

WHAT EXACTLY IS UNCIVIL IN THE WORKPLACE:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH A CHINESE SAMPLE?

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Workplace mistreatment, especially workplace incivility, has gotten more and more attention recently. Our current study used an open-ended question to collect incivility incidents at work from 596 employees who worked at a large mobile company in China.

We found that all the incivility behaviors can be categorized into 12 categories: Annoy you, blame you, fail to support your efforts, nasty verbalization, inappropriate physical behaviors, rude/impolite, ignore your opinions, ridicule, challenge your authority, fail to empathize you, sexual harassment, and treat you unfairly, in the order of frequency mentioned. Six sources of incivility were reported: Supervisor, coworker, customer, subordinate, others, and observed incivility. The results also revealed that females reported more experiences of nasty verbalization, being treated rude/impolite, and sexual harassment, while males reported more incidents of being blamed, inadequate support, experiencing inappropriate physical behavior, and opinions being ignored. However, there was no significant gender difference in reporting sources of incivility. Further, different categories of incivility behaviors were shown to associate with different level of cynicism significantly, and different sources of incivility were associated with different level of cynicism and job efficacy significantly.

More work needs to be done in the area of cross-cultural workplace incivility in the future. Our study may contribute to the literature by providing one of the first empirical qualitative studies on workplace incivility in China.

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