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## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND TURNOVER INTENTION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The emerging issues that surround the house officers (HO) of Malaysia's public hospitals has raised significant concerns among the practitioners and the academicians; such as uncivil treatment that occur in the hospital environment. Reflecting from this, this paper aims to discuss the relationship between the workplace incivility and turnover intention among the house officers of Malaysia's public hospitals. An extensive review provides the insights of the possible relationships between the variables. Related proposed framework of this research is hoped to meet the research objectives and provide valuable insights for future research.

**Keywords:** Workplace incivility, turnover intention

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite the technological globalization that take place, human force still plays their utmost contributions in facing the challenges and changes from each possible intersection within or outside the organizations. Globally, the healthcare industry is now striving over the competitive pressures. The structural changes, growing outraging public expectations, new diseases discovery, increasing number of patients and social media interference has given significant impact over the healthcare service quality; especially towards its employees. In Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), it has been stressed out that the efforts need to be gear up for the society to experience the well improved public services quality; besides, Malaysia healthcare system has been recognized as one of the best in the region (WHO). However, Deputy Health director-general, Datuk Dr S. Jeyaindran stated about 1,000 of the 5,000 (1/5) housemen in Malaysia

employed each year do not complete their two-year training stint and the number has been increasing over the past three years (The Star, 2015). This current situation has alarming the dropout rate even though they have gone through a long year in studying medical field, besides incurring such a high cost along the process. One of the reasons that have been identified by the Ministry of Health is due to the stressful work hours and lack of work-life balance as for Malaysia's housemen, the average working hours are from 65 and 72 hours. Affecting from this problem, this lead to the situation where the position of terminated houseman cannot be filled up as the termination process took quite a long period to be settled, and then this will make the related hospital to have inadequate number of staffs.

Besides from the pressure working hours, most housemen who chose to quit have stated that the reason for their action is because the trauma that they have endure throughout the process is subjected to and the unethical treatment they are accorded to by the senior medical officers (MOs), the specialists, registrars, specialists and by the consultants (The Star, 2014). The workplace environment starting throughout the people within need to be improved as it has been observed that the housemen is much more being bullied rather than trained in the internship period (New Straits Times, 2017). Unfortunately, up to this day nothing seems to have been done either by the Health Ministry, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) or the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) to fix this problem.

According to Deputy Health Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya, different medical educational background also becomes one of the reasons they are in such struggling situation as they are trying to cope with different systems and approaches. Expansion from this, it is reported that 20 percent of the housemen failed to finish their horsemanship on time and need to extend the period up to six or eight months and some of them are being absent and later quit in 24 hours from the job (New Straits Times, 2017). It is getting worse when in 2016, 1,2 percent of the house officers had quit or being terminated as they were being missing up to 400 days and unsuccessfully coping with the heat. On the other hand, there has been a growing concern related to the workplace incivility and this has drawn the attention among the academicians from different field (Clay, 2013). Although the Malaysian public service organizations have improved in many respective areas due to innovation, creativity, and transformation in the public governance, the existence of workplace deviance or specifically related to workplace incivility in the organizations may create difficulties for the Malaysian public service to improve their services (Siddique, 2014). This paper seeks to highlight the importance in understanding the factor, which is workplace incivilities that lead the housemen in Malaysia having the intention to quit the job and affecting the overall situation in healthcare industry.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Turnover Intention**

Turnover intention consists three (3) important elements that categorized under withdrawal cognition processes which are the idea or thoughts of quitting from the job, intention in finding another job and the intention to just quit (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006). Meanwhile, according to Chen, Su, Lo, Chiu, Hu and Shieh (2014), turnover intention has been referred as turnover propensity or plan of the employees that could potentially lead to the actual turnover. The turnover among the crucial employees will leads to the higher replacement cost and affecting the overall flows within the organization. Understanding the concept of turnover in details will help an organization to minimize its reverse effect towards overall organizational performance and this has one of the reason why researcher tend to focus more on employees leaving the organization compared to entering it (Price, 2001). By understanding the depth of turnover concept especially in healthcare industry, this will prevent the organization from incurring more direct and indirect cost such as replacement and training cost, productivity losses and waste in

organizational knowledge which can jeopardize the quality and effectiveness of healthcare industry (Hayes, Brien, Duffield, Shamian, Buchan, Hughes & North, 2012).

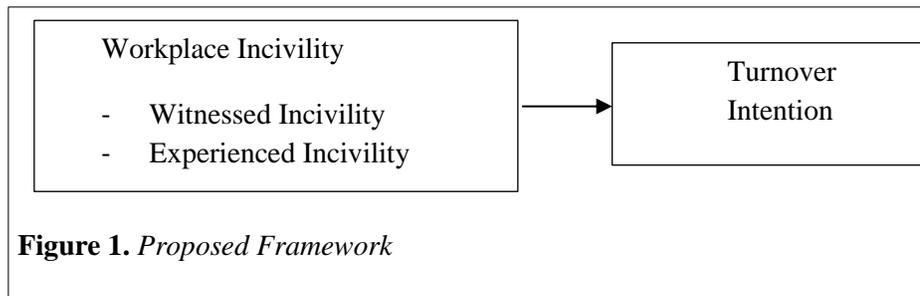
### Workplace Incivility

According to Andersson and Pearson (1999), workplace incivility has been defined as *“low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect”* (p. 457). Incivility is not penetrated only by the individuals in managerial positions but it can also be executed by the coworkers or external parties such as customers (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016). The last two decades has shown that workplace negativity has been one of the focal point in the organizational behavior literature and how this element affect each organization, group and individual outcomes (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016). One of the crucial subject discussed as a part of the workplace negativity is workplace incivility. Workplace incivility has attracted the attention of the researchers from different fields and been studied to address its impact on the targets; for example, it is found that workplace incivility reduced the employee’s satisfaction towards the job, colleagues and superior (Cortina, Magley, Williams & Langhout, 2001), reduce the level of retention (Griffin, 2010), also affecting the physical condition and mental health of an individual (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008).

There are also three (3) types of incivility which are witnessed, experienced and instigated incivility. In this study, the focus will be on the witnessed and experienced incivility. An observer who witnessed an uncivil situation will possess more negative value such as lower work performance, reduced helpfulness upon others and reduce the ability to generate, forming and relating ideas (Porath & Erez, 2009). Besides, according to Totterdell, Hershcovis, Niven, Reich and Stride (2012)., witnessing workplace incivility can lead an individual towards experiencing emotional exhaustion. Women who observed or witnesses uncivil conduct in the workplace will show poor health condition and satisfaction, besides tend to display more work withdrawal, especially in the workplace environment that consist higher number of male workers in one group (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004). Direct involvement in workplace incivility resulted in various cognitive, attitudinal, affective and behavioral outcomes upon the targets (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez, 2016). The target of the incivility reports high level of stress (Adams & Webster, 2013), low optimism and satisfaction toward the supervisor and colleagues (Bunk & Magley, 2013), high level of work-family conflict (Ferguson, 2012), lower work engagement (Lim&Teo, 2009) and showing higher level of turnover intention (Griffin, 2010; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013).

### PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

From the reviewed literatures above, there are two variables involved, the independent variable is workplace incivility which will be categorized into two; witnessed incivility and experienced incivility, while the dependent variable would be turnover intention. The proposed framework is as follows:



**Figure 1.** *Proposed Framework*

## Propositions

From previous study, it can be seen that a lot of factors have contributed in understanding their influences towards workplace behavior. It is expected that the workplace incivility consist of witnessed incivility and experienced incivility can be associated to turnover intention among the house officers (HO) in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper would propose that:

H1: Witnessed incivility can be associated with turnover intention among the HO in Malaysia.

H2: Experienced incivility can be associated with turnover intention among the HO in Malaysia.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussions and established propositions, it is hoped that the future direction of the research will be able to explore in depth the relationship between witnessed incivility and experienced incivility towards turnover intention.

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