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Effects of Workplace Incivility, Negative Affectivity and Hurt Feelings on Coworker Helping

(Kesan Ketidaksopanan di Tempat Kerja, Afektiviti Negatif, dan Perasaan Tersinggung terhadap Bantuan Rakan Sekerja)

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ABSTRACT

Helping behavior among coworkers is important in ensuring organizational functioning. Some researchers propose that the presence of negative work behavior, such as workplace incivility, may reduce helping behavior among coworkers. Research testing the effects of workplace incivility on coworker helping is, however, limited. Therefore, this study sought to address this research gap. Underpinned by affective events theory, the theory of reasoned action, and the norm of reciprocity, this study examined the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping using a mediationmoderation framework with hurt feelings as a mediating variable and negative affectivity as a moderating variable. The study sample comprised 463 employees of a public sector organization in Malaysia. The study hypotheses were tested using PLS structural equation modeling. The results of the study showed that (a) workplace incivility was negatively related to coworker helping, and this relationship was mediated partially by hurt feelings, (b) workplace incivility and negative affectivity were both positively related to hurt feelings, (c) hurt feelings was negatively related to coworker helping, and (d) negative affectivity did not moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by providing some support for (a) the presence of tit-for-tat exchanges in cases of workplace incivility, (b) the importance of examining discrete emotions in organizational research, and (c) the importance of affective events theory for explaining the link between a work event and a behavioral intention. This study also informs employers and human resource practitioners that workplace incivility is a real and costly problem; thus, appropriate managerial interventions are needed to address this issue.

Keywords: Coworker helping; workplace incivility; hurt feelings; negative affectivity; PLS structural equation modeling

ABSTRAK

Gelagat membantu dalam kalangan rakan sekerja adalah penting dalam memastikan organisasi dapat berfungsi. Sebilangan penyelidik mencadangkan bahawa kehadiran gelagat kerja yang negatif, seperti ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja, boleh mengurangkan gelagat membantu dalam kalangan rakan sekerja. Walau bagaimanapun, penyelidikan yang menguji kesan ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja terhadap bantuan rakan sekerja adalah terhad. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan mengisi jurang penyelidikan ini. Dengan disokong oleh teori peristiwa afektif, teori tindakan berdasarkan logik dan norma kesalingan, kajian ini meneliti kaitan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dengan bantuan rakan sekerja menggunakan rangka kerja pengantaraan-penyederhanaan dengan perasaan tersinggung sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara dan afektiviti negatif sebagai pemboleh ubah penyederhana. Sampel kajian ini terdiri daripada 463 orang pekerja di sebuah organisasi sektor awam di Malaysia. Hipotesis kajian diuji menggunakan model persamaan berstruktur PLS. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa (a) ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja mempunyai hubung kait yang negatif dengan bantuan rakan sekerja, dan kaitan ini diperantarakan sebahagiannya oleh perasaan tersinggung; (b) ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dan afektiviti negatif mempunyai hubung kait yang positif dengan perasaan tersinggung, (c) perasaan tersinggung mempunyai hubung kait yang negatif dengan bantuan rakan sekerja, dan (d) afektiviti negatif tidak menyederhanakan kaitan antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dengan perasaan tersinggung. Secara teori, kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur dengan menyokong (a) kewujudan pertukaran balas balik dalam kes ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja, (b) kepentingan meneliti emosi yang berasingan dalam penyelidikan tentang organisasi, dan (c) kepentingan teori peristiwa afektif untuk menjelaskan hubungan antara peristiwa di tempat kerja dengan niat tingkah laku. Kajian ini juga memaklumkan majikan dan pengamal sumber manusia bahawa sikap tidak sopan di tempat kerja ialah masalah yang wujud dan merugikan; oleh itu, campur tangan yang sewajarnya oleh pihak pengurusan diperlukan untuk menyelesaikan isu ini.

Kata kunci: Bantuan rakan sekerja; ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja; perasaan tersinggung; afektiviti negatif; model persamaan berstruktur PLS

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 33 05/10/2018 9:58:58 AM

INTRODUCTION

An organization must have organizational members who can work cooperatively with each other to ensure its functioning and success. Not all cooperative behaviors, however, can be specified in advance and written in job descriptions. Spontaneous cooperative behavior such as helping behavior, in particular, can help organizations function effectively and efficiently (Katz 1964; Katz & Kahn 1966). Acknowledging its importance, past researchers have incorporated helping behavior in their conceptualization of constructs such as prosocial organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo 1986), organizational spontaneity (George & Brief 1992), organizational citizenship behavior (Organ 1997), and contextual performance (Motowidlo & van Scotter 1994).

Since early 2000, there has been an increased interest in understanding the relationship between dysfunctional work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior. For example, Tepper (2007) who reviewed research on abusive supervision found that abusive supervision has an indirect link to organizational citizenship behavior (including helping behavior). Also, Berry, Ones and Sackett (2007) found that organizational citizenship behavior has moderate to strong negative correlations with both interpersonal and organizational deviance. With reference to workplace incivility, Porath and Pearson (2010) argue that much of the loss on performance caused by incivility is related to small acts such as reduced helping behavior.

Interestingly, little attempt has been made to test Porath and Pearson's (2010) proposition so far. This proposition suggests that the working relationships, which depend substantially on voluntary helping, may be jeopardized by uncivilized acts. As such, it is important to validate empirically this proposition. Taylor, Bedeian, and Kluemper (2012) investigated, among others, the relationship between workplace incivility and citizenship performance. Nevertheless, citizenship performance was measured as behaviors directed towards organization, or OCB-O. Therefore, their study did not test the extent to which workplace incivility reduces helping behavior among coworkers. Two earlier studies conducted by Porath and Erez in 2007 and 2009 may serve as notable exceptions to this limitation. Although they did not directly measure workplace incivility in their experimental studies, they found that rudeness reduces helping behavior. Given that rudeness is one of the workplace incivility characteristics, this finding suggests that workplace incivility may have an effect on helping behavior. To establish such a relationship, empirical investigation using a measure of workplace incivility rather than a proxy measure of workplace incivility is needed.

In addition to examining the direct effect of workplace incivility on helping, it is important to understand why and for whom such an effect may occur. According to affective events theory, employees often react emotionally to a work

event that, in turn, has an effect on their work behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). Previous researchers also have suggested including emotion as a mediating variable (e.g., Cortina et al. 2001; Pearson, Andersson & Wegner 2001). In their qualitative study, for example, Pearson et al. (2001) found participants to describe various emotional responses to workplace incivility including feeling hurt. Accordingly, we include hurt feelings as a mediating variable for explaining the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping.

Although workplace incivility may evoke hurt feelings among targets, its effects may vary according to their personality trait (Pearson et al. 2001). In this study, we focus on negative affectivity as a moderating variable on the basis of George's (1992) suggestion that negative affectivity is a robust personality trait for understanding organizational phenomena. Furthermore, affective events theory identifies negative affectivity as one affective disposition that predisposes a person to react more strongly to negative events when they occur (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996).

In sum, we suggest that workplace incivility will predict coworker helping directly and indirectly through hurt feelings at different levels of negative affectivity. The hypothesized relationships among these study variables were underpinned by affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996), theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975), and norms of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960). This research differs from prior studies in three ways. First, we focus only on workplace incivility rather than the general counterproductive work behavior construct. Second, we examine the effect of workplace incivility on coworker helping intention, which is defined according to the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Third, we include hurt feelings as a mediator and negative affectivity as a moderator to better explain the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping intention.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

COWORKER HELPING

There are many instances of voluntary helping behavior at the individual level that can be observed in an organization. For example, helping a coworker with heavy workload and showing a coworker how to use unfamiliar software when one is not obligated to do so. As a result there is a steady stream of research on helping behavior at the individual level involving a vertical relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate (e.g., King, George & Hebl 2005; Organ & Konovsky 1989) and a lateral relationship between coworkers (e.g., Bowler & Brass 2006; Lee & Allen 2002). Although there are research works examining both types of relationship in a single study (e.g., Anderson & Williams 1996; Henderson & Argyle 1986; Koster & Sanders 2006), most research attention has been given to

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 34 05/10/2018 9:58:58 AM

helping among coworkers (e.g., George & Jones 1997; Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie 2006).

Although voluntary helping behavior among coworkers is important for organizational functioning, opportunities to engage in actual voluntary helping behavior may not always arise. Therefore, employees who perceive that they have been the target of workplace incivility may only harbor an intent not to help the perceived instigator until the opportunity arises for them to actually withdraw voluntary helping. Furthermore, due to the mundane nature of workplace incivility, employees may not realize immediately that they have been the target of workplace incivility. When they realize the situation it may be too late for them to react to the instigation. In this situation, they could only harbor the intent of being unwilling to help the instigator in the future rather than actually react to the past instigation. Therefore, in line with this argument and the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) that posits intention as a proximal variable to actual behavior, we define coworker helping as a worker's willingness to help another coworker voluntarily with work-related problems.

WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND COWORKER HELPING

According to Bowler and Brass (2006), people who are proximal to each other have more opportunity to perform interpersonal citizenship behavior. Therefore, coworkers have more opportunity to help each other than those who are not working closely with them. Venkataramani and Dalal (2007), however, argued that interactions among people also enable them to harm each other. In workplaces, proximity and interactions among coworkers may expose these employees to various negative events such as workplace incivility. When employees perceive that a coworker has acted uncivilly toward them, voluntary helping may be jeopardized. Such a possibility can be explained using Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity. Specifically, the negative norm of reciprocity suggests that people will reciprocate unfavorable treatment that they received (Gouldner 1960). Such reciprocation may take the form of tangible or intangible harm similar or identical to the focal harm such as disliking someone who dislikes oneself, distrusting someone who distrusts oneself, refusing to act favorably to someone who behaved badly to oneself, and engaging in a supervisor-directed deviance as a retaliation against an abusive supervisor (e.g., Eisenberger et al. 2004; Mitchell & Ambrose 2007; Perugini et al. 2003). In short, negative reciprocity can be seen as a means of retaliating against others' hurting behavior (Perugini et al. 2003).

Because workplace incivility is a form of bad behavior (Porath & Pearson 2010) and in line with the negative norm of reciprocity, it is expected that employees who perceive another to have acted uncivilly toward them will reciprocate the perceived harm toward the perceived instigator. Although Andersson and Pearson (1999) proposed that workplace incivilities can escalate into

more intense aggressive behaviors following exchanges between the parties involved, there is also a possibility that employees reciprocate the perceived incivility in another form of incivility such as withholding voluntary help when such help is needed by the instigator. Reciprocal behavior in the form of withholding voluntary help is more likely to occur than escalated aggressive behavior in an organization because voluntary helping is discretionary. Unlike formal rules, omission of a discretionary behavior is not subject to punishment (Zellars, Tepper & Duffy 2002). Hence, the reciprocated behavior is not squelched by the fear of being reprimanded by the management. Furthermore, Baron and Neuman (1996) found that passive forms of aggression (i.e., withholding of some action) are more frequent in occurrence than are active forms of aggression (i.e., performance of some behavior) in organizations. They argued that passive forms of aggression inflict harm on the target without disclosing the source of the harm. Hence, an employee who reciprocates an uncivil act by withholding voluntary help may inflict some harm to the perceived instigator and at the same time be able to interact continuously with this person at work in the absence of open conflict (Henderson & Argyle 1986).

Empirically, studies have shown that employees would only help a coworker who has helped them (Bowler & Brass 2006; Koster & Sanders 2006). These findings suggest that people are unlikely to help others who have harmed them. Hence, when employees perceive that a coworker has acted uncivilly toward them, they are unlikely to offer help to the coworker. This argument is supported by two workplace incivility studies. First, Pearson et al. (2001) found in their qualitative study that employees who experienced workplace incivility refused to offer help to the instigators. Second, Porath and Erez (2007) found in their experimental study that participants who experienced rudeness (a form of incivility) instigated by the experimenter were less likely to help the rude experimenter. Taken together, these two studies showed that workplace incivility leads to a reciprocal behavior in the form of reduced helping.

The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975), however, posits that actual withholding of voluntary help can only occur when help is needed. Following this theory, a more immediate employee response to perceived workplace incivility would be the intention not to help the instigator when he or she needs a helping hand in the future. The intention not to help is then manifested in the form of unwillingness to help when an opportunity arises for the employee to reciprocate the uncivil behavior. Therefore, we hypothesize the following.

H₁ There is a direct negative relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping

MEDIATING ROLE OF HURT FEELINGS

According to affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996), an affective experience mediates the relationship between a work event and an affective-driven behavior.

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 35 05/10/2018 9:58:58 AM

In this study, it is expected that workplace incivility (a work event) elicits hurt feelings (a discrete emotion) that, in turn, has an effect on coworker helping (a behavioral intention). Although the present study does not test the effect of emotion on actual behavior, on the basis of the theory of reasoned action that posits behavioral intention as the predictor to actual behavior, behavioral intention is proposed as the outcome of elicited emotion.

Hurt feelings is an emotion elicited by interpersonal stimuli or interpersonal interaction (Leary 2001; May & Jones 2007). Therefore, workplace incivility, which arises from social interactions, may elicit hurt feelings. Previous studies have found that rejection events such as active and passive disassociation, criticism, betrayal, teasing, feeling unappreciated, relational denigration, humiliation, aggression, and ill-conceived humor elicit hurt feelings (e.g., Leary & Springer 2001; Leary et al. 1998; Vangelisti et al. 2005; Young & Bippus 2001). Such events indicate that hurt feelings arises from both spoken words and actions that can be total and unambiguous or subtle and implicit (Leary & Springer 2001). More important, these events elicit hurt feelings by means of perceived relational devaluation (Leary et al. 1998); that is, when one perceives that the event indicates that the other person does not value their relationship as important, close, or valuable as one desires.

Although previous studies have not tested the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings, Pearson et al. (2001) found participants in their qualitative study to report experiencing hurt feelings following workplace incivility incidents. Previous research has found that both spoken words and actions that are perceived to indicate relational devaluation elicit hurt feelings (e.g., Leary & Springer 2001; Leary et al. 1998; Vangelisti et al. 2005; Young & Bippus 2001). In workplaces, incivility may be manifested either in spoken words such as making demeaning remarks to someone, talking down to others, and gossiping, or through actions such as avoiding someone, texting during meetings, and taking someone else's items without permission (e.g., Martin & Hine 2005; Porath & Pearson 2010). These uncivil words and actions that violate the norm for mutual respect among coworkers indicate to the perceiver that the instigator does not value their relationship as important, close, or valuable as the perceiver desires. As a result, the perceiver experiences hurt feelings following workplace incivility instigation. According to Snapp and Leary (2001), relational devaluation may also occur among new acquaintances who barely know each other. Hence, an uncivil act instigated by a coworker toward a new employee may also elicit hurt feelings.

When employees perceive that a coworker has acted uncivilly toward them, they may be less likely to help the coworker when such help is needed. It is because when employees feel hurt, they will distant themselves from the coworker who has instigated workplace incivilities in order to minimize the emotional pain and to protect themselves from further harm (Vangelisti et al. 2005).

Although the employees cannot avoid further required interactions with the instigator, especially with one they have to work closely with, the employees can withdraw a discretionary behavior such as voluntary help as a way to distant themselves from the instigator when such help is needed.

A few empirical studies provide indirect support for explaining the relationship between hurt feelings and coworker helping. Vangelisti and Young (2000) found that people who were hurt frequently by someone through hurtful messages responded by distancing themselves from the relationship. In a subsequent study, Vangelisti et al. (2005) found that relational denigration, defined as the degree to which the hurtful interaction made participants feel that their relationship was not valuable or important to the person who hurt them, was positively related to distancing. Similarly, McLaren and Solomon (2008) found a positive significant association between hurt and relational distancing.

In sum, hurt feelings may mediate the relationship between workplace incivility and willingness to help a coworker. Although this relationship has not been tested in previous workplace incivility studies, on the basis of theory and some related empirical support, we hypothesize the following.

- H₂ There is a direct positive relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings.
- H₃ There is a direct negative relationship between hurt feelings and coworker helping.
- H₄ Hurt feelings will mediate partially the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping.

NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY AND HURT FEELINGS

According to affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996), affective traits may determine emotional responses that one can experience, thus specifying the link between affective trait and affective experience. That is, people who are high on negative affectivity experience negative emotion more, across time and situation, than people who are low on negative affectivity (Watson & Clark 1984). Previous research provides some support to this notion. For example, Grandey, Tam and Brauburger (2002) found negative affectivity to be a strong predictor of an anxiety composite that includes embarrassment and worry and a good predictor of a sadness composite that includes disappointment, depression, and unhappiness. On the basis of evidence from this indirect study and because hurt feelings has been identified in previous research as a negative emotion that can arise from interactions with colleagues (e.g., Basch & Fisher 2000), negative affectivity should relate positively to hurt feelings. Therefore, we hypothesize the following.

H₅ There is a positive relationship between negative affectivity and hurt feelings

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 36 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

MODERATING EFFECT OF NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY

Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996) also specifies a moderation link between a work event and an affective response. Specifically, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) argued that dispositional traits moderate the relationship between work events and affective reactions. In this study, we propose negative affectivity to moderate the relationship between workplace incivility (a work event) and hurt feelings (an affective reaction).

According to Watson and Clark (1984), people who are high on negative affectivity tend to focus on the negative aspect of things and experience negative emotions across situations. On the other hand, people who are low on negative affectivity have a more positive view of the world in general and are less likely to experience negative emotions across situations. When workplace incivility is low, employees are less likely to feel hurt regardless of their level of negative affectivity. Both employees with low and high negative affectivity, however, may feel hurt when they perceive that workplace incivilities have been targeted at them. This effect is heightened for high negative affectivity employees because their affective trait predisposes them to respond emotionally to workplace incivility more intensely (e.g., Penney & Spector 2005). In other words, negative affectivity will moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings.

Empirically, the moderating role of negative affectivity on the relationship between a work event and emotion has received little attention. In an online diary study to assess the relationships among stressors, emotions, and counterproductive work behavior with a sample of employees in Hong Kong, Yang and Diefendorff (2009) found negative affectivity to moderate the link between daily supervisor injustice and negative emotions. Specifically, they found that when daily supervisor interpersonal injustice was high, individuals with high negative affectivity experienced more negative emotions than did individuals with low negative affectivity. On the basis of the preceding theoretical argument and indirect empirical evidence, we hypothesize the following.

H₆ Negative affectivity will moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings such that the relationship is stronger for those with high rather than low negative affectivity.

METHOD

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

Sample Data were collected from employees of a large public organization in Malaysia. A total of 495 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of about 62%. Of this number, only 463 questionnaires were usable after excluding 17 cases of outliers, 4 cases of distorted responses (i.e., similar ratings on all items), and 11 cases in which respondents identified either a subordinate or

a superior instead of a coworker. The majority of the respondents were female (70%), Malays (97%), married (62%), and full-time employees (93%). Their average age was 33 years old (SD = 9.66). About 28% of the respondents reported completing their education at the undergraduate level or higher. The respondents' average tenure in their organization was 7 years (SD = 7.89), and their average years of total working experience was 11 years (SD = 9.44). The respondents occupied diverse positions including assistant director, accountant, auditor, information technology programmer, secretary, administrative assistant, clerk, and technician.

With regard to coworker's information, the respondents reported knowing their coworker for between 1 year and 37 years. The average years of coworker acquaintance was 4 years (SD = 4.62). The average age of the identified coworker was 32 years old (SD = 8.09). The majority of the identified coworkers were female (70%) and Malays (97%). The coworkers also occupied diverse positions similar to the respondents.

Procedure The paper-and-pencil survey questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of 800 employees with the help of an appointed person-in-charge from the organization's human resource department. Participation was voluntary and employees were assured their anonymity. Employees completed the survey questionnaires on their own time and returned them (in sealed envelopes) by dropping them in one of four large boxes placed within the premise of the organization.

MEASURES

Workplace incivility was measured using Cortina et al.'s (2001) Workplace Incivility Scale. This scale consists of seven items that tap on respondents' experiences on disrespectful, rude, or condescending behaviors from coworkers at work. Respondents indicated the frequency of their experience of workplace incivility on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). A sample item is "My coworker put me down or was condescending to me." The Cronbach's alpha reliability was .890.

Hurt feelings was measured using Buckley, Winkel and Leary's (2004) four hurt feeling adjectives, which are hurt, pained, injured, and wounded. Respondents indicated the frequency of experiencing these hurt feelings on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). The Cronbach's alpha reliability was .880.

Negative affectivity was measured using Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) 10-item negative affectivity scale. The scale comprised ten adjectives items, which are irritable, distressed, ashamed, upset, nervous, jittery, afraid, guilty, scared, and hostile. Respondents indicated the frequency of their general affective responses using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). The Cronbach's alpha reliability was .870.

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 37 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

With regard to the coworker helping scale, we selected and adapted seven items from the existing altruism/helping behavior scales found in the literature (e.g., Farh, Earley & Lin 1997; George & Jones 1997; Koster & Sanders 2006; Organ & Konovsky 1989; Podsakoff et al. 1990; Smith et al. 1983). These items were selected if they met the conceptual definition of coworker helping, which is a worker's willingness to help another coworker voluntarily with work-related problems.

To assess the face validity of the coworker helping scale, the scale items were submitted for review to two academic experts and two industry experts. The experts were asked to validate the relevance of each of the items to the pre-defined coworker helping construct. On the basis of the experts' review, the items were further refined. The factorial validity of the revised coworker helping scale was determined by conducting an exploratory factor analysis on the scale items using principal axis factoring with an oblique rotation (Direct Oblimin). The results of this analysis showed that all items loaded on a single factor with 61.65% of the variance explained. Also, the scree plot revealed a clear break after the first factor with an eigenvalue of 4.32. Hence, a unidimensional coworker helping scale that consists of seven items was used. Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha reliability was .918.

DATA ANALYSIS

Preliminary Analyses Univariate outliers were detected by examining the standardized values, and multivariate outliers were detected by examining the Mahalanobis distance for each case (cf. Hair et al. 2005). The presence of multicollinearity was detected by calculating the variance inflation factor. Finally, violations of the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were checked by inspecting bivariate scatterplots, and the assumption of normality was checked by inspecting skewness and kurtosis values.

Hypothesis-Testing Analyses Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle, Wende & Becker 2015) was used to test the hypotheses. This statistical technique was chosen because the objective of this study was prediction, the workplace incivility and hurt feelings variables were positively skewed, and this study sought to test the moderation effect of a continuous moderator variable.

Following suggestions by Hair et al. (2017), data were assessed at two stages. At the first stage, measurement model reliability and validity were established by conducting PLS algorithm and bootstrapping procedures. At the second stage, the structural model was assessed by conducting PLS algorithm, bootstrapping, and blindfolding procedure. Its main aim is to generate estimates that help in answering the hypotheses. As such, the structural

model assessment also includes testing the mediation and moderation hypothesis. Additionally, PLS predict (Shmueli et al. 2016) procedure was also used to determine the predictive relevance of the proposed model.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE AND CORRELATION RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlations among the study variables. All bivariate relationships among the study variables were statistically significant. The highest correlation was between workplace incivility and hurt feelings, r(461) = .656, p < .001, and the lowest correlation was between negative affectivity and coworker helping r(461) = -.363, p < .001.

TABLE 1. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlations

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.	Workplace incivility	1.92	0.86			
2.	Hurt feelings	2.25	1.01	.656		
3.	Negative affectivity	2.89	0.78	.465	.451	
4.	Coworker helping	5.15	0.94	519	553	363

Note: N = 463. All correlations were statistically significant at the .001 level.

MODEL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Measurement Model Assessment The internal consistency reliability of the measurement model was high as shown in Table 2. The Cronbach's alpha values were .890, .880, .870, and .918 for workplace incivility, hurt feelings, negative affectivity, and coworker helping, respectively. Similarly, the composite reliability values were high with values ranging from .898 (negative affectivity) to .934 (coworker helping). As shown in Table 2, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for workplace incivility, hurt feelings, negative affectivity and coworker helping were above the .50 threshold, indicating that more than half of the respective indicators' variance was explained by its latent variable.

At the indicator level, the results of indicator loadings showed that most of the loadings are above the .70 threshold value, suggesting that the indicators are reliable. One indicator loading for workplace incivility and five indicator loadings for negative affectivity, however, fall below the threshold value. According to Hair et al. (2017), any indicator loading that falls below .70 should only be considered for removal if such removal increases the composite reliability above its threshold value. In our analysis, however, composite reliability for both constructs were not affected by the lower outer loadings. It was the convergent validity for negative affectivity that was found to be below the acceptable value of .50. Therefore, we removed the problematic indicators from negative affectivity one at a time so that its convergent

TABLE 2. Reflective measurement model results

Construct	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Convergent validity
Workplace incivility	WINC 1	0.816	0.890	0.914	0.605
(WINC)	WINC_2	0.800			
	WINC_3	0.857			
	WINC_4	0.722			
	WINC_5	0.782			
	WINC_6	0.802			
	WINC_7	0.649			
Hurt feelings	HURT 1	0.762	0.880	0.918	0.738
(HURT)	HURT 2	0.865			
	HURT 3	0.905			
	HURT_4	0.896			
Negative affectivity	NAFF 3	0.666	0.870	0.898	0.523
(NAFF)	NAFF 4	0.728			
	NAFF 5	0.775			
	NAFF 6	0.750			
	NAFF_7	0.766			
	NAFF_8	0.673			
	NAFF_9	0.693			
	NAFF_10	0.728			
Coworker helping	CWHE 1	0.827	0.918	0.934	0.671
(CWHE)	CWHE 2	0.828			
•	CWHE_3	0.818			
	CWHE_4	0.826			
	CWHE_5	0.824			
	CWHE_6	0.785			
	CWHE_7	0.824			

validity would meet the threshold value. After two rounds of removal process, we found that the convergent validity of negative affectivity had achieved a value of .523.

The heterotrait-monotrait or HTMT criterion was used to assess discriminant validity. Table 3 reveals that the heterotrait-monotrait correlations were below the threshold value of 0.85. These results provide the evidence of discriminant validity.

TABLE 3. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio

	Workplace incivility	Hurt feelings	\mathcal{C}	Coworker helping
Workplace incivility Hurt feelings	0.739			
Negative affectivity	0.509	0.502		
Coworker helping	0.569	0.611	0.395	

Structural Model Assessment Following a reliable and valid measurement model, the structural model was assessed. Results of the coefficient of determination (R^2) show that the research model explained 45.8% variation

in the hurt feelings construct and 34.9% variation in the coworker helping construct. Therefore, the model explained the endogenous latent variables moderately well (cf. Chin 2010; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics 2009).

Table 4 shows that the effect sizes (f^2) of the predictors ranged from .050 to .408, indicating the presence of small to large effects (cf. Chin, 2010; Henseler et al. 2009). Specifically, workplace incivility has a large effect $(f^2 = .408)$ on hurt feelings and a small effect $(f^2 = .066)$ on coworker helping. Similarly, negative affectivity has a small effect on hurt feelings $(f^2 = .050)$, and hurt feelings has a small effect on coworker helping $(f^2 = .121)$. Interaction terms between workplace incivility and negative affectivity, however, shows no effect $(f^2 = .000)$.

As shown in Table 4, results of the bootstrapping procedure (cases = 463, resample = 5,000) for testing the significance of the path coefficients showed that all direct and indirect paths were significant. On the contrary, the interaction path was not significant.

Finally, to examine further the model's capability to predict, two approaches were used. The conventional approach was carried out using the blindfolding procedure with an omission distance of D = 7 to generate the cross-validated redundancy (Stone-Geisser's Q^2) values. The values for both hurt feelings ($Q^2 = .316$) and coworker

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 39 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

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Hypothesized Relation	nship	Path Coefficient	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Confidence intervals (95%)	Effect size f^2
H ₁ : Workplace inciv	vility → Coworker helping	-0.275	5.592	0.000	[-0.357,-0.195]	0.066
H ₂ : Workplace inciv	rility → Hurt feelings	0.569	13.643	0.000	[0.498, 0.636]	0.408
H_3 : Hurt feelings \rightarrow	Coworker helping	-0.372	7.728	0.000	[-0.451,-0.291]	0.121
H ₄ : Workplace inciv Coworker helpi	vility → Hurt feelings →	-0.212	6.635	0.000	[-0.267,-0.161]	n/a
H ₅ : Negative affecti	vity → Hurt feelings	0.187	4.207	0.000	[0.117,0.263]	0.050
H ₆ : Workplace inciv Hurt feelings	vility × Negative affectivity →	0.000	0.001	0.499	[-0.063,0.066]	0.000

helping ($Q^2 = .216$) were larger than zero, indicating that the structural model has predictive relevance. The second approach, which was PLS predict (Shmueli et al. 2016), provides further support to the predictive relevance of the model with PLS predict values above zero. The PLS predict values for hurt feelings was $Q^2 = .359$ and coworker helping was $Q^2 = .082$.

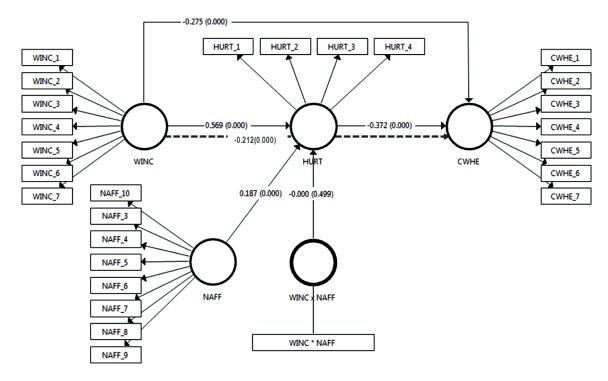
HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Overall, the results of hypothesis testing showed that five of six paths were statistically significant at the .000 level (see Figure 1). Specifically, the path coefficient was statistically significant for the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping ($\beta = -.275$,

p < .000). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 stating that there is a direct negative relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping was supported.

Hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 specify the direct effects among workplace incivility, hurt feelings, and coworker helping. Results from the PLS-SEM analysis support both hypothesized relationships. That is, there is a direct positive relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings ($\beta = .569$, p < .000), and there is a direct negative relationship between hurt feelings and coworker helping ($\beta = .372$, p < .000).

Hypothesis 4 stated that hurt feelings will mediate partially the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping. Results of PLS algorithm and bootstrapping procedures (cases = 463, resample = 5,000) showed that the specific indirect effect linking workplace



Note: Straight line represents direct effect and dotted line represents mediation effect. WINC = workplace incivility, NAFF = negative affectivity, HURT = hurt feelings, CHWE = coworker helping.

FIGURE 1. Structural model results

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 40 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

incivility to coworker helping through hurt feelings was significant (β = -.212, p < .000). Therefore, the mediation hypothesis was supported. We further identified the type of mediation by referring to Hair's et al. (2017) mediation analysis procedure. Because both direct and indirect paths were significant, we then calculated the product of these paths. As the product of the paths was positive, complementary mediation was found to be the type for the hypothesized relationship.

Hypothesis 5 stated that there is a positive relationship between negative affectivity and hurt feelings. The results showed that the path coefficient between negative affectivity and hurt feelings was statistically significant ($\beta = .187$, p < .000). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 6 proposed that negative affectivity will moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. The results of the bootstrapping procedure showed that the path coefficient between the interaction variable and hurt feelings was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.000$, p = .499). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In general, the findings of this study suggest that the higher the workplace incivility, the lesser the willingness to help the perceived instigator. According to Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity, when employees experience unfavorable treatment (e.g., workplace incivility), they will reciprocate the unfavorable treatment. Employees, however, may not be able to reciprocate an uncivil act immediately because of the mundane nature of workplace incivility. Furthermore, withholding actual helping as an immediate response to the uncivil act is not possible when such help is not needed by the perceived instigator. Therefore, consistent with the theory of reasoned action, which specifies that behavioral intention determines one's volitional behavior, employees who experienced workplace incivility will reciprocate the uncivil act in the form of their unwillingness to help the coworkerinstigator.

This study also found that hurt feelings was an explanatory underlying mechanism in the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping. That is, when employees experience workplace incivility they are likely to feel hurt, and when they feel hurt they are unlikely to be willing to help their coworker-instigator. This rationale is consistent with affective events theory, which states that work events (e.g., workplace incivility) predict experienced emotions (e.g., hurt feelings) that, in turn, predict affective-driven behaviors. Although actual helping behavior is not tested in this study, in line with the theory of reasoned action the finding of this study revealed that manifested intention (i.e., willingness to help) is a proximal outcome to hurt feelings.

Negative affectivity was found to be directly related hurt feelings. High negative affectivity employees tend to feel discomfort and distress at work and spend a considerable amount of time and energy worrying about their own problems. Therefore, they are unlikely to be willing to help their coworkers with work-related problems that they are not obliged to do. On the contrary, low negative affectivity employees are more likely than high negative affectivity employees to help their coworker voluntarily because they are likely to sympathize with others who have problems and they desire pleasant interactions and affiliation in the workplace (Watson & Clark 1984).

Also, high negative affectivity people tend to experience negative emotion because they focus more on negative aspects of self, others, and the world in general. Hence, high negative affectivity employees experience more hurt feelings than do low negative affectivity employees because they may exaggerate a situation as indicative of relational devaluation. On the other hand, low negative affectivity employees experience less hurt feelings because they are more likely to repress or deny the presence of relational devaluation (Watson & Clark 1984).

Nevertheless, the present study did not find support for the moderating role of negative affectivity on the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. Essentially, both high and low negative affectivity employees are hurt when they experience workplace incivility. This finding is inconsistent with affective events theory, which stipulates that dispositional traits (e.g., negative affectivity) will moderate the relationship between work events (e.g., workplace incivility) and affective experiences (e.g., hurt feelings).

There are at least two plausible reasons that explain the absence of a moderating effect of negative affectivity in this study. First, moderation is usually introduced when there is an inconsistent or a weak relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny 1986). In this study, there was a strong relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. Therefore, including negative affectivity as a moderator in this case did not affect the strength of the direct relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. Second, it is possible that negative affectivity alone may not be sufficient to moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. That is, the moderating effect of negative affectivity may be detected only in the presence of another moderator variable (cf. Smith, Smoll & Ptacek 1990). A possible conjunctive moderator is coworker familiarity. In the present study, employees were asked to identify how hurt they felt when they experienced workplace incivility instigated by their chosen co-worker, and they reported having known their coworkers an average of 4 years. Hence, it is possible that the moderating effect of negative affectivity can be detected only when employees experience workplace incivility instigated by coworkers who they are less or not familiar with.

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 41 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

A number of theoretical implications can be drawn from the findings of this study. First, this study adds to the body of knowledge on tit-for-tat exchanges of workplace incivility by showing that subtle reciprocation in the form of unwillingness to help is likely to occur in workplaces among coworkers following an uncivil act. Second, although affective events theory and the theory of reasoned action provide theoretical explanations of human behavior on different grounds, the present findings suggest that the two theories are complementary to each other. Specifically, affective events theory posits that work events trigger experienced emotions that, in turn, predict affective-driven behavior, and the theory of reasoned action specifies the importance of behavioral intention in predicting actual behavior. In the present study, both theories were combined to link a work event (i.e., workplace incivility) to an affective experience (i.e., hurt feelings) to a behavioral intention (i.e., coworker helping). The study found support for such links, which is indicative that the two theories complement each other. Finally, the finding that hurt feelings explained the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping highlights the importance of examining the role of discrete emotions in organizational research. Because hurt feelings only partially mediated the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping, there may be other discrete emotions, such as fear, anger, and sadness (e.g., Pearson 2010) that could explain the relationship between workplace incivility and coworker helping.

The findings of this study also have some practical implications for managers. First, because workplace incivility may have detrimental effects on voluntary helping among employees, employers should (a) explain to employees the nature of workplace incivility during new employee orientation programs, (b) provide clear information and guidelines about workplace incivility, (c) place workplace incivility awareness posters in common areas that are visible to employees, (d) hold workshops to train employees on how to manage uncivil workplace behaviors, and (e) encourage employees to be respectful and courteous to each other. Second, because employees who feel hurt as a result of perceived workplace incivility are less willing to help the coworker-instigator, the importance of emotions in workplaces needs to be acknowledged. Some of the managerial interventions that can be undertaken to manage hurt feelings among employees include providing emotion-regulation workshops, encouraging employees to apologize if they realize that they have hurt a coworker's feelings, and encouraging employees to talk about their expectations about civil workplace behaviors with coworkers. Finally, the finding that negative affectivity did not moderate the workplace incivility-coworker helping link suggests that there are limits to using negative affectivity as an employee selection criterion. As shown in this study, both high and low negative affectivity employees feel hurt when they experience workplace incivility. Therefore, negative affectivity may not be a good selection criterion when screening job applicants if the purpose is to avoid hiring employees who are easily hurt by workplace incivility.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the present study has some important theoretical and practical implications, there are some limitations that merit further discussion. First, because the present study employed a cross-sectional design, it is not possible to establish causal relationships among the study variables. For example, the present study found that workplace incivility predicts unwillingness to help one's coworker (i.e., coworker helping), but it could be also that one's unwillingness to help causes one's coworker to behave uncivilly. Future research that replicates this study should employ a longitudinal design involving multiple waves of data collection or an experimental design for a more rigorous test of the directionality of the relationships between the variables explored in this study.

Second, data for the study were collected using singlesource self-reports, which may be subject to common method bias. Nevertheless, Conway and Lance (2010) and Spector (2006) argue that common method bias is often exaggerated, and self-report questionnaires are relevant to be used in certain situations such as when collecting information regarding employees' internal states (e.g., attitude, emotion, and perception), as was the case in the present study. In this study, we assessed employees' perception, emotion, dispositional affective trait, and intention. All these internal states information are best captured using self-report measures. Also, to reduce the likelihood of common method bias, respondents were assured of their anonymity, told that there are no right or wrong answers, and asked to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Third, data were collected from a convenience sample of 463 employees working for a large public sector organization in peninsular Malaysia. Thus, generalization of the study findings may be limited to the sample being studied. Nevertheless, given that the hypotheses are forwarded on the basis of sound theory and empirical evidence, there is no compelling reason why these findings should not generalize to other organizations. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to validate the present findings in other organizational settings and using different samples of employees.

Last, the present study can be replicated and extended in the future by including other potential moderators. For example, future studies may examine Type D personality—a construct that is developed within psychosomatic studies—as a dispositional trait that could moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings. Type D employees, who experience negative emotions but may not express this emotion (cf. Ogińska-Bulik 2006), are more likely to feel hurt when they experience workplace incivility than do non-

Type D employees. Also, future studies may examine the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the workplace incivility and hurt feelings relationship. In addition, examining the effect of conjunctive moderators (e.g., coworker familiarity) on the moderating effect of negative affectivity in the relationship between workplace incivility and hurt feelings (i.e., moderated moderation) may be an interesting avenue for future studies.

In conclusion, although this study has some limitations, it constitutes a step toward understanding the effect of workplace incivility on coworker helping. In particular, this study provides some support for tit-for-tat exchanges of workplace incivility, illustrates that affective events theory and the theory of reasoned action are complementary to each other, provides some support for the theoretical links as specified in affective events theory, and emphasizes the importance of examining discrete emotions in organizational research. Practically, the study findings suggest that appropriate managerial interventions are needed to curtail workplace incivility and hurt feelings among coworkers at work so as to increase employees' willingness to help each other voluntarily.

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JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 45 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM

JPengurusan 3 (52) 2018.indd 46 05/10/2018 9:58:59 AM