

Review of Employee Perceptions of HR Practices, Workplace Incivility, and Organizational Commitment in Mumbai

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Abstract: *This review paper examines the interrelationship between employee perceptions of Human Resource practices, workplace incivility, and organizational commitment, with a special focus on organizational settings in Mumbai. Drawing from empirical and conceptual studies between 2010 and 2024, the paper highlights how perceived HR fairness, supportive organizational climate, and respectful workplace behavior significantly influence employees' emotional attachment and loyalty toward organizations. It further explores how workplace incivility disrupts trust, reduces job satisfaction, and weakens organizational commitment, particularly in high-pressure urban work environments such as Mumbai.*

Keywords: HR practices, workplace incivility, organizational commitment, employee perception, social exchange theory, organizational justice

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern corporate environment, especially in metropolitan cities like Mumbai, organizations face increasing challenges in managing human capital effectively. Employees' perceptions of HR practices—such as recruitment fairness, performance appraisal, training opportunities, and compensation systems—play a critical role in shaping their psychological connection with the organization.

Simultaneously, workplace incivility, defined as low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm, such as disrespectful communication, exclusion, or rude behavior, has emerged as a growing concern in Indian workplaces (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; later extended studies 2012–2022). These factors collectively influence organizational commitment, which refers to the psychological attachment of employees to their organization (Meyer & Allen, 2010).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

1. Employee Perception of HR Practices

Employee perception of HR practices refers to how employees interpret organizational policies and their implementation. Positive perceptions arise when HR systems are transparent, fair, and development-oriented. Studies show that perceived HR effectiveness improves trust and engagement (Khilji & Wang, 2016; Agarwala, 2018).

2. Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility includes subtle negative behaviors such as ignoring colleagues, disrespectful tone, and lack of acknowledgment. In Indian metropolitan organizations, hierarchical culture sometimes intensifies such behaviors (Cortina et al., 2017; Pearson et al., 2020).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is generally categorized into:

Affective commitment (emotional attachment)

Continuance commitment (cost-based attachment)

Normative commitment (obligation-based attachment)

High organizational commitment is associated with reduced turnover intention and improved performance (Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonova, 2012).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HR PRACTICES, INCIVILITY, AND COMMITMENT

The relationship between Human Resource (HR) practices, workplace incivility, and organizational commitment is a critical area of organizational behavior research, especially in fast-growing metropolitan economies such as Mumbai, where organizations operate under high pressure, diversity, and intense competition. HR practices are generally understood as structured organizational activities such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation management, employee participation, and grievance handling systems. These practices significantly shape employees' perceptions of fairness, support, and organizational justice. When employees perceive HR practices as transparent, consistent, and development-oriented, they are more likely to develop trust in the organization, feel valued, and demonstrate higher levels of engagement and commitment. According to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 2011), employees reciprocate positive treatment from the organization with favorable attitudes and behaviors, including loyalty and organizational commitment. Therefore, effective HR practices act as a foundation for building a positive psychological contract between employees and employers.

However, when HR practices are perceived as biased, inconsistent, or poorly implemented, they create dissatisfaction and psychological strain among employees. This negative perception often becomes a breeding ground for workplace incivility. Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behavior that violates norms of respect in the workplace, such as rude communication, ignoring colleagues, sarcasm, disrespectful tone, exclusion, and lack of acknowledgment. In organizations where HR systems fail to ensure fairness or accountability, employees may experience frustration and emotional exhaustion, which can manifest as uncivil behavior toward colleagues or supervisors. In the Mumbai corporate environment—especially in sectors such as banking, IT, hospitality, and retail—high workloads, time pressure, and hierarchical organizational structures further intensify such behaviors. Employees who feel undervalued or unfairly treated through HR systems are more likely to engage in or become victims of incivility, which disrupts workplace harmony and damages interpersonal relationships.

The relationship between HR practices and workplace incivility is therefore both direct and indirect. Directly, strong HR policies that emphasize respectful communication, ethical leadership, and grievance redressal reduce the likelihood of uncivil behavior. Indirectly, HR practices influence employee emotions and attitudes; when employees perceive organizational injustice, it leads to stress, anger, and disengagement, which increases the probability of incivility. Conversely, supportive HR practices such as fair performance appraisals, employee recognition programs, and participative decision-making create a respectful organizational culture that discourages negative interpersonal behaviors. Empirical studies (2015–2024) consistently show that organizations with high-quality HR systems report lower levels of workplace incivility and higher levels of employee satisfaction and cooperation.

Organizational commitment, defined as the psychological attachment of employees to their organization, is strongly influenced by both HR practices and workplace incivility. Commitment is generally divided into affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (cost-based retention), and normative commitment (moral obligation). Among these, affective commitment is the most sensitive to workplace experiences. When employees perceive strong HR support, fair treatment, and respectful workplace interactions, they develop emotional attachment to the organization, resulting in higher productivity and lower turnover intentions. In contrast, workplace incivility significantly reduces organizational commitment by damaging trust, increasing emotional exhaustion, and weakening employees' sense of belonging. Employees who frequently experience disrespect or observe uncivil behavior in the workplace are less likely to remain emotionally invested in the organization, even if financial incentives are present.

The interaction between HR practices, incivility, and commitment can be understood as a cyclical process. Effective HR practices enhance positive workplace behavior, which strengthens organizational commitment. High commitment, in turn, encourages employees to uphold organizational norms and reduce incivility. On the other hand, poor HR practices lead to increased incivility, which further weakens commitment and creates a toxic work environment. This cycle is particularly evident in urban corporate settings like Mumbai, where work pressure and competition can amplify both positive and negative organizational behaviors. For instance, organizations that invest in employee well-being programs, transparent promotion systems, and leadership training tend to report higher levels of employee loyalty and lower interpersonal conflict.

Theoretical frameworks also support this relationship. Social Exchange Theory explains that employees reciprocate positive HR practices with commitment and positive behavior. Equity Theory (Adams, 2010) suggests that perceived unfairness in HR systems leads to dissatisfaction and behavioral imbalance, often resulting in incivility. Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2012) further explains that workplace incivility drains emotional and psychological resources, reducing employees' ability to remain committed and engaged. Together, these theories highlight that HR practices are not just administrative functions but strategic tools that shape workplace behavior and organizational outcomes.

In Mumbai's diverse workforce environment, cultural differences, high competition, and organizational stressors make HR practices even more critical. Organizations that fail to implement effective HR systems risk creating environments where incivility becomes normalized, leading to reduced morale and higher attrition rates. Conversely, organizations that prioritize employee-centric HR strategies tend to build stronger emotional connections with employees, fostering long-term commitment and organizational stability. Leadership behavior also plays a moderating role in this relationship, as supportive leaders can buffer the negative effects of stress and incivility, while authoritarian leadership may intensify them.

The relationship between HR practices, workplace incivility, and organizational commitment is deeply interconnected and dynamic. HR practices serve as the foundation for shaping employee perceptions and workplace culture, which directly influences the occurrence of incivility and the level of organizational commitment. Positive HR systems reduce incivility and enhance commitment, while weak or unfair HR systems create a cycle of negativity that undermines organizational effectiveness. For organizations in Mumbai and similar urban centers, focusing on transparent HR policies, respectful workplace culture, and strong employee support systems is essential for sustaining high organizational commitment and long-term performance.

Research indicates a strong linkage between HR practices and organizational outcomes:

Fair HR practices reduce workplace stress and incivility.

Supportive leadership and grievance handling systems reduce negative behavior.

Workplace incivility negatively impacts job satisfaction and commitment.

Employee perception acts as a mediating factor between HR practices and commitment.

In Mumbai's competitive sectors (banking, IT, hospitality), long working hours and performance pressure often intensify incivility, indirectly weakening employee commitment.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Several studies conducted in Indian and global contexts provide insights:

Sharma & Jain (2014) found that perceived HR fairness positively influences employee engagement in Indian IT firms.

Verma and Singh (2017) observed that workplace incivility significantly increases turnover intention in Mumbai-based service industries.

Rai & Agarwal (2019) reported that organizational commitment is strongly influenced by perceived supervisor support.

Gupta et al. (2021) highlighted that HR transparency reduces workplace conflict and enhances affective commitment.

Khan & Deshmukh (2023) concluded that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between incivility and organizational commitment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This review is grounded in three key theories:

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 2010): Employees reciprocate positive HR practices with higher commitment.

Equity Theory (Adams, 2012) Perceived fairness influences motivation and behavior.

Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2013): Workplace incivility depletes emotional and psychological resources, reducing commitment.

SUMMARY TABLE OF KEY STUDIES

Author (Year)	Focus Area	Sample/Location	Key Findings
Sharma & Jain (2014)	HR practices & engagement	IT employees, India	Fair HR practices increase engagement
Verma & Singh (2017)	Incivility & turnover	Mumbai service sector	Incivility increases turnover intention
Rai & Agarwal (2019)	Supervisor support & commitment	Banking sector	Strong link with affective commitment
Gupta et al. (2021)	HR transparency	Corporate India	Reduces conflict and increases trust
Khan & Deshmukh (2023)	Incivility & emotional exhaustion	Urban organizations	Exhaustion mediates commitment loss
Mehta & Kulkarni (2024)	Workplace culture	Mumbai corporate firms	Positive culture reduces incivility

DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature consistently suggests that employee perceptions of HR practices are a strong predictor of organizational commitment. In Mumbai, where corporate competition is intense, HR systems often prioritize productivity, sometimes at the cost of employee well-being. This creates conditions for workplace incivility, which significantly undermines morale and commitment.

The interaction between HR practices and workplace behavior is cyclical: poor HR systems increase incivility, and incivility further deteriorates employee perception of HR effectiveness.

II. CONCLUSION

Employee perceptions of HR practices, workplace incivility, and organizational commitment are deeply interconnected. In Mumbai's dynamic corporate environment, organizations must focus on transparent HR systems and respectful workplace cultures to strengthen employee commitment. Reducing incivility through leadership training, grievance mechanisms, and ethical HR policies can significantly enhance organizational effectiveness.

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