

Introduction

- Adverse work conditions relate to behaviors and health issues at an empirical and theoretical level
- Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) explains how metaphors influence cognitive processes and then thoughts and attitudes (Landau et al., 2010)
- A dirty workspace can lead to harsh judgments
- Uncomfortably warm office temperature can cause employees to misattribute discomfort to coworkers (Anderson, 2001)
- Moderate noise levels can raise blood pressure and lead to stress hormones secreted (Kryter, 1994)
- Constant noise can be perceived as an annoyance and lead to chronic stress (Lercher, Hortnagl, & Kofler, 1993)
- Higher interdependence allows for more frequent employee interactions and more opportunities for uncivil behaviors
- Incivility has consistently been empirically linked to health issues (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996)
- Theoretically, victims of incivility experience stress, which can lead to negative health outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

Hypothesis

Adverse work conditions in combination with high levels of interdependence will lead to greater workplace incivility, which in turn will lead to more employee health problems.

Purpose

The goal of this study is to look beyond the psychological environment and examine the effects of physical surroundings on perceived incivility and resulting physical symptoms.

Methods

Participants included 220 male, 357 female, and 80 unreported gendered workers from around the U.S. Each participant was emailed a link to an online survey containing a variety of measures.

Measures

- Cortina et al.'s (2001) Workplace Incivility Scale
- Spector and Jex's (1998) scale with negative health symptoms
- Morgeson and Humphrey's (2006) Work Design Questionnaire assessing noise, temperature, accidents, health hazards, and cleanliness
- Demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, tenure, year in school, number of hours worked)

Model



Results

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis used PROC CALIS based on means, standard deviations, and the correlation matrix to test the model. Goodness-of-fit indices included the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Bentler's Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Values for the CFI above .95 suggest a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999), values less than .08 suggest a good fit for SRMR, and values less than .06 suggest a good fit according to RMSEA (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Based on these guidelines, the results suggest a good fit between the data and the proposed model (Bentler's CFI = .99, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .01).

Conclusions

- Physical work environment is a strong predictor of increased perceptions of workplace incivility
- Excessive noise, uncomfortable temperatures, and office cleanliness all lead to a greater likelihood of workplace incivility
- These hurtful behaviors then increase employees' chances of fatigue, headaches, backaches, and other forms of sickness
- The more interdependent the job, the more likely the employees were to experience workplace incivility
- These findings are particularly relevant as jobs progressively become more team-based

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