention (Han et al., 2016; Torres et al., 2017; Alola et al., 2019). According to Arici et al. (2016) customer incivility is more strongly linked to personal and organizational outcomes more than coworker incivility and has a great cost for the organizations.

Likewise, the workplace incivility definition, the customer incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behavior committed by customers towards employees with ambiguous intention to harm them, in violation of usual norms for reciprocal respect (Sliter et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2019). Van Jaarsveld et al. (2010) described customer incivility as treating an employee in an uncivil manner (e.g., impoliteness, speaking in an offensive way). Customer incivility is synonymous with terms such as disruptive customer behaviors (Gursoy et al., 2017), evil customer (Yang & Lau, 2019), dysfunctional customer behavior (Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Gong et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2018), customer misbehavior (Hu et al., 2017), abusive customer (Bamfo et al., 2018), deviant customer behavior (Reynolds & Harris, 2006) and jay-customer behavior (kim et al., 2014; Fong et al., 2017).

According to Zhu et al. (2019) more than 70% of frontline employees have faced incidents of uncivil customers. Customer incivility could be classified as a daily hassle because dealing with discourteous and impolite customers may be occur every day especially within the service industry (Cho et al., 2016; kim & Qu, 2019).

The literature reported various uncivil actions that may include for example: ignoring employees or speak to them in an impolite and offensive manner, rude signs/expressions from clients (rolling eyes, sighing, talking loudly), treating an employee inappropriately (e.g., “Hey you!”, ignoring to say “thank you” or “please”), or grumbling because of slow service (van Jaarsveld et al., 2010; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013; Sliter & Jones, 2016). In today’s business environment, customers feel that they has the right to behave badly, and service providers are expected to tolerate such behaviors (Yagil, 2008). Although a single experience of customer incivility may not lead to negative consequences, nevertheless the frequency of customer incivility experiences may be realized as stressful (Han et al., 2016). Employees mentioned that they experience misbehavior from customers on average 10 times daily (Grandey et al., 2004).

Customer incivility as an employee realization of interpersonal mistreatment from customers (Arici et al., 2016) can negatively affect employee well-being (Arnold & Walsh, 2015), job satisfaction (Wilson & Holmvall, 2013; kim et al., 2014), customer service performance (Sliter et al., 2010), extra-role customer service (Zhu et al., 2019) and employee performance (Torres et al., 2017). Moreover, additional studies revealed that employees who encountered customer incivility were suffered from emotional exhaustion and burnout (e.g, Sliter et al., 2010; Nzengue et al., 2012; Hur et al., 2015; Han et al., 2016; Alola et al., 2019), tend to show counterproductive behaviors in the workplace (Bibi et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2014; Torres et al., 2017) and have high turnover intention (Wilson & Holmvall, 2013; Bamfo et al., 2018; Alola et al., 2019). Sliter et al. (2012) also proved that customer incivility increased withdrawal behavior and absenteeism. Finally, employees who experience customer incivility tend to treat other customers and their coworkers uncivilly (van Jaarsveldet al., 2010; Walker et al., 2014).

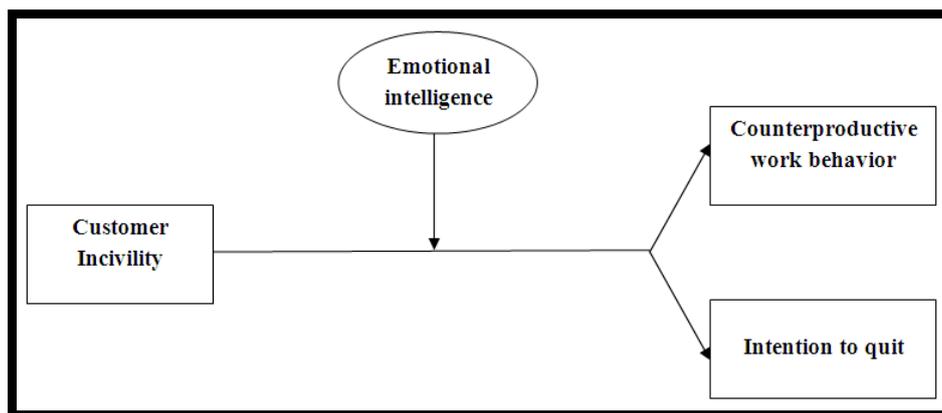


Figure 1: conceptual framework

2.2 Customer incivility and counterproductive behaviors

In recent years Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) has gained a great importance in management and organizational research because of its frequently occurrence and possible consequences (Penney & Spector, 2005; Zhang et al., 2016).

CWB refers to negative intentional or unintentional behaviors by employees that can harm the interests of a company either directly or indirectly by harming its members which consequently decreases their efficiency (McShane & Glinow, 2005; Raman et al., 2016). According to Galperin and Burke (2006), CWB of employees leads to wide economic and social damages for the organizations. CWB includes enormous series of behaviors such as deliberately working slow, theft, sabotage of equipment, verbal and physical abuse, lying, gossiping, blaming others, refusing cooperation, favoritism, bribery, corruption, harassment, withdrawal and taking long breaks (Penney & Spector 2005 ; Spector et al., 2006 ; Raman et al., 2016). As argued by researchers, CWB is generally categorized in two groups (organizational and interpersonal): CWB directed at the organization (CWB-O) and CWB directed at the organizational people (CWB-I) (Fox et al., 2001; Penney & Spector 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005).

Empirically, previous literature confirmed that when employee exposure to incivility they became more likely to engage in CWB. Based on Andersson and Pearson (1999) arguments, incivility is considered a social job stressor, which further leads to increase employees' counterproductive work behavior in their work (e.g., poor work quality, absenteeism, etc.) (Han et al., 2016). Therefore, Zhang et al. (2016) supported the arguments of previous studies and empirically proved that customer related social stressors positively influenced the CWB of frontline employees via emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, the study by Fox et al. (2001) reported that employees who experience incivility tend to perform CWB. In the same context, the study by Skarlicki et al. (2008) suggested that customer mistreatment towards employees can cause employee sabotage. Similarly, the results of Penney and Spector (2005) also indicated that incivility was positively associated with CWB. This has been confirmed by the study of Walker et al. (2014) which demonstrated that employees who encounter customer incivility tend to show CWB in the workplace. Finally, the results of Bibi et al. (2013) found that there was a positive association between workplace incivility and CWB among university teachers. Bennett and Robinson (2000) supposed that frontline employees purposely behave in counterproductive manners as a result of frequent interactions with customers. Therefore, based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis could be formulated:

H1: Customer incivility positively influences CWB of airlines' frontline employees.

2.3 Customer incivility and intention to quit

The quit intention refers to the member's desire to leave the firm to another one within the near future (Alzayed & Murshid, 2017; Shehawy et al., 2018). Quit intention occurs when an employee experiences a bad working environment and high stress in their current work, this in turn, increase his withdrawal intention (AlBattat et al., 2013). The studies of Rahman and Nas (2013) and Shehawy et al. (2018) found that intention to quit has a direct impact on turnover decision (Rahman & Nas, 2013; Shehawy et al., 2018).

As argued by Haque et al. (2019), turnover intention was considered a powerful precursor of actual employee turnover. Frontline employees spend most of their time in a direct contact with customers (Pang et al., 2015). Most service-oriented organizations adopted regulations such as ‘the customer is always right’ and ‘service with a smile’ (Alola et al., 2019). Frontline employees must adhere to the firm’s rules, control their feelings, demonstrate positive moods and appear pleasant even when customers are treating them uncivilly (Grandey et al., 2004; Chu et al., 2012). Such requirements to preserve a gentle and pleasant personality regardless how badly customers act is an emotionally exhausting work and can affect employees overall work outcomes and wellbeing (Chu et al., 2012). This leaves frontline staff with the option of either accept the poorly behaving customer, or quit (Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Grandey et al., 2004). In other words, direct conflict with customers significantly impacts employee felt stress, and in turn creating higher turnover intentions (Bamfo et al., 2018). Several studies proved that employees who have experienced customer incivility may also have a high quitting intention. For example, the researches of Hur et al. (2015) and Han et al. (2016) revealed that customer incivility has a significant positive effect on employee turnover intention through emotional exhaustion and burnout. This has been supported by studies of Walsh (2011) and Bamfo et al. (2018) which demonstrated that customer abusive behavior is significantly predict employee turnover intentions through job satisfaction.

Likewise, customer incivility has been identified as a determinant of employees’ turnover intentions (Lim et al., 2008; Yagil, 2008; Wilson& Holmval, 2013). Similarly, in a more recent study performed by Alola et al. (2019), customer incivility is positively associated with turnover intentions among frontline hotel employees. Therefore, based on the above discussion, this study hypothesizes that:

H2: Customer incivility positively influences quitting intentions of airlines’ frontline employees.

2.4 Moderating role of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the individual’s ability to recognize his own and others’ emotions, to discern between them, and to utilize this emotional information to lead and manage one’s thinking and actions (Chen & Wang, 2019). Hence, it is the capability of someone to manage himself and his relationships in a constructive and mature method (Bibi et al., 2013). According to Mayer et al. (2000), emotionally intelligent employees able to control their emotions and avoid misbehaviors that may harm their firms (Mayer et al., 2000). Emotionally intelligent people consider stressful events as a challenge rather than a threat because they believe that they can overcome such stressful situations (Zhang et al., 2016). For example, service employees with high EI tend to interpret severe and unpleasant interactions with uncivil customers as a chance for self-development (e.g., the social skills training) (Zhang et al., 2016).

Consequently, scholars assumed that emotional intelligence can be considered as a moderator in the relationships concerned with employee behaviors. For instance, the research of Wu (2011) reported that emotionally intelligent employees have the ability to minimize or change the effect of negative work pressure on work performance. A study by Yin (2010) also proved that EI playing a moderating role in the relationship between negative emotions and CWB. In addition to other studies which affirmed that EI has a moderating roles in the relationship between many variables such as stress and burnout (Gorgens-Ekermans & Brand, 2012), negative emotions and job insecurity (Jordan & Ashkanasy, 2002); procedural fairness and contextual performance (Devonish & Greenidge, 2010) and customer-related social stressors (CSS) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) (Zhang et al., 2016).

Likewise, on the one hand, customer incivility which treated as a stressor variable and one causes of work pressure (Kern & Grandey, 2009). And, on the other hand, emotional intelligence that recognized as one of the prime preventive factor against the stress (Lopes et al., 2006). Therefore, it is logical to suppose that emotional intelligence has a moderating effect on the relationship between customer incivility, CWB and intention to quit. For example, the study of Bibi et al. (2013) revealed that EI has a significant moderating influence on the relationship among workplace incivility and counterproductive work behaviors of university teachers. Similarly, Mayer et al., (2000) also found that EI is negatively affect employees' deviant behaviors. They demonstrated that the increase in employees' EI leads to a decrease in their deviant behaviors. In the same context, Petrides et al. (2004) found that employees with low EI level are more tend to participate in CWBs than those with high EI.

A recent study by Jung and Yoon (2012) confirmed the results of previous researchers. Deshpande (2005) and Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2010) also suggested that employees with high levels of EI are less likely to engage in unethical activities which involve CWB. In sum, EI helps employees to react more effectively to stressful emotional interactions with uncivil customers (Zhang et al., 2016). Furthermore, in a more recent study conducted by Chen and Wang (2019), EI has a significant moderating impact on the relationship among workplace incivility and tourist hotel chefs' turnover intentions. Thus, based on the previous arguments, this study proposes that:

H3: EI moderates the relationship between customer incivility and CWB of airlines' frontline employees.

H4: EI moderates the relationship between customer incivility and quitting intentions of airlines' frontline employees.

Specifically, the greater the emotional intelligence level, the weaker the effect of customer incivility on CWB and intention to quit.

3. Research methods

3.1 Data collection and sampling

The current study adopted a quantitative approach. The target population of the study was the frontline employees who worked in the airline companies in Egypt and had a direct contact with customers. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. As proposed by Hair et al. (2013), the minimum sample size for infinite population is 384. Therefore, the current study respondents were accepted as an infinite population and a total of 430 customer-contact employees were selected to participate in the survey. The questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected sample of frontline employees through the help of human resources departments from August 2019 to September 2019. Only 413 responses were received with a response rate (96%). Because of missing data in some of the questionnaires, 7 of them were eliminated and only 406 questionnaires were usable for statistical analysis. To ensure the conceptual equivalence of the questionnaire items, it was translated into Arabic and then back into English. To secure that the statements of the questionnaire were clear and to evaluate the reliability of measures, a pilot study was performed on 30 frontline employees in airline companies. Based on this pretest, a few minor modifications were conducted to improve the study tool.

3.2 Measures

This study measured four constructs including: customer incivility, counterproductive work behavior, emotional intelligence and intention to quit. Responses to all questionnaire items were based on the five-point Likert scale (from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree). Customer incivility was measured by six items adopted from the studies of (Cho et al., 2016; Alola et al., 2019) including “i.e. *My airline customers take out anger on me and make insulting comments to me*”. Intention to quit was measured with three items borrowed from Cole et al. (2006) and Karatepe (2013). An example item is “*I think about quitting my job at this company very frequently*”. The scale used to measure CWB was developed by Spector et al. (2006) and also used by Raman et al (2016). The measure consisted of 45 items. Sample items are “*Came to work late without permission; Left work earlier than you were allowed; and Purposely worked slowly when things needed to get done*”. Finally, a scale developed by Wong and Law (2002) was used to measure emotional intelligence. The EI scale is a multi-dimensional scale. It consisted of four dimensions with four items each for a total of 16 items. These dimensions are (“self-emotion appraisal, others’ emotion appraisal’, use of emotion and regulation of emotion’). Sample items are “*I really understand what I feel; and I am a self-motivated person*”.

3.3 Data analysis

To test the hypothesized model, data was analyzed using smart PLS 3.21 for regression-based Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data analysis of the present research was conducted with a two-step approach. The first step is the measurement model which evaluated to estimate the validity and reliability of the measures.

The second step is the structural equation modeling (SEM) which used to test the research hypotheses. According to Elbaz and Haddoud (2017), as opposed to Amos and LISREL, PLS-SEM is an approach based on regression that results from path analysis. So, PLS-SEM is a significant technique for prediction through focusing on indicating the variance in the dependent variables by evaluating the total variance in the observed indicators rather than only focusing on the relationships among all variables. Furthermore, PLS has the ability to handle extremely complicated models.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent’s profile

As shown in table (1), (66.3%) of survey respondents were males. The majority of employees were mostly 30-40 years old (45.1%), followed by those who are 41 - 50 years old (36.7%). As for their educational degree, a great number of airline employees hold a bachelor degree with a percentage of (84.2%). Regarding job experience, about (31.5%) of the employees have work experience in their current positions between 5- less than 10 years, followed by those who have 10- 15 years of experience (26.6%).

Table (1) Sample characteristics

Variable	Category	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	269	66.3
	Female	137	33.7
Age	Under 30 year	67	16.5
	30-40 years	183	45.1
	41-50 years	149	36.7
	51-60 years	7	1.7
Education	Bachelor	342	84.2
	Diploma	14	3.4
	Master	9	2.2
	Others	41	10.2
Job Experience	Less than 5 years	51	12.6
	5 – less than 10 years	128	31.5
	10 – less than 15 years	108	26.6
	15 – less than 20 years	97	23.9
	20 years and over	22	5.4

4.2 Measurement model

Standardized root means square residual (SRMR) and Bentler-Bonett index or Normed Fit Index (NFI) are measures of estimated model fit. When the value of SRMR is less than .08, the study model has a good fit, and with a lower SRMR being a better fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Also, Byrne (2008) indicated that if the value of SRMR is 0, it indicates a perfect fit. Additionally, the acceptable value for NFI is above 0.90 (Byrne, 2008).

Table (2) Model fit summary

	Estimated Model	
	Non-moderated model	Moderated model
SRMR	0.069	0.039
NFI	0.914	0.937

Table (2) shows that the value of SRMR = 0.069, and NFI = 0.914 in the non-moderated model. These results clarify that the study's non-moderated model has a good fit. Additionally, table (2) clarifies that the value of SRMR = 0.039, and NFI = 0.937 in the moderated model. These results show that the study's moderated model has a better fit. As noted above, results are near optimal in the case of the moderated model than the non-moderated model, so the moderator improves the fit of the study's model.

Means, Standard Deviations, Composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and AVE

The study checked the validity and reliability of all constructs, in order to evaluate the quality of the instruments. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess the convergent validity (see table 3). Cronbach's Alpha and composite were used to assess the constructs' reliability. Additionally, table (3) shows the means and standard deviations of all study variables.

Table (3) Means, Standard Deviations, Composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and AVE

Constructs	Mean	SD	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Customer incivility	3.80	0.65	0.871	0.832	0.686
Emotional intelligence	3.98	1.14	0.864	0.877	0.754
Intention to quit	3.14	0.82	0.913	0.897	0.713
Counterproductive work behavior	3.44	1.17	0.922	0.901	0.629

As table (3) indicated, the total mean of customer incivility was 3.80, which shows that such behaviors were popular among respondents. In terms of Counterproductive work behavior and quit intentions, the total means were respectively 3.44 and 3.14. This may indicate that frontline employees in airlines have a slightly higher tendency to do CWB and have quit intentions. Regarding emotional intelligence, the score is 3.98 which show that sample respondents tend to view a good emotional intelligence. Table (3) also shown the value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The values range from 0.83 to 0.92, which exceed the minimum value for good reliability of instruments (0.7) (MacKenzie et al., 2011). Additionally, table (3) depicts that the values of AVE are more than 0.62, which are higher than the minimum value for convergent validity. According to Hair et al. (2014) the value of good AVE is 0.5 or higher.

Structural model

The square roots of AVE for discriminate validity were applied to assess the constructs' validity.

Table (4) Squared roots of AVE

	Customer incivility	Emotional intelligence	Intention to quit	Counterproductive work behavior
Customer incivility	0.861			
Emotional intelligence	0.721	0.821		
Intention to quit	0.443	0.561	0.811	
Counterproductive work behavior	0.517	0.114	0.109	0.799

Table (4) indicates that the square roots of AVE for all constructs are higher than the highest correlations with any other construct. Hair et al. (2014) mentioned that the square roots of AVE should surpass the highest squared correlation with any other construct.

The following table shows the path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and the Sig. of the model. The results in table (5) show that customer incivility affects significantly and positively counterproductive work behavior ($\beta=0.701^*$, $p<0.01$) with t-statistic value 8.961. Furthermore, table (5) also depicted that customer incivility has a significant positive effect on intention to quit ($\beta=0.694^*$, $p<0.01$) with t-statistic value 10.113. Consequently, H1 and H2 are supported.

Table (5) Path coefficient, t-statistics, and Sig.

Path	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	Sig.
Customer incivility → Counterproductive work behavior	0.701	8.961	0.000
Customer incivility → intention to quit	0.694	10.113	0.000
Customer incivility × Emotional intelligence → Counterproductive work behavior (Emotional intelligence as a moderator)	0.428	3.554	0.000
Customer incivility × Emotional intelligence → intention to quit (Emotional intelligence as a moderator)	0.419	4.067	0.000

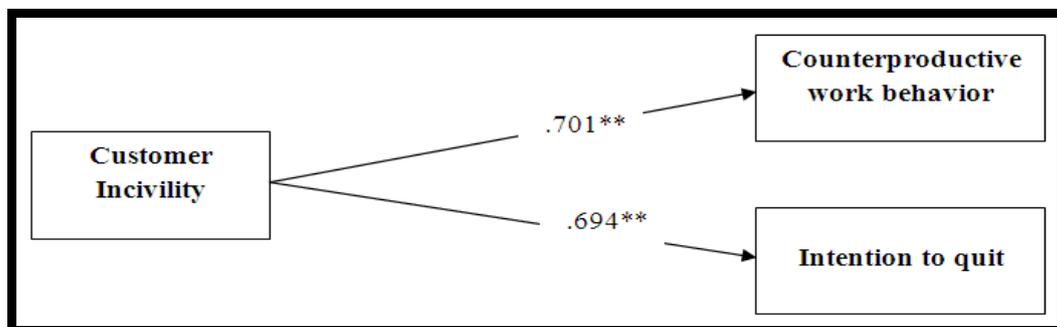


Figure 2: Direct effects of customer incivility on CWB and intention to quit

Hypothesis 3 proposed that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between customer incivility and Counterproductive work behavior. This means that the customer incivility has a high effect on counterproductive work behavior in the presence of low level of emotional intelligence and low effect on counterproductive work behavior in the presence of high level of emotional intelligence. Table (5) revealed that customer incivility affects significantly and positively counterproductive work behavior in the presence of emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.428^*$, $p<0.01$) with t-statistic value of 3.554. This result indicates that the direct effect of customer incivility on counterproductive work behavior ($\beta=0.701$) is higher than the effect of customer incivility on Counterproductive work behavior in the presence on emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.428$), which means that emotional intelligence helps reducing the effect value of customer incivility on counterproductive work behavior. In other words, the positive effect of customer incivility on CWB weakened when frontline employees had a higher level of EI instead of when they had a lower level of EI. Hence, H3 is confirmed.

Moreover, hypothesis 4 proposed that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between customer incivility and intention to quit, which means that the positive relationship between customer incivility and employee's quitting intention weakened when employees had a higher level of EI instead of when they had a lower level of EI. Table (5) revealed that customer incivility has a significant positive effect on intention to quit in the presence of emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.419^*$, $p<0.01$) with t-statistic value of 4.067. This result indicates that the direct effect of customer incivility on intention to quite ($\beta=0.694$) is higher than the effect of customer incivility on intention to quite in the presence on emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.419$), which mean that emotional intelligence helps reducing the effect value of customer incivility on intention to quit. So, H4 is accepted.

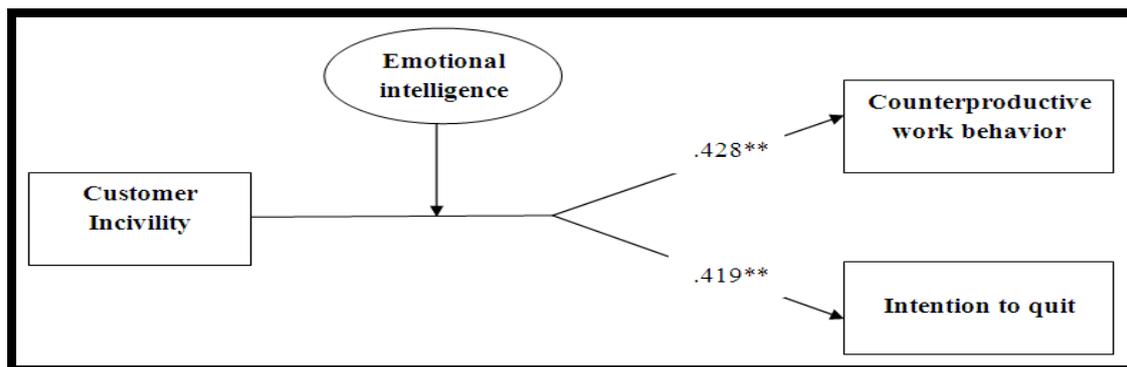


Figure 3: indirect effects of customer incivility on CWB and intention to quit in the presence of EI

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Because customer incivility was seen as the most repeatedly workplace hassles that service frontline employees faced everyday (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Zhu et al., 2019).

Therefore, the possible harmful impacts of customer incivility on organizational and personal outcomes need to be further examined (Alola et al., 2019). The purpose of this study was, thus, to examine the relationships between customer incivility, counterproductive work behavior and intention to quit of frontline employees in airlines. Moreover, the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the previous relationships was also validated. Not surprisingly, descriptive statistics showed that most of respondents had encountered customer incivility with an overall mean of 3.80. This indicated that frontline employees in airlines who participated in the study suffered from customer incivility. This came to agree with the previous studies (i.e., Grandey et al., 2004; Zhu et al., 2019), which indicated that frontline employees faced incidents of uncivil customers daily. Based on the findings of the study, customer incivility increases CWB, when frontline employees exposure to customer incivility, they are prone to show CWB in the workplace. This is consistent with results from previous studies (Fox et al., 2001; Penney & Spector, 2005; Skarlicki et al., 2008; Bibiet al., 2013).

Moreover, the empirical results of the present study revealed that customer incivility has a significant positive effect on intention to quit. This indicates that the higher the customer incivility, the higher frontline employee quitting intention is. This result is confirmed by several previous studies (e.g. Walsh, 2011; Hur et al., 2015; Han et al., 2016; Bamfo et al., 2018; Alola et al., 2019). This study also evaluated the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationships between customer incivility and CWB (or intention to quite). As previous studies proved (Mayer et al., 2000; Petrides et al., 2004; Deshpande, 2005; Bibi et al., 2013) high levels of emotional intelligence prevent employees from displaying CWB. Moreover, the quitting intention of airlines' frontline employees weakened when employees had a higher level of EI and vice versa. This result came to agree with the study of Chen and Wang (2019). These results demonstrated the significant role of emotional intelligence as a protective factor against work stress such as customer incivility. More specifically, emotional intelligence of frontline employees' could prevent them from engaging in CWB at work and leaving their jobs.

6. Practical implications

This study provides a number of practical implications for airlines management. Frontline employees play a vital role in providing high-quality service; however, they are often exposed to uncivil behaviors during service encounters. Based on the analysis and conclusion, customer incivility is one of the most influential factors that affecting the presence of CWB and leave intentions for frontline employees in airlines. Both CWB and turnover could harm the organization and its members, as well as, they are costly endeavor to the organization. Regarding CWB, organizations should pay attention to such practices, conduct appropriate investigations and take the suitable actions to deal with such behaviors. At the same time, airlines management should adopt some practices to decrease the severity of customer incivility.

For example, organizations are required to do their best to understand and give interventions to alleviate stressors resulted from customers instead of asking frontline employees to be patient with them. Moreover, airlines could provide their frontline employees with training programs to acquire the knowledge of treating annoyed customers and dealing with work stresses related to customers. Additionally, managers required to keep in touch with their employees to know their stressful situations and provide advice to handle them well so that these pressures do not lead to CWB and turnover. At the same time, empowering frontline employees and give them extra autonomy -to deal with customer related situations- enable them to provide clients with out-of-the-box solutions. The study results also found that frontline employees with a low emotional intelligence level easily exposure to the negative effect of customer incivility on CWB and intention to quit. Based on the important interactive and preventive role that emotional intelligence appears to play, organizations need to think about enhancing greater levels of EI in airlines industry. For instance, airlines not only should select and recruit persons who already display a high level of emotional intelligence but also to improve and conserve such advantages. Therefore, management should provide their employees with the educational programs on EI that reinforce their capabilities to effectively manage and control their emotions. Such these programs not only protect employees from engaging in counterproductive work behavior but also enable them to cope with stressful work situations.

Area for further research

The survey of the current study has been focused on the frontline employees in the airlines context, which restricts the generalizability of its results to other contexts. So, further research could be conducted in other tourism sectors such as travel agencies to examine whether the results are confirmed. Another topic that deserves examination is the reasons that motivate customer to be uncivil. The efficient control of these causes can help alleviating the rate of occurrence and severity of customer incivility. Finally, how an employee can deal with the uncivil behavior of customers is another important subject to study.

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أثر السلوك غير المهذب للعميل علي سلوكيات العمل المضادة ونية المغادرة لموظفي الخطوط الأمامية بشركات الطيران: الذكاء العاطفي كمعدل

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الملخص العربي

تتبنى معظم المنظمات الخدمية مبدأ "العميل دائما علي حق"، كما تنص معظم اللوائح التنظيمية علي ضرورة قيام العاملين بتحقيق السعادة للعميل حتي في المواقف التي يكون فيها العميل غير مهذب، والتي بدورها تدفع العاملين لإظهار العديد من نتائج العمل السلبية. تعد السلوكيات المضادة للعمل - مثل (الإساءة اللفظية والجسدية، السرقة، وسلوكيات الانسحاب، وانحراف معدلات الإنتاج) -، ونية مغادرة العمل من أهم هذه النتائج السلبية. لذلك يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة أثر السلوك غير المهذب للعميل علي السلوكيات المضادة للعمل ونية موظفي الخطوط الأمامية بصناعة الطيران لمغادرة العمل، علاوة علي ذلك، يخصص هذا البحث أيضا الدور المعدل الذي يلعبه الذكاء العاطفي في العلاقات السابقة. تم توزيع استمارات استبيان علي عينة عشوائية قوامها ٤٠٦ مفردة من العاملين في الخطوط الأمامية بقطاع الطيران. تم تحليل النتائج باستخدام نمذجة المعادلات البنائية. قد أظهرت النتائج أن السلوك غير المهذب للعميل يؤثر علي السلوكيات المضادة للعمل ونية موظفي الخطوط الأمامية بقطاع الطيران لمغادرة العمل. علاوة علي ذلك، وجد أن الذكاء العاطفي يخفف من شدة تأثير السلوك غير المهذب للعميل علي السلوكيات المضادة للعمل، ونية موظفي الخطوط الأمامية لمغادرة عملهم. وانتهت الدراسة بتقديم مجموعة من التوصيات للمديرين في قطاع الطيران كمحاولة للتخفيف من حدة الأثار الناتجة عن السلوكيات غير المهذبة للعملاء، بالإضافة لمجموعة من المقترحات للدراسات المستقبلية.

الكلمات الدالة: السلوك الغير مهذب، سلوكيات العمل المضادة، نية المغادرة، الذكاء العاطفي، موظفي الخطوط الأمامية، شركات الطيران، مصر.