# Exploring the Impact of Workplace Incivility on Employee Counterproductive Work Behavior through the Mediating Role of Turnover Intention: Evidence from The Gambia and Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

Workplace Incivility (WPI) has recently become a dominant area of research as a predictor of employee behavior at work. WPI is a menace in the workplace that creates dissatisfied employees who spend most of their time on non-productive tasks. Based on a sample of 504 employees of public and private sector institutions in The Gambia and Ghana, this article examines the impact of workplace incivility on employee counterproductive work behavior through the mediating role of Turnover Intention (TI). Using structural equation modeling, the results indicate a strong relationship between workplace incivility and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) as well as a partial mediating role of TI in the relationship between WPI and CWB. Furthermore, the independent sample t-test and multigroup analysis show a higher level of WPI, TI, and CWB in Ghana compared to The Gambia. These findings contribute to the under-researched area of WPI on the African continent. This study also adds value to the existing, but sparse, literature on workplace incivility and may also be used as a guide for public and private institutions in their pursuit of avoiding workplace incivility as well as knowing its effects on institutional productivity. Finally, this study is the first of its kind to look at the existence of WPI in both public and private institutions from The Gambia and Ghana making country comparisons as well as looking at the impact of WPI on the performance of employees hence its relevance to the literature.

Workplace Incivility (WPI) is a common reality across most institutions and cultures, making it a universal issue of interest (Bashir et al., 2020). It indicates that rudeness exists in the workplace and impacts these organizations and their functionality. As a domain in the research on negative workplace behavior, WPI was first introduced in an influential theoretical paper by Andersson and Pearson (1999) published in the Academy of Management Review. Since its publication over two decades ago, it has continued to grow in popularity among scholars of workplace behavior. However, even though the subject matter of WPI has gained popularity among scholars, few countries have been used as a sample for such a study, and those who have been used are classified as developed and emerging economy countries. Among these countries are the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, Cyprus, German, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK (Vasconcelos, 2020). The majority of the papers on this subject used the USA and Europe as a sample leaving the African continent underrepresented; only one such study uses Nigeria as a sample and is authored by Abubakar et al. (2018a). This study explores the influence of workplace incivility (rudeness) on employees' counterproductive work behavior through the mediating role of turnover intention.

The African continent represents 12 percent of the world's population. However, research on the continent accounts for less than 1 percent of total global research (Duermeijer et al., 2018). This shows a great deficiency and underrepresentation concerning research numbers on the continent (Rossiter & Ishaku, 2019). These percentages are extremely low and contain small sample sizes, which necessitate more studies related to the African continent using credible data that can give insight into the managerial and organizational structures that exist (Duermeijer et al., 2018; Kamoche, 2011). To fill this gap of underrepresentation of the African continent in the available literature of WPI, this study uses two countries, The Gambia and Ghana, as a sample using employees of public and private sector institutions. African countries, specifically The Gambia and Ghana, are culturally diverse, so using them as samples may produce interesting results on the literature of WPI that can be used by scholars and organizations alike.

This study is the first of its kind to explore the condition of workplace incivility in both public and private institutions of African countries, using The Gambia and Ghana as examples. It also looks at the causal effect between workplace incivility and employee counter-productivity. The comparison of The Gambia and Ghana in terms of their WPI averages is a vital contribution and the results of this study will help scholars to learn if there is a relationship between WPI and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) in research that uses Africa as a sample continent. It will also help public and private institutions in The Gambia and Ghana learn about some of the negative impacts that workplace incivility can cause on their employees' performance, and the results of this study will also be an asset for future researchers in the subject area.

The studies related to workplace incivility have mostly concentrated on the private sector as a sample in their investigation of the relationship between WPI and CWB (Schilpzand et al., 2016a; Vasconcelos, 2020). A few look at the public sector as a sample (Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina & Magley, 2009). These studies mostly look at a single sector, not both. However, our research aims to fill this gap by looking at both the public and private sectors as well as making a sector comparison to see the differences that may exist based on sectors. Additionally, according to Schilpzand et al. (2016a) and Vasconcelos (2020), there is a lack of cross-country

studies when it comes to studies on WPI. Our research compares two countries to see the existence of a difference in the impact of WPI on CWB based on country analysis, which is the first of its kind to the best of our knowledge. The Gambia and Ghana are two countries with similarities and differences, and comparing them on these metrics can contribute to the literature on WPI. These countries are culturally different, which may also impact their understanding of WPI and its impact on employee CWB. WPI is not experienced in one geographic area but is a phenomenon that exists worldwide, hence the importance of covering more countries and, most importantly, doing cross-country studies.

## Literature Review
### *Workplace Incivility*

Workplace incivility "is low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. These uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (Andersson & Pearson 1999, p. 457). Compared to mistreatment, which involves the intention to harm the target, WPI is ambiguous in the sense that the perpetration may even lack the knowledge of being uncivil (Pearson et al., 2001; Pearson et al., 2005).

Being uncivil, knowingly or unknowingly, creates a negative impact on the target as well as the witness. Additionally, it creates an unpleasant business culture and working environment that can negatively impact the performance of employees (Pearson et al., 2001). Workplace incivility is a negative behavior that goes against moral values and could lead to aggression and violence. It is of paramount importance for organizations to know more about incivility as well as its possible consequences, and to not forget the solutions to these consequences (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

Within a number of research papers on incivility, several scholars have concentrated on the detrimental outcomes that negative behavior can cause. Among them are: low job satisfaction (Alias et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2008), low organizational commitment and satisfaction (Reio, 2011), turnover intention (Ghosh et al., 2013), emotional exhaustion (Cho et al., 2016; Hur et al., 2015; Welbourne et al., 2020), psychological withdrawal behavior and self-blame (Schilpzand et al., 2016b), job burnout (Rahim & Cosby, 2016), low creativity and reduced intrinsic motivation (Hur et al., 2016), knowledge hiding (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), job-related anxiety (De Clercq et al., 2018), low organizational citizenship behavior (De Clercq et al., 2019; Mackey et al., 2019), sabotage behavior (Cheng et al., 2019), counterproductive behavior (Daniels & Jordan, 2019; Penney & Spector, 2005), sleep disorders (Demsky et al., 2019), and work-to-family conflict (Lim & Lee, 2011; Ferguson, 2012; Cheng et al., 2019). Workplace incivility is a constantly encountered phenomenon with a serious negative impact on interpersonal relationships as well as organizational survival.

Cortina et al. (2001), in their research on examining the impact of incivility on employees used a sample of 1180 public sector employees in the USA. Out of this sample, 71% reported some form of experienced incivility, and women endured greater frequencies of incivility compared to their male counterparts. Employees who experienced WPI had low job satisfaction levels and high job withdrawal levels. Additionally, these negative behaviors caused them greater psychological distress and, to a lesser extent, impacted their physical health. Intending

to find the relationship between WPI and employees' occupational and psychological well-being, Lim et al. (2008) used a sample of 1158 employees in the USA. The results of their study indicated an impact of incivility on the well-being of employees as well as their intention to leave their organization. Incivility does not only impact the employees at their workplace but also at home. To find out how experienced incivility at the workplace can also impact an employee's behavior both at work and their family Lim and Lee (2011) looked at the relationship between incivility and work-to-family conflict. Using a sample of 180 employees from different organizations in Singapore indicates a strong relationship between incivility and work-to-family conflict, increased perception of unfair treatment, and increased depression. They also postulated that employees face a higher level of incivility from their supervisors than coworkers or subordinates.  All these studies used a single country and sector as a sample.

The realities of WPI and how it impacts employees in organizations have started gaining attention from researchers in the field of negative behaviors. However, a few countries have been covered with a majority of those papers using the USA as a sample and the rest covering Europe and Asia (Schilpzand et al., 2016a; Vasconcelos, 2020). It will be of paramount importance to explore the realities of WPI from other parts of the World using cross country or cross-cultural lens as well as knowing the realities of WPI and its existence in other countries. This research tries to fill this gap by using the under-researched African continent as a sample, using The Gambia and Ghana as cases. The study did not only look at the existence of WPI in these countries but compared the two to find similarities and differences. Studies done on WPI involve employees from a wide variety of professions, most of whom are from the private sector with very few from the public sector (Schilpzand et al., 2016a). This means there is a lack of enough research on the understanding and situation of WPI in the public sector.  Additionally, a comparison of the public and private sectors unearths the differences, based on sector realities, that are not covered by present literature.

In their literature review papers, Schilpzand et al. (2016a) and Vasconcelos (2020) indicated a strong relationship between incivility and counterproductive work behavior in organizations with high incivility levels. Incivility is a stressor that, when not regulated, may lead to efficiency impairment which comes in the forms of reduced performance, counterproductive work behavior, or, more extremely, the intention for revenge (Han et al., 2021; Penney & Spector, 2005). This research postulates the following hypotheses:

**H1:** *Workplace incivility has a positively significant relationship with employee counterproductive work behavior.*
**H2:** *Workplace incivility has a positively significant relationship with employee turnover intention.*

### *Workplace Incivility and Employee Counterproductive Work Behavior*
Being professional in the workplace is strongly related to organizational ethics of civil behavior (Phillips et al., 2018). Uncivil behavior, which entails a lack of regard for others as well as being rude and discourteous, is, however, against the ethics of mutual respect in organizations (Andersson & Pearson 1999), and these uncivil behaviors are related to counterproductive work behavior (Alyahya et al., 2021; Zhu & Zhang, 2021).

Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) has gained popularity among researchers and the general public due to its detrimental impact on organizational efficiency and effectiveness. These are behaviors that are intended to harm an organization or its stakeholders (Spector & Fox, 2005). According to Fox et al. (2001) CWB is "behavior that is intended to have a detrimental effect on organizations and their members. It can include overt acts such as aggression and theft or more passive acts, such as purposely failing to follow instructions or doing work incorrectly" (p. 292).

Researchers looking at the relationship between workplace incivility and CWB have conceptualized the concept of CWB in different ways. Among them are: abusive behavior (Adams & Webster, 2013; Matthews & Ritter, 2016), withdrawal behavior (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Loi et al., 2015; Sliter et al., 2012a), deviance (Lim & Teo, 2009; Itzkovich, 2016), absenteeism (Porath & Pearson, 2012; Sliter et al., 2012b), tardiness (Sliter et al., 2012b), and sabotage (Abubakar et al., 2018b; Cheng et al., 2019). The scales used by these authors indicated the existence of an overlapping set of behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005). What is most common in all these scales measuring different conceptualizations of CWB was the existence of behaviors that were harmful to the organizations and property as well as harming employees who, as a result, may reduce their effectiveness at the workplace (Fox et al., 2001; Spector et al., 2006). All the findings of these studies mentioned above indicate a strong and significant relationship between WPI and CWB. Our research aims to continue this tradition by using the African continent as a sample to check the relationship between WPI and CWB proposed by hypothesis one (H1).

## *Turnover Intention as a Mediator*

The workplace can be a challenging place to make things work. Some employees find it easy to cope with their daily responsibilities while others find it difficult or even unbearable to stay motivated and find quitting as the only remedy. The feeling an employee has in wanting to quit their organization is considered turnover intention. Turnover Intention (TI) is "a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization" (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p. 262). It indicates the extent of an employee's likelihood of leaving an organization (Mobley, 1977). Employees' TI can result from their dissatisfaction with the job, high workload, lack of organizational support, and experienced incivility (Vasconcelos, 2020). Employees intending to leave their job may spend time searching for other employment opportunities that can reduce their productivity levels at their workplace.

TI has been widely linked to the performance outcomes of employees (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). Employees with an intention to quit an organization mostly lack the motivation to contribute to positive organizational performance (Nuhn & Wald, 2016). Coyne and Ong (2007) indicated a negative relationship between turnover intention and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). This means that when an employee intends to leave an organization, their level of OCB reduces. According to Sender et al. (2021), employees with the intention to leave an organization are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors. Some of these types of deviant behaviors can include theft of company property, going against the wishes of their supervisor, and arriving to work late (Sender et al., 2021). Due to their intention to quit, they may also adopt other withdrawal behaviors which may also affect organizational effectiveness (Chang et al., 2013). TI is also positively related to the decrease in overall

employee energy and work output due to the social presence of other colleagues, especially when working in groups. Such employees may try to hide behind the general output of the group while intentionally decreasing their own output, as there are few measures to indicate their contributions to the group (Alyahya et al., 2021).

The use of TI as a mediator in the relationship between negative workplace behaviors is very minimal. The few papers that used TI as a mediator include Zhu and Zhang (2021) and Alyahya et al. (2021). Alyahya et al. (2021), with the use of the social exchange theory as a theoretical background, postulated that when employees sense any form of injustice or feeling of insecurity within their organization may respond through the intention to quit or CWB. Their results indicate a significant relationship between job insecurity and social loafing as well as distributive injustice and social loafing through the mediating role of TI. On their part, Zhu and Zhang (2021) investigated the relationship between ostracism and CWB through the mediating role of TI. The correlation results of the study indicated a positively significant relationship between ostracism, TI, and CWB. The mediation results indicated that ostracism could cause CWB through the mediating role of TI. This study is similar in the sense that it looks at the relationship between WPI and employee CWB through the mediating role of TI, prompting the following additional hypotheses:

**H3:** *Turnover intention has a positively significant relationship with employee counterproductive work behavior.*

**H4:** *Turnover intention positively mediates the positive relationship between workplace incivility and employee counterproductive work behavior.*

## Study Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between workplace incivility and employee counterproductive work behavior through the mediating role of turnover intention. The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) was used to create the research framework. This theory helps explain the relationship between WPI and employee CWB through the mediating role of TI.

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a major theory used in understanding workplace behavior and relations which makes it a popular theory in behavioral studies (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Researchers have used it to understand behaviors related to commitment, organizational support (Cropanzano et al., 2017), incivility (Meier & Spector, 2013), and social loafing (Hou & Zhang, 2021). SET is "the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others" (Blau, 1964, p. 91). It is a relationship that exists between two people, which involves a cost and a benefit. The behavior of a person in the workplace is usually contingent on the behavior of another hence the reason why it is considered to be a reciprocal process where when one receives a benefit, they are expected to reciprocate the same benefit in some form (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976). When a favor is received from a person, there is an expectation of returning the same favor (Emerson, 1976).

Incivility is considered a major stressor in the workplace which disturbs the basic foundation of an employee's social exchange relationship within the organization (Meier & Spector, 2013). Incivility violates the norms of respectful workplace treatment and reduces the mutual

obligations and commitments between the exchanging partners (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The principle of reciprocity in the SET indicates that when a person is treated well at the workplace, their contribution towards organizational development is likely to increase (Vaitoonkiat & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). However, when they are treated negatively (e.g., through incivility) they may also reciprocate by also behaving negatively through CWB or even having the intention to quit their job (Han et al., 2021). The model of this research, as shown in Figure 1, uses the SET because the researchers hypothesized that a negative behavior like WPI towards an employee may lead to CWB as a form of reciprocation. It also postulates that TI mediates the relationship between WPI and CWB.

**Figure 1**
*Conceptual Framework*
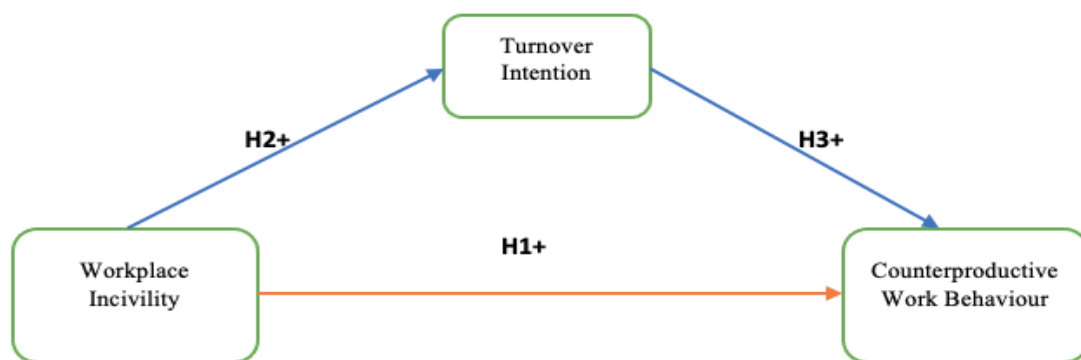


## Method
### Participants
Participants for this study were selected from both public and private sector organizations in The Gambia and Ghana. The organizations were selected based on purposive sampling which involved the researchers' judgment on the most suitable organizations and participants for the survey (Etikan et al., 2016; Polit & Beck, 2010). The organizations selected were from the greater Banjul area for the Gambian sample and the greater Accra region for the Ghanaian sample since most of the offices are located there. A total of 768 hardcopy survey questionnaires were sent, and 504 copies were received, giving a total response rate of 66%.

### Instruments
The research model uses three main scales to measure the three existing components of workplace incivility, turnover intention, and counterproductive work behavior. The scale was adopted from reliable sources to avoid internal inconsistencies.

Workplace incivility had seven items adopted from Cortina et al. (2001) which asked respondents on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Quite often, 5 = Very often) the frequency of incivility they face in their organization.

Turnover intention had four items adopted from Kelloway et al. (1999), asking respondents on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree) about their intentions to leave their current organization.

For counterproductive work behavior, a ten items scale from Spector et al. (2010) was used to ask respondents on a scale of 1 to 5(1 = Never, 2 = Once or twice, 3 = Once or twice per month, 4 = Once or twice per week, 5 = Every day) their frequency in being involved in CWB in their organization.

A reliability test was conducted for all the components separately to check the internal consistency of the scales used in this research. As a result, they all had a Cronbach's alpha score of above .80.

## Procedure

Before the actual data collection process, a pilot study was conducted to gauge the reliability of the measurement scale. The survey questionnaires were physically submitted to all the sample organizations for answering. After the data collection process, the responses were put into an Excel spreadsheet which was later converted into an SPSS dataset for analysis.

## Ethical Considerations

To conduct reliable and ethical research that follows academic rules, an application for the approval of this research topic and scale was submitted. The Ibn Haldun University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee reviewed the topic and scale, and after a rigorous process, it was approved (Reference number: E-71395021-020-11174). On the first page of the survey questionnaire, respondents were given an introduction to the research and its purpose and were assured that any information provided through the data collection process would be treated as confidential. Additionally, they were informed that the exercise was voluntary and they had the free will to answer the survey questions.

## Data Analyses

Data analysis was done with the use of two quantitative software packages; IBM SPSS version 20 and AMOS version 24. IBM SPSS was used for preliminary data analysis, which involved normality and reliability as well as adjusting for missing data. It was also used for descriptive statistics to indicate the characteristics of the sample and for independent t-tests to show if a difference exists within groups. AMOS was then used to run a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the research model to assess its reliability and validity. It was also used to run Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the research hypotheses indicating their relationships and validity.

# Results

## Sample Characteristics

The sample's characteristics using frequencies indicate a total sample size of 504 employees, among which 259 representing 51.4% are from the Gambia, and 245 representing 48.6% are from Ghana. Of the total sample, 52.8%  are employees of public sector institutions, while 47.2% are from the private sector. The sample was slightly male dominated with 267 representing 53.0%, while females made up 237 representing 47.0%. The detailed results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**
*Sample Characteristics*

|  | Gender | N | Percentage | Sector | N | Percentage | Country | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | Male | 267 | 53 | Public Sector | 266 | 52,8 | The Gambia | 259 | 51,4 |
|  | Female | 237 | 47 | Private Sector | 238 | 47,2 | Ghana | 245 | 48,6 |
| Total |  | 504 | 100 |  | 504 | 100 |  | 504 | 100 |

## Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics results in Table 2 show the means of CWB (1.84), TI (2.75), and WI (2.18), which indicates the existence of these behaviors and intentions among the respondents of the sample. The Cronbach's Alpha results, which are all above .8, indicate the internal consistency of the measurement scales used for the research. For a scale to be considered reliable its Cronbach's Alpha score should be .70 and above, which our scale has achieved (Hair et al., 2014).

The results in Table 2 also indicate the skewness and kurtosis values of the research sample distribution. For a sample to be normally distributed, the values for skewness and kurtosis should be between +2 and -2. All the values of our skewness and kurtosis are between +2 and -2, concluding that the data is normally distributed and suitable for the parametric test (Hair et al., 2014). A correlation test was done to test for a relationship among our variables. The results in Table 2 indicate a significant positive relationship among all the variables with a p-value at .01 significant level. CWB correlated with TI ($r = .25, p = .01$) and strongly with WPI ($r = .63, p = .01$). TI correlated with WPI ($r = .26, p = .01$).

**Table 2**
*Descriptive Analysis, Internal Consistencies, Skewness - Kurtosis Values, and Correlations*

| Variable | Mean | SD | α | Skewness | Kurtosis | CWB | TI | WPI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CWB | 1.84 | .82 | .88 | .74 | .01 | - |  |  |
| TI | 2.75 | 1.07 | .87 | 09 | -.57 | .25** | - |  |
| WPI | 2.18 | .73 | .89 | 1.09 | .35 | .63** | .26** | - |

*Note. α = Cronbach's Alpha; **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

## Independent T-test and Group Statistics Results

To see if there is a difference related to how employees see workplace incivility, turnover intention, and counterproductive work behavior, an independent t-test was done to compare groups. These groups were based on country and sector. Results of the t-test based on country showed a significant difference with regards to how employees in The Gambia and Ghana see WPI ($p = .000$) TI ($p = .000$), and CWB ($p = .000$), as shown in Table 3. WPI averages for The Gambia are 1.78 and 2.41 for Ghana, which, based on the questionnaire used, indicates that WPI rarely happens in The Gambia while it sometimes happens in Ghana. This shows that WPI is higher in Ghana when compared to The Gambia. With regards to the TI averages, The Gambia has a mean of 2.56, while Ghana has a mean of 2.94. This also indicates a higher turnover intention in Ghana compared to The Gambia. On the side of CWB, The Gambia has a

mean of 1.45 while Ghana has a mean of 2.24, which indicates a higher level of CWB in Ghana. This mean result indicates a prevalence of WPI, TI, and CWB in both countries.

**Table 3**

*Independent T-test Results Based on Country*

| Variable | t | p (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Country | N | M |
|----------|------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----|------|
| WPI | -7.92 | .000 | -.62 | The Gambia | 259 | 1.78 |
|     | -7.89 | .000 | -.62 | Ghana | 245 | 2.41 |
| TI | -4.05 | .000 | -.38 | The Gambia | 259 | 2.56 |
|    | -4.06 | .000 | -.38 | Ghana | 245 | 2.94 |
| CWB | -12.34 | .000 | -.79 | The Gambia | 259 | 1.45 |
|     | -12.16 | .000 | -.79 | Ghana | 245 | 2.24 |

An additional independent t-test to check the differences between public and private sector institutions, as indicated in Table 4, shows a significant difference in TI ($p = .01$) and CWB ($p = .01$), while it was insignificant when it came to WPI ($p = .56$). The group mean related to employee TI in the public sector is 2.63 and 2.88 in the private sector which indicates a higher rate of TI among employees in the private sector compared to the ones working for the public sector. The significant difference in CWB within sectors indicates a mean of 1.75 for the public sector and a mean of 1.93 for the private sector. This result indicates a higher rate of CWB in the private sector compared to the public sector. The means of CWB are all close to 2, which postulates that employees in both the public and private sectors are involved in negative behaviors like CWB.
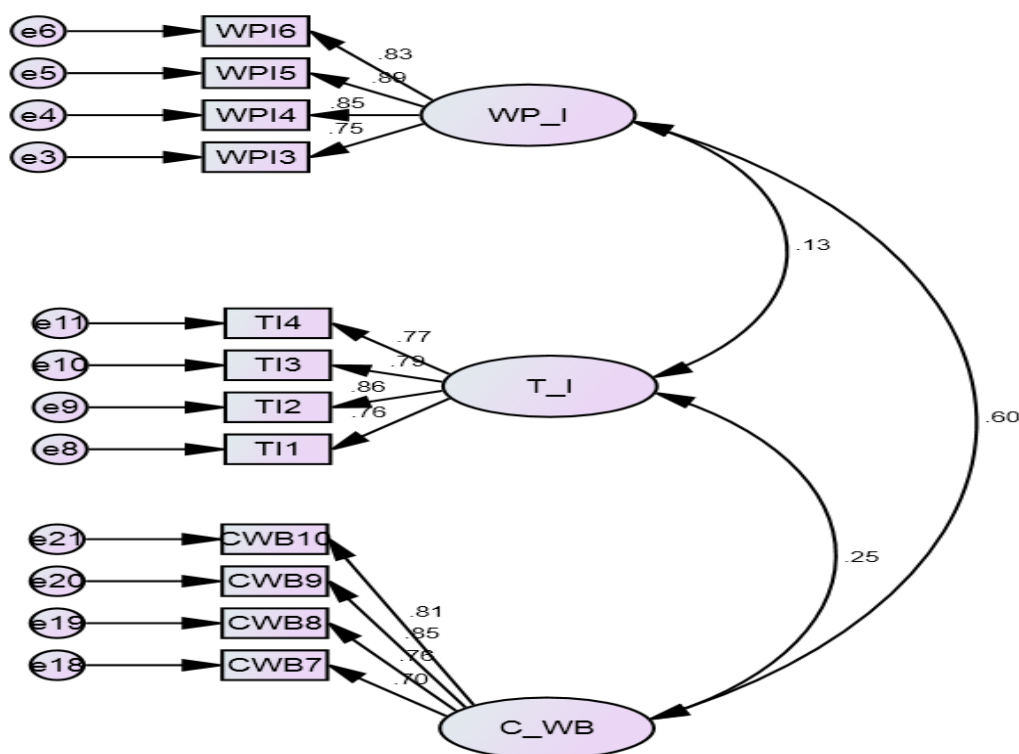
**Table 4**

*Independent T-test Results Based on Sector*

| Variable | t | p (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Sector | N | M |
|----------|------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|------|
| WPI | -0.57 | .56 | -.04 | Public Sector | 266 | 2.07 |
|     | -0.57 | .56 | -.04 | Private Sector | 238 | 2.12 |
| TI | -2.59 | .01 | -.24 | Public Sector | 266 | 2.63 |
|    | -2.59 | .01 | -24 | Private Sector | 238 | 2.88 |
| CWB | -2.51 | .01 | -.18 | Public Sector | 266 | 1.75 |
|     | -2.49 | .01 | -.18 | Private Sector | 238 | 1.93 |

## CFA Results

First-order confirmatory factor analysis was done to test the measurement model's validity, as shown in Figure 2. The results indicate that there were no validity issues.

**Figure 2**
*CFA Path Model*



*Note. WP_I= workplace incivility; T_I= turnover intention; C_WB= counterproductive work behavior*

## Construct Validity

The construct validity of the study is achieved through the obtained model fit summary results in Table 5 (CMIN/DF = 4.41, GFI = .92, TLI = .93, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08). These results are all in line with the acceptability requirements for construct validity (Hair et al., 2014).

**Table 5**
*CFA Construct Validity Results*

| Model Fit Summary | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CMIN/DF | GFI | TLI | CFI | RMSEA |
| 4.41 | .92 | .93 | .95 | .08 |

## Discriminant and Convergent Validity

The requirement for convergent validity is an AVE score of at least 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All the AVE scores (see Table 6) of our variables are more than .6, which is in line with the convergent validity requirements. The composite reliability results, which are all above .8, are also in line with the reliability requirements of a CR score of at least .6 (Hair et al., 2014). For discriminant validity to be achieved, the square root of a variable's AVE should exceed its correlation value with other constructs in the model (Byrne, 2016). It is achieved if the diagonal values in bold (.79, .83, and .78) are higher than the values of variables in its row and column. The results, as presented in Table 6, of the square roots of the variables' AVEs are all higher than the other values in their rows and columns and therefore achieve discriminant validity.

**Table 6**

*CFA Composite Reliability, Discriminant, and Convergent Validity Results*

|     | CR  | AVE | MSV | MaxR(H) | TI  | WPI | CWB |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | ------- | --- | --- | --- |
| TI  | .87 | .63 | .06 | .87     | **.79** |     |     |
| WPI | .89 | .68 | .36 | .90     | .13 | **.83** |     |
| CWB | .86 | .60 | .36 | .87     | .25 | .60 | **.78** |

## SEM Results

To test the causal relationship in the model as shown in Figure 3, structural equation modeling was used with maximum likelihood as an estimation method (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). The model fit, which indicates the degree to which the structural equation model fits the sample data (Hair et al., 2014), was achieved as shown in Table 7 (CMIN/DF = 4.36, GFI = .93, TLI = .94, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08).

**Figure 3**

*SEM Analysis Path Model*
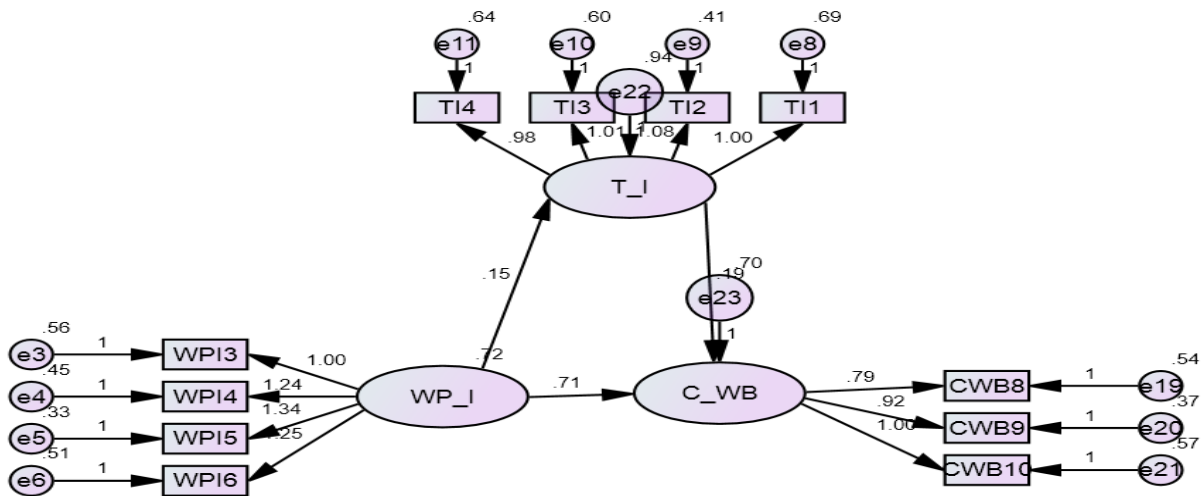


*Note. WP_I= workplace incivility; T_I= turnover intention; C_WB= counterproductive work behavior*

**Table 7**

*SEM Construct Validity Results*

| Model Fit Summary | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CMIN/DF | GFI | TLI | CFI | RMSEA |
| 4.36 | .93 | .94 | .95 | .08 |

## SEM Regression Path Coefficient Results and Its Significance

This result, as shown in Table 8, indicates the relationship between the variables in the SEM path model. It also tests the research hypotheses to see whether they are significant. The results indicate a positively significant relationship ($p$ = .008) between workplace incivility and turnover intention. The estimate of this relationship is .15, which means that when WPI increases by 1 TI also increases by .15. Additionally, the relationship between workplace incivility and counterproductive work behavior is significant at .001 with an estimated value of

.71. This means that when WPI increases by 1, CWB also increases by 0.714. The final relationship is that of turnover intention and counterproductive work behavior, which is also significant at .001 and has an estimate of .18 which indicates that when TI increases by 1, CWB also increases by .18. These results indicate that the hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) of the study are statistically significant with p-values of less than .05 (Byrne, 2016).

**Table 8**

*The SEM Regression Path Coefficient Results and their Significance*

| | | | *Estimate* | *S.E.* | *C.R.* | *P* | *Result* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turnover Intention | <--- | Workplace Incivility | .15 | .05 | 2.64 | .008 | Significant |
| Counterproductive Work Behavior | <--- | Workplace Incivility | .71 | .06 | 11.04 | *** | Significant |
| Counterproductive Work Behavior | <--- | Turnover Intention | .18 | .04 | 3.8 | *** | Significant |

*** p-value < 0.01

## *Mediation Results*

The mediation result of this study, as shown in Table 9 and Figure 4, indicates that TI has a mediation effect between the relationship of WPI and CWB. This is because the indirect effect between WPI and TI with an estimate of .15 is statistically significant, the indirect effect between TI and CWB with an estimate of .18 is statistically significant, and the direct effect between WPI and CWB with an estimate of .71 is also statistically significant. Since both the indirect effect with a p-value of $< .05$ based on bootstrapping and Sobel test result and the direct effect ($p = < .01$) are statistically significant, we can conclude that TI has a partial mediation role in the relationship between WPI and CWB, hence the significance of H4. This is a complementary mediation due to the existence of positive estimate signs for both direct and indirect relationships.

**Figure 4**

*Mediation Results*
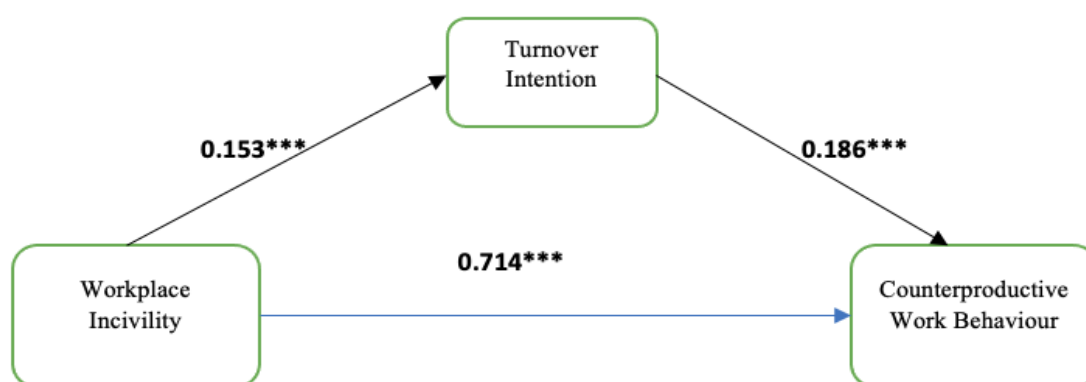


1) Indirect Effect = **0.153 x 0.186 = 0.028****
2) Direct Effect = **0.714*****
3) Both Indirect paths (WPI to TI and TI to CWB) are significant
4) There is a **partial mediation** since both the direct and indirect effects are statistically significant

*** p < 0.01
** p < 0.05

**Table 9**

*Standardized Direct-Indirect Effects and Results*

| Path | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| WPI -> TI -> CWB | .71*** | .02** | Partial Mediation |

*** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05

## SEM Model Multigroup Analysis

Multigroup analysis helps in determining the existence of variance among groups in a research sample by checking the significant differences in their group-specific parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2017; Her et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2011). For this research, a multigroup analysis using the main SEM model to look at the possible differences between employees from The Gambia and Ghana and employees from the public and private sectors was done.

### Multigroup Analysis Based on Country

Results from the multigroup analysis based on country indicate a significant variance among relationships in the model when the two countries are compared. The relationship between WPI and TI as well as TI and CWB are significantly different, with a p-value of less than .05 for both countries (see Table 10). For the direct relationship between WPI and CWB the existing difference among groups is even stronger with a p-value of less than .01. The regression estimates and p- values of the individual groups show the level of differences that exist. When WPI increases by 1, CWB increases by .18 in The Gambia and by .90 in Ghana. The estimates show a big difference between the two groups hence the group difference p-value being less than .01.

**Table 10**

*Multigroup Analysis Based on Country Results*

| | | | Main SEM Model | | The Gambia | | Ghana | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Estimate | P | Estimate | P | Estimate | P | z-score |
| TI | <--- | WPI | .15 | .008 | .24 | .006 | -.04 | .59 | -2.33** |
| CWB | <--- | WPI | .71 | .001 | .18 | .000 | .90 | .000 | 5.70*** |
| CWB | <--- | TI | .18 | .001 | .06 | .064 | .26 | .001 | 2.29** |

*Note*. *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

### Multigroup Analysis Based on Sector

Unlike the country-based results that indicate significant differences in all the relationships in the SEM model, the multigroup results (see Table 11) based on sector show a significant difference ($p = < .01$) only in the direct relationship between WPI and CWB. The estimates of these differences are .53 for the public sector and .89 for the private sector. This result implies that when WPI increases by 1, CWB increases by .53 for the public sector and by .89 for the private sector. This result indicates a higher existence of CWB in the private sector compared to the public sector. Even though the differences based on the sector when it comes to the relationships between WPI and TI as well as TI and CWB are not significant, just looking at the estimates and their significant levels indicate a higher level of WPI and TI in the private sector compared to the public sector.

**Table 11**

*Multigroup Analysis Based on Sector Results*

| | | | Main SEM Model | | Public Sector | | Private Sector | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Estimate | P | Estimate | P | Estimate | P | z-score |
| TI | <--- | WPI | .15 | .008 | .18 | .009 | .10 | .28 | -0.68 |
| CWB | <--- | WPI | .71 | .001 | .53 | .000 | .89 | .000 | 2.78*** |
| CWB | <--- | TI | .18 | .001 | .12 | .038 | .22 | .001 | 1.18 |

*Note.* *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate a direct and significant relationship between WPI and CWB. This indicates that when employees of public and private institutions in the Gambia and Ghana experience WPI, they tend to be involved in some forms of CWB. The study's results are similar to some publications that indicated a relationship between WPI and knowledge hiding (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), sabotage behavior (Cheng et al., 2019), and counterproductive behavior (Daniels & Jordan, 2019; Penney & Spector, 2005) which are all types of CWB. This result indicates that the H1 of the study is statistically significant ($p = .001$). On the results of the relationship between WPI and TI, there is an indication of a statistically significant relationship ($p = .008$). This means that when employees experience workplace incivility, they are persuaded to incur TI. The results also indicated that when WPI increases by 1 TI also increases by .15. H2, which deals with the relationship between WPI and TI is also significant. The result is also similar to that of Ghosh et al. (2013), who found a significant relationship between WPI and TI. The relationship between TI and CWB was also statistically significant at 0.001 with an estimate of 0.186, which means that when TI goes up by 1, CWB also goes up by .18. This result shows that H3 is also statistically significant. The result is similar to Sender et al.'s (2020) results which argued that employees with the intention to leave an organization are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors. All the indirect and direct relationships among the variables used are significant with P values of less than .05, which indicates that TI partially mediates the relationship between WPI and CWB hence the significance of H4.

To look at the differences in levels of WPI, TI, and CWB, based on country and sector, an independent t-test was done. The results based on country differences indicate a higher level of WPI, TI, and CWB in Ghana compared to The Gambia. Regarding the public and private sector institutions, the results show a significant difference in TI and CWB and a non-significant difference with regard to WPI. The results based on group averages indicate that CWB is higher in the private sector compared to the public sector. The multigroup analysis result also indicates similar results of WPI, CWB and TI being higher among employees in Ghana compared to the ones in the Gambia and among employees in the private sector compared to the public sector.

Even though our findings are similar to the above-mentioned research, some differences exist with the results of this study. Arshad and Ismail (2018), in their research on the relationship between WPI and knowledge hiding, collected data from 108 employees from private sector organizations in Malaysia, while our research used both public and private sector institutions to find the impact of workplace incivility on employee CWB. Our results indicate a higher level of WPI and CWB among employees from the private sector compared to employees in the public sector. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2019) also used the private sector as a

sample concentrating on 200 fitness club providers as respondents for their sample and indicated a significantly positive relationship between WPI and sabotage behavior. For Penney and Spector (2005) and Daniels and Jordan (2019), used the USA was as a sample for their data collection process. Daniels and Jordan (2019) used a sample of 408 employees from private sector organizations to look at the relationship between WPI and CWB. Their result indicates a positively significant relationship between WPI and CWB on employees from private sector institutions. Penney and Spector (2005) used a sample of 307 university students employed from various sectors. Their results also indicate a positive relationship between WPI and CWB, especially for employees with higher trait negative affectivity.

Our research looked at the relationship between WPI and CWB through the mediating role of TI. Unlike the above-mentioned papers (Arshad & Ismail, 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Daniels & Jordan, 2019) our study used a sample of 504 employees from both the public and private sectors. Instead of only looking at the relationships between WPI and CWB like in the case of Arshad and Ismail (2018), Cheng et al. (2019), and Daniels and Jordan (2019), we also made a group analysis based on sectors to see if there is a difference that may exist. Our sector-based results indicated a significant difference in the levels of WPI and CWB in the public and private sectors. Our independent t-test and multigroup analysis results indicated that WPI and CWB are higher in the private sector compared to the public sector. Additionally, Penney and Spector (2005), Arshad and Ismail (2018), Cheng et al. (2019), and Daniels and Jordan (2019) all used a single country as their sample. Instead of using a single country, our study adopted a cross-country analysis using The Gambia and Ghana as samples. The multigroup analysis of our study indicated a higher level of WPI and CWB in Ghana compared to The Gambia. Our results are different from these studies because not only did we look for the relationships between WPI and CWB, but we also did a multigroup analysis by looking at the differences that may exist between sectors and countries, which is an integral contribution of this study. Not only did we show the relationship between WPI and CWB but we also showed a difference between their levels based on sectors as well as countries which, to the best of our knowledge, has not been covered by the literature on WPI.

## Conclusion

WPI is a global predicament faced by businesses and service-providing organizations operating in diverse cultural backgrounds. This is an issue faced by many organizations that necessitates addressing solutions to the negative organizational behaviors it creates. The phenomenon has negative behavioral impacts and financial impacts since employees who experience it tend to have a reduction in their production level. Organizational cultures that embrace incivility should be discouraged and re-educated since it may lead to positive work-related outcomes which benefit the organizations' productivity. It can be addressed by implementing management policies encouraging civility and respect for others and discouraging incivility. With better policies, there is likely to be an increase in positive organizational behaviors like commitment, loyalty, and organizational citizenship behavior. WPI as behavior has detrimental outcomes that both public and private sector institutions in The Gambia and Ghana need to spend time on to address its impact on their performances. Institutional leaders should spend time and effort addressing WPI and creating an environment that discourages it, which may include the punishment of the instigators. The provision of proper training for employees on issues related

to WPI and its predicaments as well as the importance of civil behavior at work should be highly valued.

The literature regarding WPI and its impacts on organizations have largely used developed countries as their main sample. This research is vital because it used two developing African countries with both existing similarities and differences, hence the reason for our intriguing results. The majority of the published papers use single-country analysis, but this study used cross-country analysis which allows comparing two countries and seeing if there are differences that may exist. The study also contributes to the literature by using a single sector, the private sector, and the under-researched public sector.  The findings of this study indicated the existence of differences based on country and sector, which is an integral contribution to the literature since most papers do not adopt a comparative study methodology. The results have implications for the management of institutions, both as an indicator of employees' experienced negative behavior and how it impacts their performance.

Research on WPI has shown a positive relationship between WPI and CWB in mostly private sectors of different countries; however, their results are not based on sector or country comparison hence the importance of this study.  The results of this study will help managers and policymakers in The Gambia, Ghana, Africa, and the world at large to understand the impacts WPI can have on the performance of their employees. This could encourage them to create a peaceful and enabling environment that promotes positive behavior, which may lead to a better and more productive workforce.

This study offers valuable insights into the existence of WPI and its impacts on CWB in public and private institutions in The Gambia and Ghana. Even though the results of these two countries and sectors are different, what is constant is the existence of WPI and how it also creates CWB. This study implies that WPI has a positively significant relationship with CWB, and researchers, managers, and policymakers interested in African administrative realities can use it as a source of reference in understanding the context and reality of WPI in public and private institutions in The Gambia and Ghana. The outcomes of this study can also motivate institutions to discourage WPI and promote civil behaviors in the workplace. Our results contribute to the literature on WPI by advancing the understanding of the phenomenon from different perspectives. These include sector and country-based perspectives.  To the best of our knowledge, it is the first of its kind to compare the sectors and countries based on their levels of WPI and CWB hence its integral contribution.

## Declarations
### Acknowledgements
Not applicable.

### Disclosure Statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Ethics Approval
Not applicable.

## Funding Acknowledgements

## Citation to this article

## Rights and Permissions

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