

EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES OF THE FORMS, CONSEQUENCES AND STRATEGIES FOR CURBING WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

Trustee EFAYENA,

Institute of Education, Delta State University, Nigeria

tefayena@gmail.com

Avwiry, H. E.,

Institute of Education, Delta State University, Nigeria

havwiri@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explores gender differences of the forms, consequences and strategies for curbing workplace incivility among primary school teachers in Delta State, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey which adopted the ex-post-facto design. The population comprised all the public primary schools in Delta State, from which a sample of 362 teachers (112 males 250 female) was drawn exploring purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was researcher developed: titled ‘Forms, Consequences and Strategies for Curbing Incivility Questionnaire (FCSCIQ)’. Face and content validity were employed validating the instrument which was further subjected to a reliability test which yielded .82 indicating a high reliability index. Data obtained were analysed using mean score for research questions at 2.50 bench mark and t-test for hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that multifaceted forms of incivility manifested in the primary schools; incivility had grave consequence for the schools; positive school climate, culture, prompt and decisive response to acts of uncivil conduct were effective strategies for curbing incivility. Results additionally indicated that significant difference does exist between male and female teachers’ view on forms of incivility, whereas in terms of consequences of incivility and strategies for curbing incivility, significant difference was not recorded between male and female teachers. It was therefore recommended among others that the school leadership should ensure positive school climate, culture and address uncivil conduct decisively, etc.*

Key words: *forms of incivility; consequences of incivility; curbing incivility; primary school teachers.*

Introduction

Teachers are the main human sources and they have the greatest impact on classroom and students' academic performance. Teachers are integral to the educational system; they are invaluable assets in school due to their expertise, impact on student achievement, and classroom management skills. Teachers possess specialized subject knowledge and pedagogical skills that enable them to effectively deliver instruction that helps them to provide feedback, and support to help students develop essential knowledge, skills and competencies. They play crucial role in shaping students' character, values, and personal development by serving as role models and inspiring students to reach their full potential.

Anderson and Pearson (2023) defined workplace incivility as a “low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others”. Uncivil behaviour in workplace is seen by Namin, Ogaard and Roislien (2022) as violating workplace norms, showing discourteous behaviour, and avoiding job responsibilities. Thus, workplace incivility may refer to unproductive employee behaviour or counterproductive work behaviour that harms organizational interests and wellbeing, for instance, stealing office inventory, damaging organization's property, bullying co-workers or students, avoiding job duties, reporting to work late, neglecting students and so on. Incivility is typically viewed as a sort of emotional and psychological aggressiveness that goes against the ideal workplace norms of respect for one another.

The primary goal of the school is to deliver formal, structured instruction in the hopes of creating well-behaved, orderly adults (Avwiri, 2020, Efayena, 2023). In an environment where uncivil disposition flourishes, this objective cannot be accomplished. Administrators, parents, and students frequently treat teachers disrespectfully, which fosters a toxic workplace that threatens morale and job satisfaction. The dynamics of primary school settings in Delta State have a considerable impact on teachers' professional experiences. An increasing number of studies highlight how crucial leadership is in educational settings. According to Johnson and Smith (2022), Anderson and Pearson found that the conduct of school administrators significantly affects the work satisfaction and retention of teachers.

Incivility by school leaders has been highlighted as a critical factor contributing to increased stress and discontent among teachers, as evidenced by disrespectful speech and bad relationships. According to Smith and Johnson (2020) there is a substantial link between workplace incivility and poor effects for employees, such as increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and plans to leave. Co-worker incivility can compound these challenges in primary schools, where teamwork among instructors is critical. Instructors who experienced incivility from colleagues are more likely to consider leaving their jobs. It reduces job happiness, lowers workplace commitment, and increased attrition intentions. Reduced commitment and the emotional toll of dealing with incivility contribute to increased teacher attrition intentions (Bjork 2011 & McKinney, 2015)

Research has consistently indicated that female teachers are more likely to experience incivility in the primary school system compared to their male counterparts. Studies have shown that female teachers are more often subjected to verbal abuse, disrespect, and intimidation by students, parents, and colleagues (Björk, 2011; McKinney, 2015). The studies of Burke, et al (2019) and Tamir, et al (2016) reported that female teachers are more likely to face emotional and psychological distress due to uncivil conduct, which can negatively affect their job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. On the other hand, male teachers tend to experience less incivility in the primary school system, although they are not immune to it. According to research, male teachers are less likely to be resisted or treated disrespectfully by parents and kids because they are more likely to be seen as authoritative individuals (Smit, 2015). Nonetheless, male educators may still encounter rudeness, especially if they are thought to be less macho or dictatorial (Martino, 2008, Avwiri, 2016). Overall, the evidence indicates that female teachers are more susceptible to incivility, even though both male and female teachers may encounter it. Muliira, Natarajan, and Van der Colff (2017) have reported that students' incivility includes sarcastic remarks, unacceptable complaints and objections, disregard for social discourse, incapacity or reluctance to listen to others' opinions or seek mutuality, and exam cheating. According to Keng (2017), rudeness, alienation, and disdain for others are the most common forms of antagonism noticed in organisations. Speaking about the detrimental effects of rudeness in gossip, Orunbon and Ibikunle (2023) claimed that it creates a hostile environment at work by fostering disagreement, hurting feelings, and encouraging bullying and harassment. According to Mohammadipour, Hasanvand, Gooudarzi, Ebrahimzadeh, and Pournia (2018), rudeness is a reciprocal

behaviour in which both teachers and students engage. In a survey of 152 secondary schools on students' rudeness towards teachers, Woudstra, Rensburg, and Visser (2018) found that 62.1% of instructors had experienced verbal bullying. According to Porath (2009), 60% of the reported workplaces in their survey were started by higher-ranking individuals who were aiming their attacks at a lower-ranking official. According to a 2019 study by Cortina and Magley, harsh treatment is more detrimental to employees when it is started by a higher-ranking individual.

Coworkers are typically the biggest source of rudeness that results in turnover when compared to managers or superiors (Shinde and Warale2023). Porath (2016) reported that 49% of colleagues' rudeness resulted in instructors leaving their jobs. Hendryadi and Zannati (2018) found that a significant contributing factor to employees' decision to leave their jobs is a high level of workplace rudeness. Regarding the cost of workplace rudeness, Doshy and Wang (2014) believed that workers experience severe psychological trauma, which has a significant impact on their success and performance on the job. According to a 2017 study by Mahfooz et al., employees frequently have less motivation to stay in their jobs as a result of workplace rudeness. Carpenter and Berry (2015), Tolentino (2016), Riasat and Nisar (2016), Namin et al. (2022), and others have highlighted the detrimental effects of workplace rudeness on employees in a variety of ways, including social, psychological, and physical. They have pointed out that it has serious consequences for the organisation as well as for individuals.

A number of strategies can be used to reduce rudeness in elementary schools. Creating a clear code of conduct that specifies acceptable conduct and the penalties for rudeness is one potential tactic (Hutton, 2012). Additionally, schools can offer staff and instructors professional development opportunities and training in communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence (Porath& Pearson, 2010). Furthermore, schools can foster a positive school culture by promoting respect, empathy, and inclusivity among teachers, staff, and students (Kelloway, Francis and Catano, 2010). Another possible strategy for curbing workplace incivility in primary schools is to implement restorative practices, such as restorative circles and restorative mediations (Thorsborne&Vinegrad, 2014). These methods can help instructors, staff, and students develop strong bonds, settle disputes, and foster a sense of belonging and respect. Furthermore, schools can set up a system for reporting instances of rudeness, which can help pinpoint specific treatments and identify types and hotspots of rudeness

(Porath, 2016). Primary schools may create a more upbeat and courteous workplace by putting these tactics into practice.

Among all occupations, teaching has the highest turnover rate, according to Heller (2014). With the implementation of the Universal Basic Education program, school enrolment increased significantly, placing an undue burden on the few teachers who were available. According to Balogun (2019) and Adeyemi (2012), the Nigerian educational system has a surprising issue with the high rate of teacher attrition. Nigeria's teacher attrition rate is actually 15% higher than the global average, according to a 2020 World Bank research. This might not be entirely unrelated to rudeness at work. According to a 2023 assessment by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation, there is cause for grave concern. Nigeria is located in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has a concerning deficit of primary school teachers, according to the research.

Statement of the problem

Teachers are the most important resource for attaining high-quality education, and education has been shown to be one of the main drivers of societal change and development in Nigeria, particularly in Delta State. High levels of rudeness have been sustained among and against teachers in schools, and primary school teachers are not an exception. According to statistics, teacher abuse in Nigeria increased dramatically from 12% in 2010 to 23% in 2022 (Madumere-Obike, Ukala, and Nwabueze, 2022). There is no denying that the increase in teacher abuse is concerning. In addition to hindering the accomplishment of school goals, uncivil acts towards and among teachers wastes money on training, replacement costs, and the indirect costs required for new teachers to become proficient. In primary schools throughout the state, there has been a noticeable degree of rudeness among instructors, as well as student and head teacher anti-teacher behaviour. Teachers who encounter uncivil behaviour at work will undoubtedly face increased stress and significant negative effects on their mental and emotional health. Because of the school's social structure, cooperation amongst its stakeholders is essential for achieving shared advantages. However, it appears that unwholesome behaviour towards teachers by school administrators, students, and even among teachers themselves threatens the expected reciprocal advantages that the school's social structure should provide. Therefore, among other things, this research aims to investigate the forms, consequences, and tactics for reducing incivility in the primary school sector.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide the study.

- 1) What are the forms of work place incivility in Delta State primary schools?
- 2) What are the consequences of work place incivility among primary school teachers in Delta State?
- 3) What are the strategies for preventing work place incivility in Delta State primary schools?

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant difference among male and female teachers on the forms of workplace incivility in Delta State primary schools.
- 2) There is no significant difference among male and female teachers on the consequences of workplace incivility in Delta State primary schools.
- 3) There is no significant difference among male and female teachers on the strategies for curbing workplace incivility in Delta State primary schools

Methods

The study is a descriptive survey which adopted the ex-post-facto design. The population comprised all the public primary school in Delta State, Nigeria from which a sample of 362 teachers (112 males 250 female) was drawn exploring purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was researcher developed and titled “Forms, Consequences and Strategies for Curbing Workplace Incivility in Delta State Primary Schools Questionnaire (FCSCWIDSPSQ)”. The instrument was designed to elicit veritable information from teachers on their perception on the forms, consequences and strategies for mitigating incivility. Four point rating scales of STRONGLY AGREED (SA=4), AGREED (A=3), DISAGREED (=2) and STRONGLY DISAGREED (=1) was used by respondents to indicate their opinion. The instrument was face and content validated and was further subjected to a reliability test using 30 respondents who were not part of the study area. Split-half reliability test was adopted, scores computed using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded .82 indicating a high reliability index. Data obtained were analysed using mean score for research questions at 2.50 bench mark and t-test for hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the forms of incivility in Primary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

MAL	FEMAL
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S N	Items: Forms of Incivility	X1	E SD1	Decision	X2	E SD2	Decisio n
1	High rate of gossip among teachers	3.28	0.93	Agreed	3.74	0.44	Agreed
2	Physical intimidatio n	3.36	0.72	Agreed	2.71	0.45	Agreed
3	Withholdin g information	2.46	0.50	Disagree d	2.67	0.47	Agreed
4	Humiliated or ridicule	2.87	1.31	Agreed	3.20	1.33	Agreed
5	False accusation	2.65	1.40	Agreed	3.09	1.39	Agreed
6	Unwarrante d teasing from colleagues	2.51	1.11	Agreed	3.07	0.99	Agreed
7	Lack of mutual respect from colleagues	3.99	0.10	Agreed	3.73	0.45	Agreed
8	Disrespect from students	2.77	0.71	Agreed	2.77	0.71	Agreed
9	Insults from students	2.59	1.07	Agreed	2.53	0.76	Agreed
10	Offensive remarks	2.06	0.24	Disagree d	3.25	0.77	Agreed
11	Being howl at	4.00	0.00	Agreed	2.77	1.45	Agreed
12	Persistent criticism of work	2.44	0.49	Disagree d	2.86	0.93	Agreed
13	Threats of violence	2.37	0.65	Disagree d	2.95	0.78	Agreed
14	Sexual	2.1	0.35	Disagree	2.9	0.81	Agreed

	harassment	4		d	9		
15	Rude remarks from superiors	2.0 6	0.24	Disagree d	2.7 3	0.64	Agreed
16	Stalking from the opposite sex	3.0 9	1.39	Disagree d	2.5 9	1.07	Agreed
17	Unwarranted negative feedback of teaching review	3.4 8	0.50	Agreed	2.5 1	1.11	Agreed
18	Giving silent treatment	2.5 3	0.76	Agreed	2.6 5	1.45	Agreed
19	Sending nasty and belittling message	3.3 3	1.13	Agreed	3.4 9	0.50	Agreed
20	Invading spaces	3.9 9	0.10	Agreed	3.0 7	0.99	Agreed
	GRAND MEAN	2.9 0		Agreed	2.9 4		Agreed

Table 1 shows the mean rating of both male and female primary teachers' view on the general forms of incivility perpetuated in the primary schools across stakeholders. While male teachers do not see withholding of information, offensive remarks, persistent criticism of work, threats of violence, sexual harassment, rude remarks from superiors, and stalking from the opposite sex as forms of incivility within the Primary School, their female counterparts think otherwise. However, the grand mean rating of 2.90 and 2.94 for male and female teachers respectively which are above the bench mark of 2.50 indicate that these uncivil acts are prevalent in Delta State primary schools.

Table 2: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the cost of incivility in the primary school system in Delta State, Nigeria.

	MAL E	FEMAL E
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S N	Items: COST OF INCIVILIT Y	X1	SD1	Decisio n	X2	SD 2	Decisio n
1	Decreased work effort	2.8 7	0.80	Agreed	3.09	0.7 8	Agreed
2	Increased time spent on work	3.0 0	0.83	Agreed	2.93	0.8 8	Agreed
3	Decreased the quality of work	2.9 5	0.81	Agreed	2.96	0,8 4	Agreed
4	Lost work time worrying about incivility	3.0 5	0,89	Agreed	2.93	0.8 5	Agreed
5	Lost work time avoiding the offender	3.0 7	0,85	Agreed	2.88	0.8 3	Agreed
6	Leads to poor performanc e	3.1 1	0.77	Agreed	3.01	0.8 3	Agreed
7	Declined commitmen t	3.1 4	0.82	Agreed	3.05	0.7 9	Agreed
8	Leads to abandoned work	2.9 8	0.84	Agreed	3.07	0,8 1	Agreed
9	Affected negatively their general work readiness	2.6 7	0,85	Agreed	3.00	0.8 3	Agreed
10	Leads to teachers stress	3.1 4	0.78	Agreed	2.99	0.7 5	Agreed

GRAND	2.9	0.82	Agreed	2.99	0.8	Agreed
MEAN	9				2	

Table 2 indicates that both male and female respondents view all of items 1 – 10 as cost/ consequences of incivility in Delta State primary schools; as evident in the fact that all 10 items recorded mean score above the 2.50 bench mark of acceptance. Thus, it could be concluded that incivility has grave cost/consequence for the effective and efficient functioning of the primary school sector in Delta State.

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the strategies for preventing workplace incivility in primary schools Delta State, Nigeria.

		MAL			FEMAL		
		E			E		
S	Items:	X1	SD1	Decisio	X2	SD2	Decisio
N	Strategies			n			n
	for						
	preventing						
	incivility						
1	Establishment a positive school culture	3.0	0.84	Agreed	2.9	0.75	Agreed
		5			7		
2	Implement incivility a zero-tolerance policy	3.0	0.79	Agreed	3.0	0.84	Agreed
		3			5		
3	Promote	2.8	0.84	Agreed	3.0	0.79	Agreed

	open communicati on	7			6		
4	Staff training on emotional intelligence	2.9 5	0.82	Agreed	3.0 5	0.84	Agreed
5	Mindfulness and self-care	3.1 4	0.82	Agreed	2.9 5	0.75	Agreed
6	Foster resilience among staff by promoting a growth mindset	3.0 1	0.80	Agreed	3.1 4	0.82	Agreed
7	Model respectful behavior	2.9 5	0.75	Agreed	2.9 7	0.75	Agreed
8	Fostering a positive school climate	3.0 8	0.82	Agreed	3.1 4	0.84	Agreed
9	Address incivility promptly	2.9 5	0.75	Agreed	3.1 1	0.83	Agreed
10	Encourage collaboration among teachers	3.0 1	0.80	Agreed	3.0 5	0.84	Agreed

11	Teacher- student relationships	3.1 4	0.82	Agreed	3.1 1	0.77	Agreed
	GRAND	3.0	0.79	Agree	3.0	0.81	Agree
	MEAN	2		d	5		d

Table 3 indicates that both male and female respondents view all of items 1 – 11 as effective strategies for curbing incivility in Delta State primary schools; as evident in the fact that all 11 items recorded mean score above the 2.50 bench mark of acceptance. Thus, it could be concluded that incivility has grave cost/consequence for the effective and efficient functioning of the primary school sector in Delta State.

Table 4: T-test summary of the difference in the mean rating of primary school teachers on the forms of incivility when gender is considered.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sig.	Decision
Male	11	59.3	6.46	36				Significant
	2	8		0				t
					3.01	1.9	0.05	Hypothesis rejected
					1	6		
Female	25	56.2	12.0					
	0	2	6					

In table 4, the t-calculated value of 3.011 is higher than t-critical value of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean responses of male and female primary school teachers on their consideration of what forms incivility in the schools. This implies female teachers view acts of incivility different from their male counterpart.

Table 5: T-test summary of the difference between male and female primary school teachers mean rating of the cost of incivility to the primary school system in Delta State

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sig,	Decision
Male	112	29.9	8.2	360	.141	1.95	0.05	Not Sig. Hyp. Accepted
Female	250	29.9	8.2					

In table 5, the t-calculated value of .141 is less than t-critical value of 1.95. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female primary school teachers on their consideration of what are the cost/ consequences of incivility in the schools. This means that both male and female teachers hold the same view on the consequences of incivility in primary schools.

Table 6: T-test summary of the strategies for preventing workplace incivility in Delta State primary school

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sig,	Decision
Male	112	33.22	8.69	360	-1.009	1.95	0.05	Not Sig. Hyp. Accepted
Female	250	33.55	8.91					

In table 6, the t-calculated value of -1.009 is less than t-critical value of 1.95. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female primary school teachers on their consideration of what constitute strategies for curbing incivility in the schools. This means that both male and female teachers hold the same view on the strategies for preventing incivility in primary schools.

Discussion of results

There is a clear disparity between the mean assessment of male and female primary teachers about the general types of rudeness that are maintained in primary schools by all parties involved. However, the mean for male teachers was lower than that of female teachers. Additionally, the obvious difference was proven by the grand mean ratings of 2.90 and 2.94 for male and female teachers, respectively. However, it is important to note that the differences are more pronounced in the areas of sexual harassment, threats of violence, frequent criticism of one's work, withholding information, insulting statements, harsh remarks from superiors, and stalking by the other sex. This is consistent with research by Burke et al. (2019) and Tamir et al. (2016), which found that female teachers encountered more rudeness from supervisors, coworkers, and pupils. Additionally, the current study supports the findings of Muliira, Natarajan, and Van der Colff (2017), who found that among the incivility reported by faculty, students' disregard for social discourse, unacceptable complaints and objections, sarcastic remarks, exam cheating, and disrespect for others are among the most common behaviours. According to Keng (2017), rudeness, alienation, and disdain for others are the most common forms of antagonism noticed in organisations. Male and female teachers' perceptions of uncivil behaviour differed significantly, according to Koth and Bradshaw (2013) and Waasdrop and Bradshaw (2015). The results of this study also show how serious the consequences of rudeness in the educational system are.

This is demonstrated by the fact that both male and female educators concurred that rudeness in the classroom lowers commitment, effort, and quality of work; it also causes anxiety, poor performance, and work abandonment, which in turn affects work preparedness and instructors' stress levels, among other things. The results of this study are consistent with research by Hendryadi and Zannati (2018), which found that high levels of workplace rudeness are a significant influence in employees' intentions to leave. Regarding the cost of workplace rudeness, Doshy and Wang (2014) believed that workers experience severe psychological trauma, which has a significant impact on their success and performance on the job. According to Mahfooz et al. (2017), employees frequently have less motivation to stay in their jobs as a result of workplace rudeness. Berry (2015), Tolentino (2016), Riasat and Nisar (2016), Namin et al. (2022), and others have highlighted the detrimental effects of workplace rudeness on employees' physical, mental, and social well-being. They have pointed out that it has serious consequences for the organisation as well as for individuals. Speaking about the detrimental effects of gossip, Orunbon and Ibikunle (2023) claimed that it creates a hostile environment at

work by fostering disagreement, hurting feelings, and encouraging bullying and harassment.

Regarding how to reduce workplace rudeness in Delta State elementary schools, male and female educators have similar opinions. Therefore, a zero-tolerance policy for incivility, the creation of a positive school culture, the encouragement of open communication, emotional intelligence training, mindfulness, and self-care, the modelling of respectful behaviour, the development of resilience in staff, the prompt resolution of incivility, the encouragement of staff collaboration, and the maintenance of a healthy relationship between the school head, teachers, and students are all suggested as potential strategies to prevent incivility in schools. The results of Porath and Pearson (2010), Kelloway et al. (2010), Thorsborne and Vinegrad (2014), and Porath (2016) are all consistent with the current study. According to their research, preventing rudeness in the educational system depends heavily on a school's climate, organisational code of conduct, open and unrestricted communication, supervisors, staff, and students working together and maintaining constructive connections.

Conclusion

It is clear from the results and discussion above that incivility is rampant in schools. Additionally, it is apparent that uncivil acts in our schools have serious consequences and repercussions. The fact that teachers no longer perceive teaching to be an attractive career path makes this clear. However, as evident as the signs of incivility among and against teachers and the repercussions they cause, a supportive school environment, culture, and leadership will obviously obviate and lessen the negative effects of incivility on the teachers and on the school's general health. Another tactic to reduce rudeness in schools is cooperation between parents, instructors, students, and school administrators.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendations are put forth.

1. At the organizational level, the school heads/management, should ensure to create a school culture and climate that enhances respect, empathy and inclusivity through staff development.
2. Training should be organized for all members of staff within the school on emotional intelligence, self-discipline and resilience.
3. School leadership should address any act of incivility promptly, decisively and justly.

4. there is need to put policies that project female teachers from uncivil acts within the school system

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