Shedding Light on the Dark Side of the Organization:

Frontline Employees' Perception of Workplace Incivility

by

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Oslo, December 2021

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Summary

Given the different norms across cultures, industries, and organizations, every workplace accepts a number of shared moral understandings as to its own respect norms among the members. However, in today's global workplace, behavior has more nuances due to the speed and complexity of interpersonal interactions. Workplace incivility is a notable example of a unique form of interpersonal mistreatment in the organization with its low intensity and ambiguous intention of harming the target. With the aim of contributing to the current knowledge, the main purpose of this thesis is to provide a better understanding of workplace incivility perception among frontline employees in the service industry context.

Turnover, on the other hand, is a big issue in the tourism and hospitality sectors that results in excessive costs for recruiting and training service employees. As an important source of job stress caused by negative interpersonal interactions, workplace incivility could be a critical antecedent of employees' turnover. Therefore, the other purpose of this thesis is to shed more light on the employees' responses to workplace incivility in terms of turnover intentions. Moreover, the current thesis is also aimed to investigate the role of a positive working environment, as environmental factors, as well as individual differences, as personal factors, in the perception of workplace incivility and its effect on turnover intention.

This thesis consists of one systematic review and meta-analysis study, one quantitative empirical paper, and one exploratory paper. Firstly, in line with the purpose of the thesis, a deep review of the workplace incivility literature, in twenty years period, was conducted to provide an early meta-analysis of the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions in the first paper. This paper investigated the consistency of the incivility–turnover relationship across different sources of workplace incivility (i.e.,

customer, coworker, supervisor incivility), as well as incivility measures, industries, and countries. The results from the first paper confirm a significant positive relationship between workplace incivility (regardless of the source) and employees' turnover intention.

Following up on this result, the second paper aims to examine to what extent the working environment can affect frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions in the hotel and restaurant industry in Norway. In this quantitative paper, the effect of a perceived caring climate, as an environmental factor, on employees' turnover intention through a serial multiple mediation model including coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion. The result of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis reveals that the perception of caring climate in the workplace has not only a direct negative effect on turnover intention but also has indirect effects through a reduction in both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion. This result emphasizes the important role of environmental factors in the workplace (i.e., caring climate) in employees' perceptions of incivility and their responses in terms of turnover intention.

Given the same sample set, the third paper is an exploratory study that looks at individual differences as personal factors in the perception of workplace incivility, social supports at work, and intention to turnover through applying cluster analysis. Specifically, this study explores if it is possible to identify distinct groups of employees that perceive and behave differently from other groups. The results of K-means cluster analysis and one-way ANOVA indicate three different clusters/groups of frontline employees with different demographic and behavioral profiles.

Taken together, the findings of the present thesis provide valuable insights into our knowledge about the incivility–turnover relationship in service work environments, as well as a better understanding of the role of environmental and personal factors in such a relationship.

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Hejraty Namin, B., Marnburg, E., & Bakkevig Dagsland, Å. H. (2022). The Effect of a Caring Climate on Frontline Employees' Turnover Intention in the Service Industry: A Serial Multiple Mediation Model. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* (published online) **https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2022.2047778**

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Part I

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1 Introduction

One of the most important issues in the studies of service work environment is the quality of relationships between employees, between managers and their subordinates, and between service providers and their customers. Studies in service organizations have indicated that these relationships may affect the employees' motivation for their job and their willingness to remain in the organization (Kashif, Zarkada, & Thurasamy, 2017). Therefore, mistreatment in organizations, which represents a dark side of organizational life continues to attract the interest of scholars (Hershcovis, 2011). Workplace mistreatment, as an umbrella term, includes a variety of actions and behaviors on a subtle-blatant continuum (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Among insiders, frontline employees are most vulnerable to mistreatment in the service work environment.

The crucial role of frontline service employees is undeniable in today's service environments where intensive competition and pressure exist for achieving greater productivity and delivering high-quality services. As the face of the organization, these employees have the main role in customers' service experiences (Paek, Schuckert, Kim, & Lee, 2015) through frequent face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions they have with the customers (Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2011). Nevertheless, research has constantly claimed that the lack of training, overworking, and high-level of stress are general problems among service employees (e.g., Daskin & Surucu, 2016).

Workplace stressors may arise in situations that employees perceive as stressful such as facing extensive job demands and interpersonal conflicts (Spector & Fox, 2002). Specifically, for frontline service employees, stressful situations could simply arise from experiencing negative social interactions (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). In fact, these employees are required to cope with multiple interpersonal stressors

caused by different sources in the workplace (i.e., customers and coworkers), which put more pressure on them (Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016). One of the major factors in job stress is "workplace incivility", which is one of the most prevalent phenomena in the work environment (Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016). According to the result of research conducted among thousands of workers during 14 years from 1998 to 2013, it has been reported that 98% of them experienced incivility in which half of them experienced it at least once a week (Porath & Pearson, 2013).

The overall model of the current thesis, which illustrates the main focus of the three papers in this research project is provided in the following figure (Figure 1).

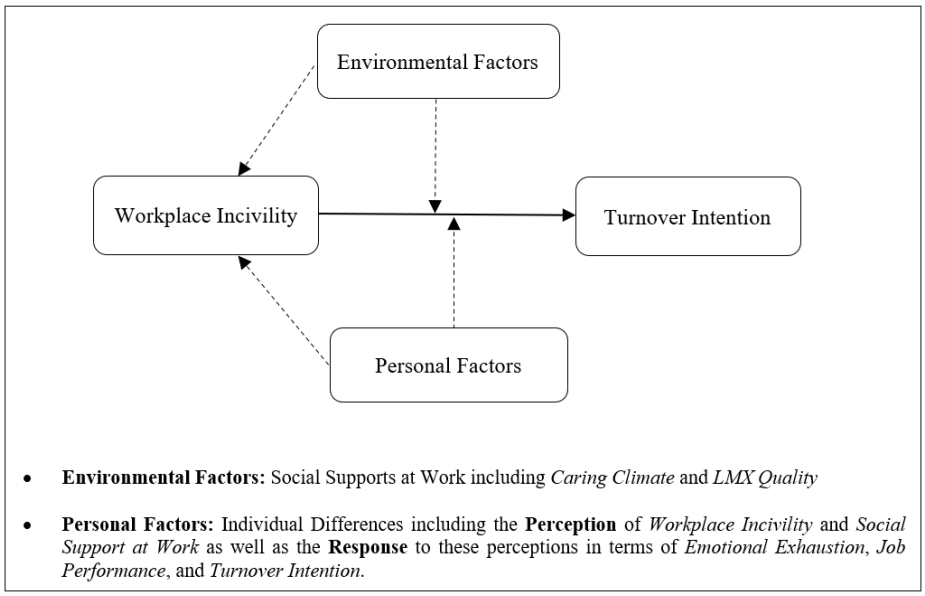

Figure 1 – The Overall Model of This Research Project

1.1 Key Constructs

The main constructs in this thesis are defined and explained in the following subsections.

1.1.1 Workplace Incivility

From 1999, a distinct stream of research concentrated on workplace incivility as a unique and less intensive form of interpersonal mistreatment in organizations (Teng, Qian, & Qu, 2021; Liu, Xiao, He, Wang, & Li, 2020; Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019; Arasli, Hejraty Namin, & Abubakar, 2018; Cho, Bonn, Han, & Lee, 2016; Porath & Pearson, 2013; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2005; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Workplace incivility has been introduced and defined by Andersson and Pearson (1999, p. 457) as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others."

Although there is a substantial overlap between workplace incivility and other mistreatment constructs such as antisocial behavior, deviance, violence, aggression, emotional abuse, and social undermining at work (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; O'Leary-Kelly, Duffy, & Griffin, 2000), these forms of negative treatments have differences in several dimensions such as intention to harm, the type of norm violation, continuation, their targets, and intensity of the actions (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2005). According to Andersson and Pearson (1999), employees' antisocial behavior is inclusive of the other concepts of mistreatment in the workplace that intent harm to the organization and/or the members. Employee's deviant behavior, as a type of antisocial behavior, violates organizational norms and contains employee aggression and incivility. Employee's aggression is inclusive of violence and incivility, which contains the behaviors with an intention to harm in

a way that the instigator, the target, and/or the observers perceive the intent as ambiguous. However, other forms of incivility such as those that occur out of ignorance or oversight (without intent to harm, but with ambiguous intent) remain outside of aggression's domain. In Figure 2, the difference between incivility and its overlaps with some of the other forms of mistreatment in organizations is illustrated.

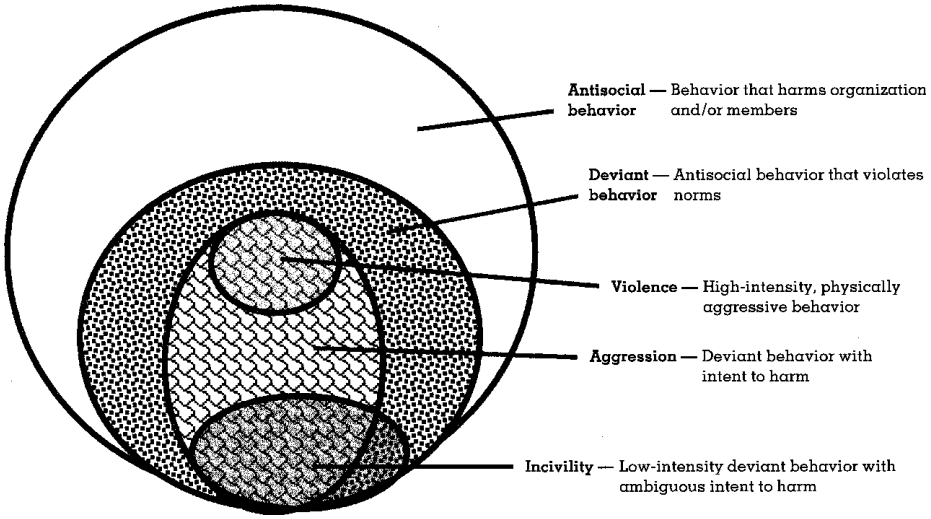

Figure 2 – Different Forms of Mistreatment in Organizations (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 456)

Generally speaking, any impolite behavior in the workplace that is repeatedly perceived over a period of time with harmful effects on the individual, group, and organizational level could be considered as workplace incivility (Reio & Ghosh, 2009). The low intensity of uncivil behaviors indicates that they are more verbal, passive, indirect, and subtle rather than being physical, active, direct, and overt. Thus, they can be simply overlooked. The incivility perpetrator can easily deny any negative intention against the target, and therefore, s/he could harm the target accidentally rather than intentionally (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Behaviors such as ignoring someone in a group, blaming someone for no reason, leaving rude messages, spreading rumors, taking credit for

someone else's efforts, or simply not saying "please" or "thank you" in the workplace, and in general, all body language or gestures that can be perceived as offensive are among incivility behaviors (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2005). Figure 3 presents the range of uncivil behaviors.

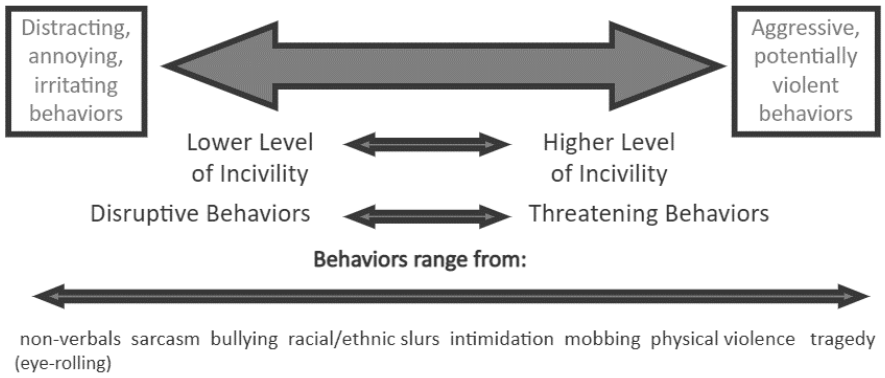

Figure 3 – Continuum of Incivility (Clark, Barbosa-Leiker, Gill, & Nguyen, 2015, p. 309)

Incivility within a work setting could be perceived by employees from their customers, coworkers, and supervisors who are recognized as the three main sources of workplace incivility (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). These sources of incivility represent the same behavior only from different perpetrators from the inside (coworkers and supervisors) or outside (customers) of the organization (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). However, as previously argued (e.g., Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016), workplace incivility would be perceived with different severity based on the sources and the preparators. Workplace incivility can be fitted into a particular category of daily hassles as *workplace interpersonal hassles* (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010), which refer to a routine experience of nuisances that threaten or damage an individual's well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Dealing with disrespectful and rude people could be a day-to-day occurrence for frontline employees in any service work environment. Therefore, in the

presence of multiple sources of workplace incivility, many jobs in the service industry could be at risk (Sliter, Sliter, Jex, 2012). This is specifically true for frontline employees who are reliant on each other in order to provide customer services. It has been also indicated that hassles related to social environments such as relationship issues with coworkers and customers are among the most damaging hassles (e.g., Beaudoin & Edgar, 2003).

1.1.2 Turnover Intention

Employee turnover as a burning issue in the service industry has increasingly attracted the interest of scholars specifically in tourism and hospitality since turnover is frequently reported to be very high in tourism, hotel, and restaurant sectors (e.g., Afsar, Shahjehan, & Shah, 2018; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016; Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013). In these sectors, there are many natural reasons for high turnover such as low salary, long working hours, students' time-limited work, carrier changes, and other opportunities (Xu, Martinez, Van Hoof, Tews, Torres, & Farfan, 2018; Jogaratnam & Buchanan, 2004). The companies cannot do much to reduce such turnover however, when it comes to the work environment as a reason for turnover (e.g., Kysilka & Csaba, 2013), improvements are possible. Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) defined turnover intention as the employees' intention to leave their present job because of dissatisfaction and looking for other job opportunities. Accordingly, they used turnover intention as a measure of the employees' subjective feelings about turnover rather than their specific behaviors. Additionally, the turnover intention could be also referred to as employees' generation of the idea of turnover before making the final decision on real turnover (Chen & Wang, 2019).

The turnover intention of service employees is one of the vital and continuous challenges for service managers since a higher turnover rate gives higher recruiting costs and makes problems with service delivery,

and overall, it may have serious negative effects on the work environment (Ozturk & Karatepe, 2019; Afsar, Shahjehan, & Shah, 2018). Given the high turnover rates in the hospitality industry, it is very important to identify the predictors and empirically test the potential antecedents to decrease the negative effects of turnover on the success of the organization (Kim, Song, & Lee, 2016).

Job stress has been suggested as a critical antecedent of turnover (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007) and workplace incivility is the major factor in job stress (Grandy, 2004). It has been evidenced that even small acts of rudeness can result in a wide range of negative outcomes including psychological distress and negative emotions (Park, Fritz, & Jex, 2018; Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). The feeling of being berated or belittled by others in the workplace (e.g., customers and coworkers) can lead the targets to be emotionally exhausted (Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019; Cho, Bonn, Han, & Lee, 2016). The emotionally exhausted employees may, in turn, show negative reactions by showing higher turnover intention (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). The mediating role of emotional exhaustion between the perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention is supported in previous studies (e.g., Huang & Lin, 2019; Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015).

1.1.3 Social supports at Work

According to Sarafino (1997), social support is the respect, consideration, and help that one receives from others, which results in a sense of being valued, respected, and cared for as a part of a social group. Supports from supervisors and coworkers in the workplace could be the most influential factor in employees' well-being, especially for frontline employees who need psychological support (Akkawanitcha, Patterson, Buranapin, & Kantabutra, 2015; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). Social support at work is an emotional resource for the employees and can positively

affect their feeling and decrease their stress caused by facing aggression (Schat & Kelloway, 2003). For example, those employees who have supportive coworkers can deal more effectively with rude and aggressive customers (Wu & Hu 2009).

Service managers play a significant role in providing a more pleasant work environment for their employees. One important social support at work is leader-member exchange (LMX) quality that emphasizes the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers (Graen, 1976) and refers to the perception of employees about the quality of the interpersonal social exchange with the manager (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). A high-quality LMX relationship is portrayed by higher levels of respect, mutual trust, and commitment (Grean & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which enables managers to provide support for employees' needs and show empathy (Medler-Liraz, 2014). Previous research indicated that high perception of LMX quality among employees leads them to complete challenging tasks more effectively, showing higher job performance, and in turn, showing lower turnover intention (Li, Zhu, & Park, 2018; Kim & Koo, 2017; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000).

In addition, one of the significant factors in addressing the relationship between job stressors and employees' job outcomes is the caring climate (Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014). The caring climate is a type of ethical climate in the workplace, which encompasses the benevolence criterion of ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). A caring climate is defined as shared perceptions of employees about the organization's policies, procedures, and systems that affect their behaviors with focusing on friendship and team interest (Cullen, Victor, Bronson, 1993). There is a high positive correlation between employees' perception of a caring climate and their ethical behavior in the workplace (Fu & Deshpande, 2012). Research shows that through establishing a caring climate in the workplace, managers could develop and support positive attitudes among employees, motivate them to consider the interest of

others' well-being when making decisions, and feel obliged to help others in the workplace (e.g., Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019; Parboteeah & Kapp, 2008). It has been also evidenced that working in such a caring atmosphere, leads employees to show fewer negative reactions (i.e., better job performance and lower turnover intention) when they experience interpersonal stressors (Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014; Berry, Lelchook, & Clark; 2012).

1.2 Research Gaps

Due to the wide and diverse extant body of research on workplace incivility from 1999, it is not easy for scholars and practitioners to fully understand and integrate the results from such negative behavior. Conducting a meta-analytic review is an effective way to make a clear and more approachable body of literature (Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). In a recent narrative review, it has been discussed that there is a lack of cohesiveness in the workplace incivility literature in grouping the different studies together and testing for overall effects (Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). Therefore, the literature on workplace incivility requires quantitative or meta-analytic reviews to provide deep and sufficient insight into this broad literature. It is the first aim in the current project to address this research gap.

Moreover, since most of the existing relevant studies have focused on the outcomes rather than the antecedents of workplace incivility, it is important to increase research on potential antecedents to gain the depth of knowledge and formulate policies to reduce the prevalence of workplace incivility. Accordingly, Schilipzand, De Pater, and Erez (2016) recommended focusing on factors that may prevent employees to become potential targets through investigating broader contextual effects including organizational climate variables that, as powerful environmental factors and situational attributes, may minimize the prevalence of incivility in the workplace in general. Specifically, there is

a severe lack of knowledge related to the effect of caring climate on job stressors (i.e., workplace incivility) in the literature (Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014), which needs to be thoroughly investigated. This is the second goal that the current thesis is pursued.

Additionally, glancing over the workplace incivility literature reveals that although many demographic characteristics and personality traits have been considered as moderators or control variables in previous studies (e.g., Taylor & Kluemper, 2012; Penny & Spector, 2005), there is still a lack of knowledge about the role of individual demographic and behavioral differences in explaining employees' perceptions and reactions. This research gap is also addressed in the current thesis by an exploratory study looking at individual differences in the perception of workplace incivility and employees' turnover intention.

1.3 Research Questions, Aims, and Contributions

In order to address the above-mentioned research gaps, this thesis is an attempt to shed light on the dark side of the organization by expanding the general knowledge about the frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and its effects on their turnover intention. In addition, with considering the environmental and personal aspects, this thesis contributes to the workplace incivility literature and provides a better understanding of the role of environmental and personal factors in the relationship between the perception of workplace incivility and service employees' turnover intentions.

To answer the call for meta-analytic reviews of workplace incivility and to fill the research gap (Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016), the first paper in this thesis is conducted as an early meta-analysis study to give an overview of the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention. The following research questions have been addressed in the first paper:

Q1(a): How does the perception of workplace incivility affect employees' turnover intention?

Q1(b): To what extent this effect is consistent if we check for different sources of workplace incivility (i.e., customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility), different workplace incivility measures, different industries, and different countries?

Afterward, with the purpose of gaining more insight into the role of the working environment in the frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions, the second paper is conducted to examine the effect of a perceived caring climate in the service work environment on the employees' turnover intention through a serial multiple mediation of coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion. Moreover, in line with the recent academic attention to an ethical climate perspective (e.g., Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018; Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015), this paper contributes to the employee turnover literature by investigating the effect of a caring climate on frontline service employees' intentions to quit. This paper addressed the following research question:

Q2: What is the effect of perceiving a caring climate in the service workplace on employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention?

Furthermore, in order to explore the role of personal factors, the third paper is conducted to look at employees' individual differences in perception of workplace incivility and social supports at work, and their relevant reactions and behaviors especially in terms of showing turnover intention. Thus, this paper attempts to address the following research questions:

Q3(a): Can individual differences among employees explain the employees' perceptions of and reactions to workplace incivility?

Q3(b): Is it possible to identify distinct groups of frontline service employees who perceive and react differently from other groups?

1.4 Thesis Structure

The rest of the sections of the current thesis are organized as follows. The selected theoretical considerations are presented in chapter 2 that goes beyond the workplace incivility construct and looks into the theoretical background in the aggression literature. That is because these constructs are very close and workplace incivility is claimed to be the starting point for extreme forms of workplace aggression (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This chapter focuses on two different theoretical perspectives for explaining human aggression including the cognitive perspective, which emphasizes internal stimuli, and the behavioristic perspective emphasizes external stimuli. Accordingly, different theoretical explanations of aggression are presented. Then, the most popular theories within workplace incivility literature and the theories applied in my papers would be discussed.

Chapter 3 is mainly allocated to philosophical understandings and methodological issues of the current project. Research design including data setting and adopted analytical approach is further described in this chapter as well as some ethical considerations related to the quantitative data used in social science and the main methodological strengths and weaknesses of this project. Chapter 4 presents a brief overview of the three papers in this thesis and their results. The discussion about the main results of the conducted studies is available in the next chapter (chapter 5). Chapter 6 contains theoretical and practical implications, conclusion, and directions for future research. The list of references is provided in

chapter 7. And finally, in Part II of this thesis, the three full-size papers are enclosed respectively.

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2 Theoretical Considerations

According to workplace mistreatment research, incivility and aggression are conceptually different. That is, incivility has a lower intensity and ambiguous intention to harm the target that violates organizational norms (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), whereas aggression is more intense with a clarity of intention to harm the target, who is motivated to avoid it (Neuman & Baron, 2005). However, workplace incivility has been argued to be as an accumulation of low-intensity encounters, which may spiral to more severe aggravations in the end, as an escalation of minor irritation or annoyance into an aggressive workplace behavior (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Most social psychologists are agreed on defining human aggression as any directed behavior toward others with the proximate and immediate intention to harm, where harmful effects of the behavior on the target and target's motivation for avoiding that behavior should be clear for the perpetrator (Anderson & Bushman, 2002)

An incivility spiral in the workplace results from tit-for-tat interactions among the individuals in the organization (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This spiral could start with, for example, an employee's uncivil act toward another employee (target) who may perceive it as an interactional injustice and thus, desires to reciprocate by showing the aroused negative affect toward the instigator (the first employee) or even other employees. The reciprocal uncivil act from the target employee toward the instigator leads to repetition of the same harmful cognitive, affective, and behavioral response sequence, which eventually results in violating of mutual respect norms and could escalate the incivility spiral into more aggressive behavior between the parties (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Therefore, Andersson and Pearson (1999) considered workplace incivility as a starting point for an extreme form of workplace aggression and violence. An incivility spiral is presented in Figure 4. Generating workplace aggression from the escalation of incivility is also consistent

with the "popcorn" model of aggression (Schat & Kelloway, 2005), which proposes that the repetition of minor offenses or unfairness in the workplace, finally results in aggression explosion.

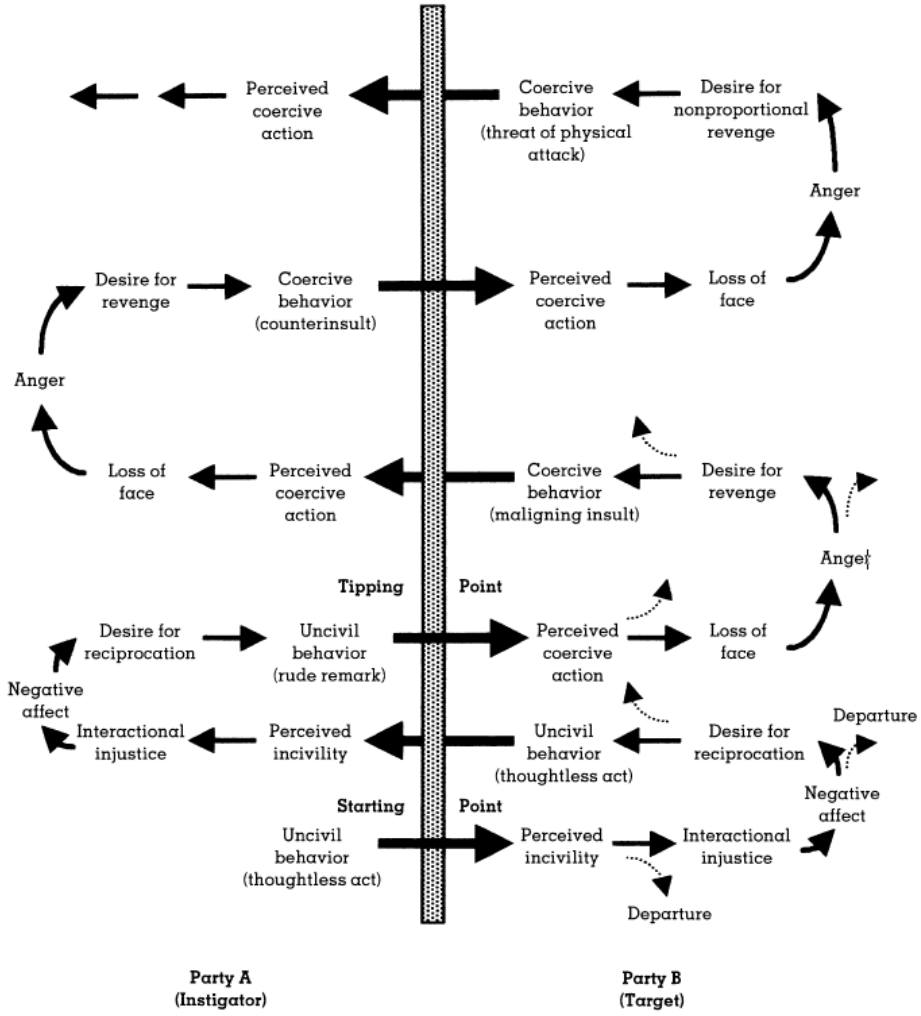

Figure 4 – Incivility Spiral in the Workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 460)

According to Buss (1961), aggression forms are different ways by those aggressive behaviors are expressed as verbal or physical, direct or indirect, and active or passive. *Verbal* and *physical* aggression refers to

harming others with words while using body parts (e.g., yelling, swearing, etc.) or with objects and weapons (e.g., hitting, shooting, etc.). In *direct* aggression, the target is physically present (e.g., choking a person or cursing someone face-to-face), while in *indirect* aggression, the target is physically absent (e.g., stealthy puncturing the tires of one's car or spreading gossips about someone). In *active* aggression, the responses of the instigator are in a harmful manner (e.g., cursing or hitting someone), whereas in *passive* aggression, the instigator just fails to respond in a helpful manner (e.g., forgetting to deliver an important message). Thus, it is not easy to blame the instigator of passive aggression, which is a desirable feature for him/her (Buss, 1961).

In this regard, workplace incivility shows the closest similarity to passive aggression. In fact, most people prefer to express aggression in a passive and indirect form, since it can be very risky to use active and direct forms of aggression specifically in the work environment. Based on Baron and Neuman (1998), most workplace aggression does not manifest itself in direct form and physical assaults, but rather it typically includes relatively covert and subtle forms of harm-doing behavior. Moreover, workplace aggression could result in experiencing stress and that stress can be also replaced by aggression (Inness, LeBlanc, & Barling, 2008).

As a multifaceted phenomenon, aggression and aggressive reactions include a combination of human hereditary factors and genetic, predispositions, and acquired or learned responses to particular events (Ramirez, 2003). There are two main theoretical perspectives for explaining human aggression that I have studied; the cognitive perspective emphasizing the internal stimuli and the behavioristic perspective with a focus on external stimuli. First, in this chapter, both cognitive and behavioristic perspectives in aggression and relevant theories are discussed (section 2.1) and then, popular theories in workplace incivility studies are explained (section 2.2). Finally, the applied theories in the current Ph.D. project are described in section 2.3.

2.1 Cognitive and Behavioristic Perspective in Aggression

Based on the cognitive paradigm (Beck, 2011; Beck, 1976), a specific system of beliefs generates and maintains a specific behavioral reaction and activates it in a specific situation for evaluating the perceived situation. The assessment of the situation (the automatic thought-cognition) leads to generating an emotional state in physiological reactions which results in a specific behavioral response. Based on the instinct theory of aggression from Darwin and Freud's notion of aggression as a component of the ego's sexual drive and the death drive(Freud, 1930), a number of theories were developed in line with the cognitive perspective. Frustration-aggression theory (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939) considered frustration as the main cause for aggression, which was unable to explain more instrumental forms of aggression or subtle effects of the presence of aggressive stimuli. However, the theory of instrumental aggression (Buss, 1961) went deeper and proposed human temperaments (anger and personality) that are affected by genetic endowment, are important factors in human aggression. Later, in 1974, the excitation transfer theory (Zillmann & Bryant, 1974) emphasized the role of residual arousal and the brain-assigned emotions to them in amplifying the excitatory response to different stimuli. With more focus on cognitive processes and associative memory structures, the cognitive neoassociation theory (Berkowitz, 1989, 1990) explained aggressive behavior during the experience of an aversive event in which negative affect, thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses will be activated sequentially, connected to fight and flight tendencies. In the middle of the 1990s, attribution theory (Weiner, 1995, 1985) associated controllability and responsibility attributions with emotional responses such as aggressive reactions. This theory basically looks at the human intrinsic need to gain a causal understanding of events. Among these cognitive-oriented theories, the cognitive neoassociation theory seems more convincing in terms of

elaborating human cognitive processes. Any aversive event in our life may activate our knowledge structures including a network of interrelated concepts in our memory, which therefore may guide our behavior.

On the other hand, a number of theories have been developed based on the behavioristic perspective, which focuses on the individuals' understanding and responses to the environment based on the specific situational factors (Anderson & Huesmann, 2007). External factors in triggering aggression are categorized as provocations, aggression-related cues, and intangible entities (Bushman & Bartholow, 2010). The social interactionist theory (Tedeschi, Smith, & Brown, 1974) put emphasis on the important role of social interaction in the learning process during language development in children, as well as making efforts to integrate aggression, self-presentation social conflict, and social power and influence. Although the focus of this theory was on the social motives that can be achieved by aggressive behaviors, it failed to specify the essential criteria required for considering the behavior to be aggressive in the first place. As a well-known behavioristic theory in aggression studies, the social learning theory (Bandura, 2001; Bandura & Walters, 1977) is considered an important role for both learnings through observation and direct experience in the development of aggressive behavior. This is a useful theory related to socialization in which harm-doing is considered as instrumental behavior. Deeper into the process of social learning, the script theory (Huesmann, 1986, 1998) suggested that behaviors have a kind of stored program in people's memory (so-called scripts), which can guide behavior immediately after elicitation. This theory is highly relevant to social learning theory. Habitual responds to the conflict based on scripts including aggressive behavior, lead these scripts to come to mind more easily, make them automatic, and generalize them to other situations, which in turn increase the likelihood of aggression in future social life. Compared to other theories, the social learning theory presents a more comprehensive viewpoint on aggression

from the behavioristic perspective. Not an only imitation of others' behaviors is considered in social learning but also according to this theory the individuals' cognitive inferences are the main component of their today and future social behavior. The other advantage of social learning theory is related to its concentration on the learning of scripts, mainly by different ways such as instruction, observation, and the activation of the relevant behavior through the reward expectation.

Nevertheless, the integration of both cognitive and behavioristic perspectives is perhaps the most effective way to provide a more comprehensive system, which offers a deeper understanding of human aggression. Accordingly, the general aggression model (GAM) (DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2011; Anderson & Huesmann, 2007) was developed as an integrative, bio-social-cognitive, and developmental approach through including six domain-specific theories that have been commonly used for explaining aggression, namely social learning theory, social interaction theory, cognitive neoassociation theory, excitation transfer theory, script theory, and the general affective aggression model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). GAM has three separated phases (i.e., inputs, routs, and outcomes) for each episode of aggressive behavior, and each episode of GAM, as a learning trial, can either stimulate or prevent the development of aggressive knowledge structures as well as an aggressive personality (Allen & Anderson, 2017).

2.2 Popular Theories in Workplace Incivility Studies

The literature covers a wide variety of theories that have been proposed to explain how workplace incivility impacts employees' job outcomes, for example, social cognitive theory (e.g., Huang & Lin, 2019; Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018), conservation of resource theory (e.g., Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016), social learning theory (e.g., Miner, Smittick, He, & Costa, 2019), social exchange theory (e.g., Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013), social identity

theory (e.g., He, Costa, Walker, Miner, & Wooderson, 2019; Huang & Lin, 2019), burnout theory (e.g., Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018), and affective event theory (e.g., Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015; Lim & Cortina, 2008).

Among these theories, affective event theory (AET), social identity theory (SIT), and conservation of resource theory (COR) are the three most popular theories used in predicting employees' turnover intentions as a result of experiencing workplace incivility. Adaptation theory is also relevant and provides a good understanding of employees' experience of workplace incivility over time. These theories are fully explained in the following paragraphs.

Affective event theory (AET), which is developed by Weiss and Cropanzano in 1996, focuses on the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work. This theory argues that the main determinants of employees' attitudes and behaviors in the work environment are their affective reactions to specific work events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Employees often react emotionally to the different things that happen in the workplace, and these affective experiences directly influence their attitudes and behaviors. Affect levels can be fluctuated over time and the pattern of affective reactions has a significant influence on employees' feelings about their job and distinct behaviors at the workplace. According to this theory, affective experiences at work may strongly influence employees' overall job satisfaction, which in turn results in judgment-driven behaviors including turnover (Lim & Cortina, 2008). Due to their potentially damaging impact on employees' well-being, negative events at work tend to provoke more severe reactions compared to positive events through influencing both employees' affective states such as anxiety and anger, and their behavioral responses such as emotional exhaustion and turnover (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

The other popular theory used in workplace incivility literature is social identity theory (SIT), which is developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1986. This theory proposes that fair treatment in the organization conveys significant identity-relevant information for employees in terms of whether they are valued, trusted, and respected within their group. Such assessments of social standings have a key role in constructing and maintaining employees' positive social identity by confirming a positive image about them in their groups and the organization (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to this theory, employees look for holding an optimistic view about themselves and their groups, and those who are highly identified with their group (positive group regard) are intended to show perceptual in-group biases toward negative in-group behaviors interpreting them as forgivable (Brown, 2000). The ambiguous intention to harm in workplace incivility may lead employees, who are highly identified with their group, to interpret incivility as negligence and thus less negative. On the other hand, incivility could be evaluated as more accurate confirming negative attitudes regarding the group among employees who are less identified with their group and the organization (Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010). In fact, for employees with strong organizational identification, who are very sensitive and highly concerned about being fairly treated, experiencing workplace incivility is against their expectation and exhausts them emotionally (Epitropaki, 2013), which in turn may negatively affect their job outcomes.

2.3 Theories Applied in The Current Ph.D. Project

Conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is the most popular theory that has been widely used in workplace incivility studies (e.g., Chen, Wang, & Shih, 2021, Guo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020; Miner, Smittick, He, & Costa, 2019, Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016; Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012; Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010). COR theory provides a good conceptual framework for a deeper understanding of workplace

incivility and its influences on different job outcomes. It also describes the process of employees' coping ability and responding to work stress. Hobfoll (1989) summarized four types of resources for individuals, namely the goal, personal characteristics, social supports, and energy resources, which are a critical part of COR theory. Since these valuable emotional, social, and psychological resources are limited and could be gradually drained, employees tend to achieve, retain, and protect the specific resources demanded to accomplish job tasks and use them in the process of responding to job stressors and pressure. Based on this theory, employees try to avoid the risk of resource loss and restore them by reducing performance and showing negative behaviors if they realize they cannot get the return of invested resources (Guo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). Therefore, in line with COR theory, continuous exposure to workplace incivility in daily working life is a resource drain for the targeted employees, which results in experiencing more stress and leads employees to enact their defense mechanisms to protect and restore their valuable personal resources (Hobfoll, 1989). This process often makes them feel sad, distressed, and rejected, and leaves them emotionally strained depending on how the individual responds in terms of the quality of their job outcomes (Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015). COR theory is the main theory applied in all three papers constituting the current thesis.

The other theory that is applied to the first paper (the meta-analytic review) is adaptation theory, which could be a useful theory to investigate the longitudinal effects of psychological stressors such as workplace incivility and specifically the effect of time on stressor-strain relationships (Ritter, Matthews, Ford, & Henderson, 2016). The main premise within adaptation theory is that employees are likely to adapt themselves to both positive and negative stimuli in the organization by eventually returning to the baseline level of a specific cognition or emotion (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006). In contrast to popular theoretical models applied in workplace stressor-strain processes such as

COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which propose that strains do not decrease for persistent stressors but rather, they accumulate over time, adaptation theory suggests that people are able to adjust to the experience of stressors over time and return to more positive level (Ritter, Matthews, Ford, & Henderson, 2016). Up to now, only a few studies have applied adaptation theory to workplace issues within the organizational context (Matthews, & Ritter, 2019; Ritter, Matthews, Ford, & Henderson, 2016; Matthews, Wayne, & Ford, 2014). For example, based on this theory and within a longitudinal framework, Ritter, Matthews, Ford, and Henderson (2016) demonstrated that although the level of job satisfaction among employees, who experience negative stimuli (i.e., role conflict) in the workplace, was negatively affected at first, over time, employees adapted to the situation and returned to a more positive level of job satisfaction. Moreover, using adaptation theory in another longitudinal study, Matthews and Ritter (2019) found that continuous exposure to workplace incivility for a long time may lead employees to adapt to the situation and systematically recover themselves from experiencing incivility over time.

Ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988) as a theoretical foundation is applied in the second paper to explain the role of environmental factors in the employees' perception of workplace incivility. The ethical climate is a type of workplace climate, which is defined as "the shared perceptions of what is regarded ethically correct behaviors and how ethical situations should be handled in an organization" (Victor & Cullen, 1987, p.51). Five types of theoretical ethical climate were generated by Victor and Cullen (1988), namely rules, instrumental, independence, law and code, and caring climate. Among them, the perception of a caring climate has the biggest positive correlation with employees' ethical behavior (Fu & Deshpande, 2012). According to ethical climate theory, a caring climate, which includes the benevolence criterion of ethical climate and emphasizes friendship and team interest, refers to employees' perceptions of organizational

policies, procedures, and systems that affect their behaviors (Cullen, Victor, & Bronson, 1993). Based on this theory, providing any type of ethical climate in the organization in terms of rules, norms, policies, and culture, may affect employees' attitudes and improve their responsibility, morality, and positive behaviors, while decreasing their negativity including egoism, anger, aggression, emotional exhaustion and uncivil behaviors, which can help to decrease their turnover intention (Yang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Working in a caring climate encourages employees to consider the interests of others and be more careful about the effect of their behaviors on each other. Based on ethical climate theory, the antecedent role of a perceived caring climate in the formation of turnover intention has been revealed, and employees demonstrated a lower level of turnover intention when they felt there are strong caring or benevolent values in their work environment (Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018; Sims & Keon, 1997).

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3 Methodological Considerations

3.1 Applied Philosophy of Science in This Project

The term "paradigm" refers to a shared research culture with a set of values, beliefs, and assumptions about the nature and conduct of research among a group of researchers (Kuhn, 1977). Olsen, Lodwick, & Dunlap (1992) claimed that a paradigm is a framework, structure, and pattern or a system of academic and scientific ideas, values, and assumptions. Simply stated, a paradigm is a method of thinking about research and doing it. Research paradigm is the central notion in social science research (Morgan, 2007) conceptualizing different perspectives of the researcher to describe their philosophical stance to conduct research (Shah, Shah, & Khaskhelly, 2019). As a research strategy, methodology refers to the translation of ontological and epistemological principles into the best instructions about how specific research can be conducted by showing controlling principles, procedures, and practices in the research (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005).

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), a French philosopher, developed a philosophical idea, which is the basis for the positivist paradigm of exploring social reality. He believed that human behavior could be fully understood by observation and reason, and true knowledge requires observation and experiment. According to Henning Van Rensburg, and Smit (2004), revealing truth and presenting it by empirical means is the main concern for positivism. At the ontological level, positivists consider knowledge as objective and quantifiable, which means that they detach themselves from their research, as insignificant variables. Their philosophical idea assumes that reality exists *out there* in the knowable world and they can discover it by using a quantitative methodology (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In such orientation, knowledge as a given should be studied through objective ways, and generally, research results are represented quantitatively in numbers speaking for

themselves (Mutch, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). At the epistemological level, positivists consider social science as a well-arranged method for making a combination of deductive logic and precise observations of one's behavior for the purpose of finding and approving a set of probabilistic causal laws, which may be used to predict general patterns of human activity (Neuman, 2003). Positivism paradigm considers stable patterns for social reality and positivists believe that the nature of social reality is that empirical facts are independent of personal thoughts, which are governed by cause-and-effect laws (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005; Neuman, 2003). Positivist researchers focus on describing human behavior via measurable data and using precisely formulated questionnaires and psychological tests as highly standardized tools (Neuman, 2003).

Table 1 – Overview of Three Papers of the Current Thesis

N	Purpose	Type of study	Data collection method	Findings
1	conducting an early meta-analysis of the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility & their turnover intentions	Meta-analysis & systematic review	Reviewing papers of the relationship between workplace incivility & turnover intention	Confirming the positive relationship between workplace incivility & turnover intention
2	Investigating the role of the working environment (caring climate) in the frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility & their turnover intentions	Quantitative approach/ hypotheses testing/ using SEM	Survey	Revealing the negative effect of caring climate on workplace incivility and turnover intention
3	Identifying the frontline service employees' profiles by exploring the role of individual differences in their perceptions of & behavioral reactions to workplace incivility	Exploratory approach/ using cluster analysis	Survey	Indicating three distinct groups of frontline service employees with different perceptions of and reactions to workplace incivility

The quantitative paradigm, that has been applied in this thesis, relies on positivism to formulate the investigation and present the researcher's perspective, which is happening through variables development based on the literature and applying measurement process to social life (Bryman, 2012). Creswell (2003) defined quantitative research as an approach to test objective theories by investigating the relationship among specific variables, measuring them on instruments, and finally analyzing these numbered data by statistical procedures. A short overview of the three papers of the current thesis is presented in Table 1.

3.2 Research Design

In order to explain the overall design of the present thesis, the design of papers one, two, and three would be described respectively.

A brief literature review of all empirical research on workplace incivility from construct introduction in 1999 showed a broad and diverse extant body of work, which emphasized the necessity of conducting meta-analytic reviews in order to integrate the previous findings and enabling scholars and practitioners to better understand this phenomenon (Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). The first paper was designed to provide a meta-analysis and systematic review of relevant literature on the relationship between workplace incivility and employees' turnover intentions. Meta-analysis has been attracted increasing scholars' attention because of its reputation of high reliability and accuracy by achieving cumulative effect through collecting and synthesizing published studies on a larger scale (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2011). Conducting a meta-analysis study is beneficial since it can provide an estimate of the effect of workplace incivility on employees' turnover intention based on all empirical evidence in the field, rather than on single studies that usually have small samples. In fact, the estimate in a meta-analysis study is more precise due to an increased amount of data,

hypothesis testing, and statistical power (Borenstein, Higgins, Hedges, & Rothstein, 2017). One important issue in meta-analysis is the possible publication bias, which refers to a systematic difference between published and unpublished research literature because of the general tendency to publish studies with higher effect sizes and statistically significant results (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2011). Likewise, a systematic review as a reproducible and explicit method attempts to distinguish all eligible studies based on its main characteristic of clearly defined objectives and eligibility criteria for included studies (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2009).

The second and the third papers relied on quantitative methods mainly, using a non-experimental survey-based research design to investigate the specified research questions and hypotheses (Lavrakas, 2008). Specifically, the second paper was based on a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis to find linear structural relationships related to the perception of workplace incivility within a serial multiple mediation model. SEM is currently one of the most noticeable analytical approaches in different fields of the social sciences with the advantage of conducting a complex, multidimensional, and more precise analysis of empirical data over other statistical models (Tarka, 2018). In fact, SEM enables researchers to consider various aspects of the examined reality, theoretical constructs, and abstract concepts (Tarka, 2018). It has been convincingly argued that the use of SEM as an analytic tool should receive priority for organizational behavior researchers who investigate latent mediation or moderation models (Wu & Zumbo, 2008).

Given the exploratory nature of the third paper, cluster analysis (CA) was employed to appropriately address the main research question about finding well-defined clusters of employees who have similar perceptions and behaviors as well as a clear distinction from other clusters. CA is the most beneficial data analytic approach, which is widely used to identify groups of subjects or people according to similarities and differences

they have compared to each other (Jackson, McLellan, Frey, & Rauti, 2020).

3.3 Samples and Procedure

The purpose of the first paper was to predict the effect of workplace incivility on employees' turnover intention based on a broader sample with considering the effect of different sources of workplace incivility, different measures of incivility, different industries, and countries. In line with this purpose, a review of the current literature was conducted followed by a meta-analysis considering recommendations from the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Review and Interventions (Higgins et al., 2011; Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2011), as well as PRISMA statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2009). The literature search was conducted in two phases: Search I was performed in spring 2019 within the following databases: PsychInfo, ISI Web of Science, Emerald, Scopus, Soc Index, and Hospitality & Tourism Complete, to identify empirical peer-reviewed papers in English from 1999 to 2019. The following words were searched in this phase: "organizational mistreatment", "uncivil behavior", "job outcome", "supervisor", "coworker", "customer", "workplace", and "incivility", which resulted in 658 articles. Literature search II was performed in summer 2019 within three more databases: ProQuest, Science Direct, and Google Scholar using the following keywords: "supervisor incivility", "coworker incivility", "customer incivility", "workplace incivility", and "employees' outcome", which resulted in 115 articles. The final sample of 773 studies resulted from phases I and II, of which 745 studies were excluded and only 28 studies were included for statistical analyses (more information is available in the inclusion and exclusion criteria reported in Paper 1). These 28 papers comprise 46 studies since some of them explored the relationship between more than one source of incivility and turnover intention in one or more specific

studies, and some of them compared the results over time and in separate samples.

To investigate the effect of a specific type of ethical climate (i.e., caring climate) on frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention, the second paper developed a model representing a serial multiple mediation of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion in the relationship between the perception of caring climate and turnover intention in the service industry. The third paper, with an exploratory approach, concentrates on the effect of individual differences on the perception of workplace incivility and employees' behavioral reactions including turnover intention. A non-experimental survey-based research design (Lavrakas, 2008) was employed to collect data and one questionnaire (in English) was developed for both Papers 2 and 3. The survey method inspired by Roberts (1999) is one of the most commonly used approaches in the social sciences to conduct empirical studies about psychological and sociological variables' characteristics and interrelationships. Moreover, the non-probability (non-random) purposive sampling technique was used (Maxwell, 1996). This technique relies on the researcher's judgment or deliberate choice for selecting people who are willing to provide the required information for the study using their experience and knowledge (Bernard, 2002). The self-administrated questionnaires were distributed among respondents who were undergraduate students in hotel management or tourism management at a university in Norway. The eligibility of these respondents was restricted to (1) the students who have been working only in the hotel or restaurant sectors in Norway, (2) with full-time or part-time positions as frontline service employees only (i.e., reservations agents, front-desk agents, waiters or waitresses, and bartenders), and (3) having at least six months tenure in their positions before accepting to participate in the study. Only frontline service employees were selected since – due to the nature of their job – they are prone to uncivil behaviors from different sources in the workplace (i.e.,

customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility) compared to the other employees in the hotel and restaurant sectors (Arasli, Hejraty Namin, & Abubakar, 2018; Daskin, 2015; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012).

Two weeks before the main data collection, ten master students in the same field were selected to participate in pre-testing the questionnaire in order to check the clarity and understandability of the items, and some necessary changes were applied in the questionnaire accordingly. The approximate time for completing the questionnaire was 10-15 minutes. The purpose of the study, contact information, a polite request emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were provided on the first page of the questionnaire. To make responses anonymous and confidential in the main data collection, a special box was provided by the researcher for collecting the completed questionnaires. In line with previous studies, this approach helped to reduce the potential threat of common method bias (CMB) (Line & Runyan, 2012; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

322 out of 465 distributed questionnaires were returned (response rate: 69.2%), and those with more than 20% unanswered items were considered as missing data. Therefore, the total sample was 291, which was subjected to data analyses for both Papers 2 and 3. 193 respondents were female (66%) and most of them had 1-3 years of job tenure (45%). 190 (65%) of them worked at hotels and 217 (75%) did not have a supervising position.

3.4 Instruments

In the second and the third study of this thesis, a number of pre-validated measurements were employed and a 5-point Likert-format scale was used for measuring all items. All measurements were used in the third study and only four measurements (i.e., perception of caring climate, perception of coworker incivility, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention) were used in the second study.

Perception of customer incivility was measured by four items adapted from the Incivility from Customer Scale (IFCS) developed by Wilson and Holmvall (2013). Items were: "*How often have customers continued to complain despite your efforts to assist them?*", "*How often have customers made gestures (e.g., eye-rolling, sighing) to express their impatience?*", "*How often have customers kept complaining to you about slow service during busy times*?", and "*How often have customers blamed you for a problem you did not cause?*".

Perception of coworker incivility was measured by four items from the Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ) adapted from Martin and Hine (2005). Items were: "*How often have your coworkers spoken to you in an aggressive tone of voice*?", "*How often have your coworkers taken items from your desk without prior permission?*", "*How often have your coworkers not consulted you about a decision you should have been involved in?*", and "*How often have your coworkers made unkind/mean remarks about you in a clever indirect way?*".

Emotional exhaustion was measured by three items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Items were: "*I feel emotionally drained from my job*", "*I feel used up at the end of the workday*", and "*I feel burned out from my work*".

Job performance was measured by three items taken from Babin and Boles (1998). Items were: "*I am among the 10% of best frontline employees here*", "*I know what my customers expect better than most others*", and "*I am a top performer*".

Turnover intention was measured by three items from Mitchel (1981). Items were: "*I plan to be with the company quite a while*", "*I would accept a contract offer from another company if it came tomorrow*", and "*Sometimes I get so irritated, I think about changing job*".

LMX quality was measured by four items taken from Scandura and Graen (1984). Items were: "*I characterize my working relationship with my supervisor as very effective*", "*I feel my supervisor understands my job problems and needs very well*", "*I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his/her decisions if he/she were not present*", and "*Regardless of the amount of formal authority he/she has, I can count on my supervisor to defend me, even at his/her own expense, when I really need it*".

Perception of caring climate was measured by four items from Cullen et al. (1993). Items were: "*Our organization always cares about what is the best for each employee*", "*In this company, it is given importance to affection and kindness among all the employees*", "*When making decisions in this organization, it is expected that each individual is cared for*", and "*The managers are very concerned about what is generally best for the employees in this organization*".

3.5 Analytical Approach

The three studies of the current thesis applied different analyses of the data based on the design and research question(s) of each study.

The objective of the first paper was to perform a meta-analytic study with a systematic literature review predicting the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention. The Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Higgins et al., 2011) and its suggested description for inclusion and exclusion criteria were followed for data collection. In order to identify the effect of different sources of workplace incivility, incivility measures, different industries, and countries, meta-regression moderation analyses were carried out (Viechtbauer, 2010). As a systematic literature review supported by statistical methods, a meta-analysis helps researchers to quantify the relevant findings from each study and to prepare values for further aggregation and comparison

(Viechtbauer, 2010). To conduct the meta-analyses of the data in the first study, R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020) was applied using provided functions in the "metafor package" (Viechtbauer, 2010).

The objective of the second study was to test four hypotheses about the relationship between employees' perception of caring climate and turnover intention considering the perception of coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion in the service industry. Quantitative data collected by questionnaire and the hypotheses were analyzed and tested by means of the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS version 26.0 (SPSS 26.0 IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York, USA). The capacity of SEM to estimate and test the relationships among constructs is an advantage of SEM. Moreover, with SEM, multiple measures could be used for representing constructs and addressing the issue of measure-specific error, which is different from other general linear models (Weston & Gore, 2006). In the second study, AMOS was used for the assessment of the model fit as well as conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the operationalization of constructs in the measurement model (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

The objective of the third study was to identify distinct groups of frontline service employees who have individual differences in perception and behavioral reaction to workplace incivility. SPSS version 26.0 was used to analyze the collected data. Since cluster analysis (CA) is a good approach to make groups of the participants based on their similar responses considering their characteristics' heterogeneity, K-means cluster analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998) was conducted to explore a structured view of the employees participated in this study. As a specific type of CA, K-means clustering allows potential improvement in the locations of the cases during relocating them in the iteration process without any changes in the number of clusters. Chi-squared test and post-hoc ANOVA analysis with Bonferroni correction

were also conducted to distinguish obtained clusters (Garcia-Perez & Nunez-Anton, 2003; Beasley & Schumacker, 1995).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability establish the fundamental bases for contemporary scientific research. In order to reduce errors, validity and reliability in all studies are fundamental concerns (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Study quality can be considered in terms of validity including construct, internal, external, and statistical conclusion validity (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). According to Mead (2005), the reliability of a study mainly concerns the degrees of freedom for error in the computed test scores. The internal consistency, the interrater reliability, and the test-retest reliability are the primary themes considered in current and continuing research (Juni, 2007). First, the validity of the three studies will be discussed first, and then, the reliability will be explored in this section.

Construct validity concerns the degree to which the measure is correct in terms of capturing the designed phenomenon for measurement (Sawilowsky, 2007). Throughout this thesis, the concepts were clearly defined based on relevant existing theories to provide convincing construct validity. Specifically, the definition of workplace incivility and its distinction from other workplace mistreatment has been widely discussed in Chapter 1 Section 1.1.1. Both the convergent validity and the discriminant validity could represent construct validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Following Fornell and Larcker (1981), the estimated discriminant and convergent validity of measures have been largely addressed in the second study (Paper 2). Internal validity is about demonstrating a causal relationship between considered variables. The non-experimental and cross-sectional studies may have difficulty reaching this validity. It has been noted in the limitation section in Paper 2. Regardless of this limitation, however, it has been argued that cross-sectional solution presents adequate arguments for developing external

and/or construct validity (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). As far as survey data achieve consistency with discussed theories, they may provide evidence for functional relationships (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). External validity is about the extent to which the results of a specific study can be generalized. The sample used in Paper 2 and 3 was quite adequate and was drawn from two different service contexts (i.e., the hotel and restaurant industries). The frontline service employees, who are particularly prone to experiencing workplace incivility (Arasli, Hejraty Namin, & Abubakar, 2018; Daskin, 2015; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012), could be reasonably representative of the population. Since all included studies in the meta-analytic study (Paper 1), Paper 2, and 3 were based on typical criteria, which portray employees' perception of workplace incivility, the findings of the current thesis may have external values. For statistical conclusion validity, the objectivity of statistical procedures in this thesis was maximized by using empirically validated and theoretically driven scales for measurements (in Papers 2 and 3) as well as applying the structural equation modeling (SEM) as a powerful statistical approach for testing the serial multiple mediation model (in Paper 2) and confidence intervals (CI) and effect size measures (in Papers 1 and 2).

The internal consistency of all scales was estimated by Cronbach's alpha. The advantage of Cronbach's alpha is its ability to assess the systematic variance value in a measure as well as providing a summary measure of inter-correlations among items (Churchill Jr & Peter, 1984; Churchill, 1979). Moreover, the equivalent coefficient (composite reliability score) that considers the latent nature of psychological constructs has been supported by the scholars who advocate the latent variable framework (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). The reliability of all included variables in Papers 2 and 3 was assessed by Cronbach's alpha, and the scores were comfortably greater than the reliability standard of 0.60 (from 0.70 to 0.89) for all constructs in Paper 2 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Similarly, the composite reliability scores (CR) were between

0.70-0.89 and exceed the threshold of 0.70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998), which indicates satisfactory reliability for the operationalizations of the latent constructs in Paper 2. Moreover, almost all the studies included in Paper 1 (meta-analysis) reported the reliability tests through Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability scores (CR) and Pearson's *r* statistic. More than half of these studies used the same or a modified measurement of workplace incivility called the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) developed by Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout (2001). The effect sizes and CIs of each included study were presented in the Forest plot, which visualizes these values as well as the computed summary effect size at the bottom of the plot (please check Paper 1 for the Forest Plot and more information).

3.7 Strengths and Weaknesses

Similar to all scientific methods, the overall design of the current thesis has both strengths and weaknesses, which need to be taken into account to define the boundaries of the applied approach.

Given the strengths first, the three studies of this thesis are designed to achieve a deeper understanding of workplace incivility through different methodological frameworks and statistical approaches. Compared to results based on single studies, a meta-analytical integration and systematic review in the first study (Paper 1) certainly provides a better estimate of the effect of employees' perception of workplace incivility on their turnover intention. The second study (Paper 2) has the advantage of using structural equation modeling (SEM) for providing precise estimates for hypothesized relationships in a serial multiple mediation model. SEM is increasingly applied in social science since it contains growing statistical methods with great flexibility, which enables researchers to use it in testing considered models and hypotheses in a broad range of studies with different designs including cross-sectional, longitudinal, experimental, and survey research (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). The third study (Paper 3) with the use of K-means cluster analysis, has

an exploratory design focusing on identifying different groups of frontline service employees in terms of individual differences in perception of workplace incivility and their psychological and behavioral reactions.

Another strength would be related to the samples. The results of the meta-analysis study (Paper 1) were based on a large sample of employees targeted by incivility in the workplace. Moreover, conducting research on the perception of workplace incivility, specifically among frontline service employees is very important because of the crucial role of such employees in the hotel and restaurant industry and the fact that they could be highly vulnerable to incivility committed in the service work environment than other employees (e.g., Arasli, Hejraty Namin, & Abubakar, 2018; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). Therefore, choosing a sample of frontline service employees for Papers 2 and 3 is a strength of this thesis. The originality in considering the effect of a specific type of workplace ethical climate (i.e., caring climate) on frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention in a serial multiple mediation model shows another strength of the current thesis

On the other hand, some issues could be considered as weaknesses of this thesis. The first one is related to the generalization issue in the meta-analysis study (Paper 1). Since the sample was limited to only published journal papers in English the findings require caution, especially when it comes to the results of the moderation analysis based on small subsamples. As an early endeavor to conduct meta-analytic research on employees' incivility-turnover relationships in the workplace, the results should be interpreted with caution until further meta-analysis studies are available.

Causal inference is another methodological limitation in this thesis. The research design with cross-sectional surveys in Papers 2 and 3 probably hinders strong causal inferences (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) and therefore, the causal relationship between the variables needs to be

cautiously interpreted. However, refusing to consider survey research only because of low support for causal arguments is opposed by other scholars (e.g., Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). The exploratory nature of the third study (Paper 3) may raise questions about being primarily descriptive and providing a limited incremental theoretical contribution. However, this paper has its logical position in the sequence of research purposes in the current thesis. After conducting a meta-analysis and systematic review paper of available empirical studies on the relationship between perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention, the second step was to investigate the effect of environmental factors (i.e., a caring climate in the workplace) on employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention (in Paper 2). The next step was to explore the role of individual differences (as personal factors) in employees' perceptions and reactions to workplace incivility.

More details of the three studies' limitations are available in the respective papers.

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4 Results

The overall aim of the current thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between frontline service employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention and to explore the effect of the working environment as well as individual differences in employees' perceptions and reactions to workplace incivility. This chapter contains a brief overview of the specific research questions and a summary of the results in the three papers, which form the core of this thesis. The results are presented in detail in the three papers at the end of the thesis.

4.1 Paper 1

"Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention in Organizations: A Meta-analytic Review" by Namin, B. H., Øgaard, T., and Røislien, J.

This paper has been published by *the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2022.*

With the aim of providing an overview of the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention, specific research questions of the first paper are to conduct an early meta-analysis and systematic review paper investigating the effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention, and to check this effect for different sources of workplace incivility (i.e., customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility), different measures, industries, and countries.

The recommended method in the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Review and Interventions (Higgins et al., 2011; Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2011), and PRISMA statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2009) is closely followed to review empirical studies in the 20 years since the first publication (in 1999 by Andersson and Pearson) with search in multiple databases.

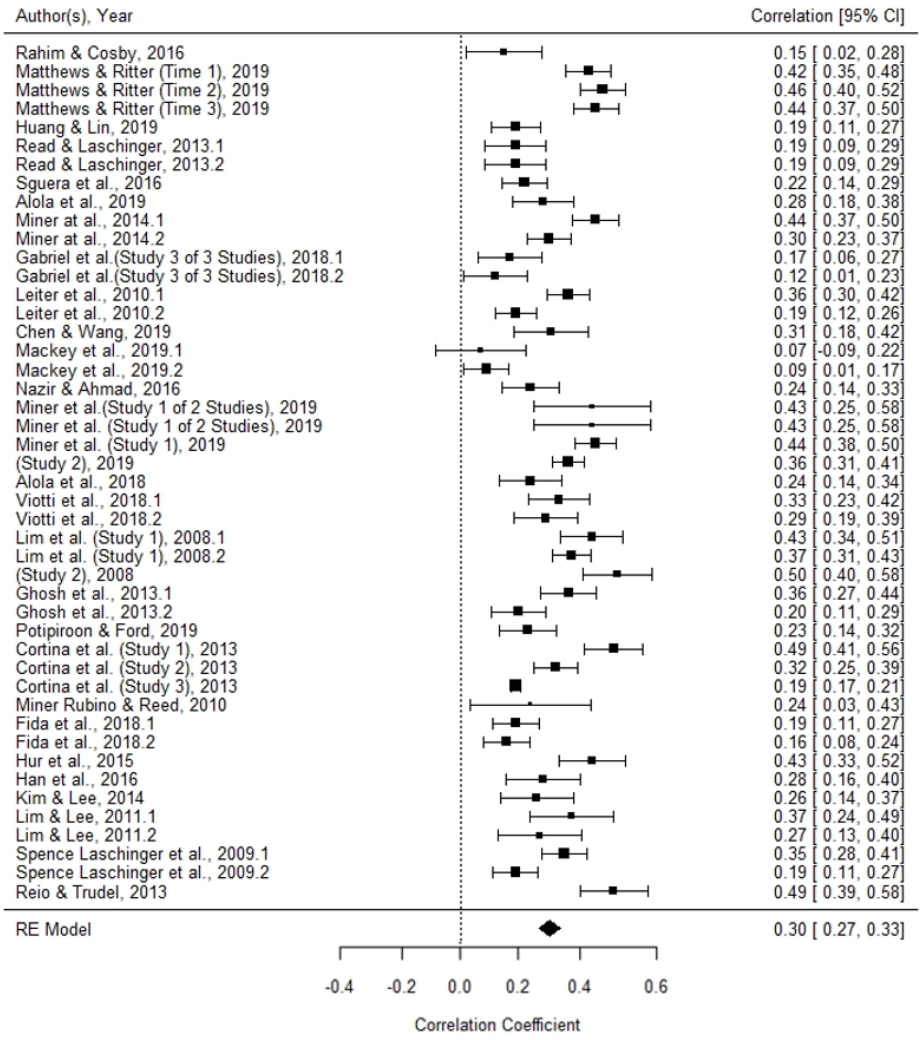

Figure 5 – Forest Plot for All Studies Included

A more detailed description of the process of studies' identification, screening, and eligibility assessment (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria), is available in Paper 1 presented at the end of the thesis. The results from analyzing data (a sample of 28 papers including 46 effect sizes) in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020) using the "metafor package" (Viechtbauer, 2010), reveal that there is indeed a positive

relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention, which give a straight answer to the first research question in this paper. Figure 5 presents the forest plot that visualizes the studies' effect sizes and CIs as well as the summary effect size calculated in this meta-analysis study.

For the second research question, meta-regression moderation analyses are conducted (Quintana, 2015; Viechtbauer, 2010). The included studies are categorized into five groups based on their reports about the sources of workplace incivility including three major sources (customer incivility, coworker incivility, and supervisor incivility) and two combination types (supervisor *and* coworker incivility, and supervisor *or* coworker incivility). The result of the meta-regression analysis for the different sources shows no statistically significant difference between the five groups. Although the number of studies in each group is relatively low, which emphasizes a cautious interpretation of the result, the effect on turnover intention in the group of "coworker *and* supervisor incivility" is lower than the sum of the direct effects of only one of the sources implying a kind of non-linear (not additive) effect of incivility on turnover intention. This may suggest some form of interaction between these two sources. For the different workplace incivility measures, the included studies are categorized into two groups; the studies that used the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout; 2001) and the studies that used WIS-related measures (i.e., modified or extended versions of WIS). The result of the meta-regression analysis for the different workplace incivility measures reveals that there is no significant difference in using different measures of workplace incivility. In the next step, the included studies are categorized into four groups based on the industries they have been conducted, which include healthcare, hospitality, academia, and the other industries. Based on the result of the meta-regression analysis for the different industries, studies in academic sectors demonstrate a statistically significant difference and a slightly higher effect of

workplace incivility on employees' turnover intention. Moreover, for the last part of the second research question in Paper 1 (i.e., different countries), the included studies are categorized into two groups including studies in the US (North America) and studies in other countries, since most of the included studies have been conducted in the US and the rest of them were from one country in Europe, five countries in Asia (from different regions), and one country in Africa. The meta-regression analysis for the different countries demonstrates that the effect of workplace incivility on employees' turnover intention is higher in the US (North America) compared to the other countries. A wide literature review and the results of the first study enhanced a broader knowledge base for Papers 2 and 3 in the current thesis.

4.2 Paper 2

"The Effect of a Caring Climate on Frontline Employees' Turnover Intention in the Service Industry: A Serial Multiple Mediation Model" by Namin, B. H., Marnburg, E., Bakkevig Dagsland, Å. H.

This paper has been published by *the Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 2022.*

The purpose of the second paper is to gain more insight into the role of environmental factors (the working environment) in the frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions. With the emphasis on this purpose in the service work environment, Paper 2 is conducted to examine the effect of a perceived caring climate (environmental factors) on the employees' turnover intention through testing a serial multiple mediation model with two mediators (i.e., coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion). The specific research question of the second paper is to investigate the extent to which a perceived caring climate in the workplace may influence employees' perception of workplace incivility and their subsequent intention to quit (turnover intention). The

conceptual model of the second study illustrated in Figure 6, which presents direct and indirect relations between a caring clime and employees' turnover intention serially mediated by coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion.

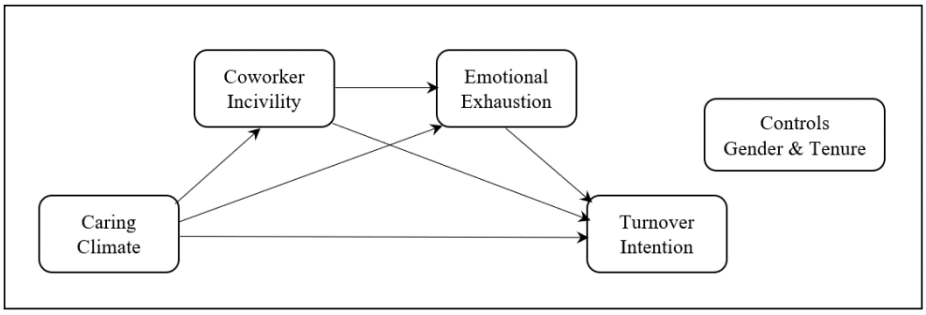

Figure 6 – Conceptual Model of the Second Study

In order to test the hypothesized relationships in this paper, the survey data from 291 frontline service employees were analyzed with the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique using AMOS version 26.0 (SPSS 26.0 IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York, USA). The analytical model of Paper 2 with estimated parameters and their statistical significance are presented in Figure 7.

The results of this study provide evidence that perception of caring climate is negatively associated with frontline employees' perception of coworker incivility, their emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention. Additionally, according to the results of this study, coworker incivility does not mediate the relationship between perception of a caring climate and employees' turnover intention. However, the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion is supported in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. Finally, the test of the serial mediation path statistically supports the serial mediation effect of both coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion in the relationship between their perception of caring climate and turnover intention.

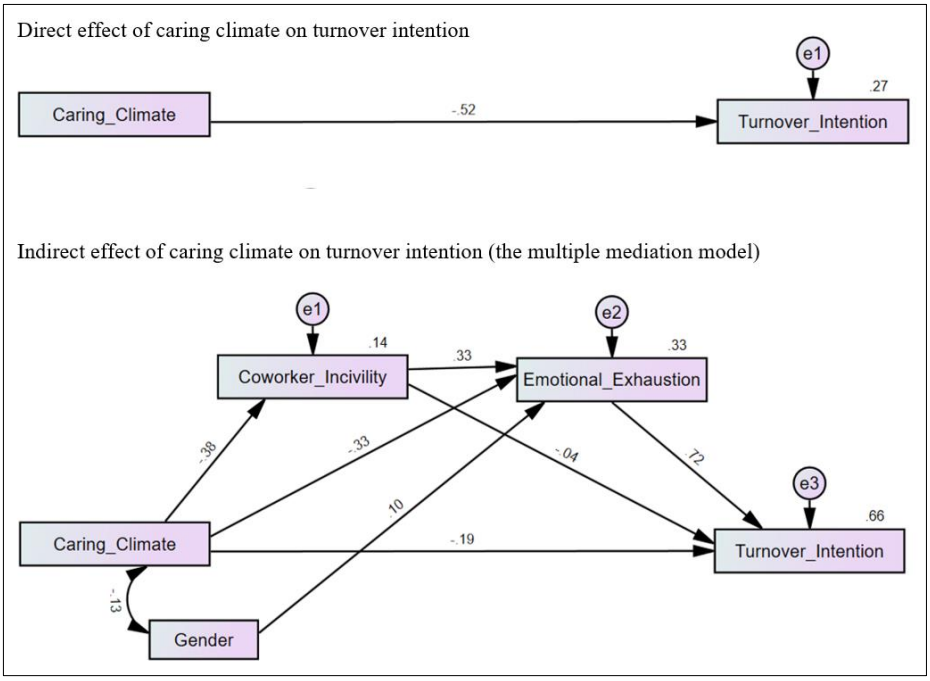

Figure 7 – Statistical Model of the Second Study

4.3 Paper 3

"Frontline Service Employees' Profiles: Exploring Individual Differences in Perceptions of and Reactions to Workplace Incivility" by Namin, B. H., Marnburg, E., Bakkevig Dagsland, Å. H.

The paper has been published by *Behavioral Sciences, 2022*.

After investigating the role of a caring climate as an environmental factor in frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention, Paper 3 is conducted to explore the role of personal factors considering employees' individual differences in perception of workplace incivility and social supports at work, as well as their behavioral reactions and turnover intention. Therefore, the specific research questions of the third study are to explore the role of individual differences in the employees' perceptions of and reactions to workplace

incivility and to identify distinct groups of frontline employees who perceive and react differently from other groups.

Drawing upon the same survey data (291 frontline service employees in Norway), K-means cluster analysis and post hoc ANOVA is applied to answer the research questions using SPSS version 26.0. Based on the results of K-means cluster analysis and Kappa test, three distinct groups of frontline employees are found, which are labeled as Independent, Integrated, and Disintegrated employees based on their particular demographic and behavioral profiles considering final inference from their different characteristics and behaviors and the relationships established at work.

The results of this exploratory study indicate that the majority of the employees are female, without supervising positions, and from the hotel industry. Independent employees (cluster/group 1) have the lowest work experience, the lowest perception of workplace incivility, the lowest emotional exhaustion, and a relatively high perception of social supports at work compared to other groups. They also show weak job outcomes considering their job performance and turnover intention. Integrated employees (cluster/group 2) have the highest work experience, a relatively low emotional exhaustion and perception of workplace incivility (the lowest perception of coworker incivility in particular), the highest perception of social supports at work, and finally, they show the best job outcomes (the lowest turnover intention in particular) compared to the other groups. The last cluster (Disintegrated employees) have the highest perception of workplace incivility, the highest emotional exhaustion, and the lowest perception of social supports. Therefore, they show the weakest job outcomes with the highest turnover intention among clusters.

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5 Discussion

The current thesis mainly focused on the workplace incivility construct specifically examining the association between employees' perception of incivility in the service work environment and their intention to leave the organization (i.e., turnover intention) is the primary aim of this thesis. Given the widespread nature of incivility in the workplace (Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016; Porath & Pearson, 2013), frontline service employees, who are especially prone to experience such mistreatment in the service industry (e.g., Arasli, Hejraty Namin, & Abubakar, 2018) have been considered for investigations and addressing the research questions. Moreover, in line with further aims, the role of a specific type of workplace climate (i.e., a caring climate) as environmental factors as well as the role of individual differences as personal factors in the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention is further investigated in this thesis.

In this chapter, the most important results of three studies are explained and discussed first, and then theoretical and practical implications are presented followed by suggesting some directions for future research and practices.

5.1 Perception of Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention

In order to integrate the existing knowledge about the perception of workplace incivility and its effect on employees' turnover intention, the first study provide a meta-analysis and systematic review applying random effects procedure (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004) and meta-regression moderation analyses (Quintana, 2015, Viechtbauer, 2010).

The result from Paper 1 illustrates the positive overall effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention based on 46 effect sizes from included studies. The significant positive relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention has been widely evidenced in previous research including the sample of studies collected for the meta-analytic paper (Paper 1) (e.g., Huang & Lin, 2019; Chen & Wang, 2019; Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019; Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016; Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015; Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008).

The most interesting result in Paper 1 is about the lower effect on turnover intention in the group of studies that combined two sources of incivility (i.e., coworker *and* supervisor incivility) compared with the groups of studies that only considered a direct effect from one of these sources (only "coworker incivility" or only "supervisor incivility"). Such a non-linear (not additive) effect may suggest some form of intercorrelation between two mentioned sources of workplace incivility in all the included studies indicating overestimation of individual main effects. It can be also due to ceiling effects in workplace incivility and turnover intentions implying too short scales that are unable to achieve the real simultaneous effects or controlled responses from the respondents. Thus, this observed combined effect may be underestimated. Given the small and unequal number of studies in the categories related to the type of incivility, more intensive exploration is required regarding this novel finding. There could be a dynamic and unobserved process in employees' perceptions of coworker incivility and supervisor incivility. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that coworker incivility may show a lower (but still significant) effect on employees' job outcomes than other sources of workplace incivility (e.g., Cho, Bonn, Han, & Lee, 2016; Sliter, Pui, Sliter, & Jex, 2011). That could be due to fewer negative emotions the employees may feel when they experience uncivil behaviors from their coworkers. They may perceive it as less

threatening compared with experiencing the same behaviors from their supervisors or customers. Moreover, based on adaptation theory it can be argued that the employees could become habituated to experiencing negative emotions during and after dealing with uncivil behaviors (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). This process may return them to their previous levels of well-being over time especially by considering the low-intensity characteristic of incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). It is still necessary to note that the result did not show any significant difference between the effects of the three main sources of workplace incivility.

A slightly higher significant correlation between workplace incivility and turnover intention in the academic sector compared to other industries in the results may emphasize the higher expectations of more respectful and ethical treatments in the academic work environment. A significantly higher relationship between perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention in the US (North America) category compared to the other countries could be explained by cultural differences (Hofstede, 1984). In more indulgent and individualistic cultures (e.g., North America) with weaker control over impulses, the perception of workplace incivility tends to be higher than in more restrained cultures (e.g., Mediterranean, Middle East, and Eastern countries). In individualistic countries with a competitive organizational culture, employees may perceive uncivil behaviors as an effort to decrease their strength in the workplace and therefore, they may feel more threatened and challenged by experiencing workplace incivility (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). However, the relatively limited number of studies in the categories of industry and country, lead us to have tentative conclusions of these results.

5.2 The Role of Environmental Factors

Given the results of the meta-analytic paper supporting a significant positive relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention, the second paper is designed to investigate the role of a specific type of workplace climate (i.e., caring climate) in frontline employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention in the service industry. Within the literature on workplace incivility and turnover intention, only a small research stream has developed from the perspective of an ethical climate in the workplace (e.g., Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018; Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015; Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014).

Paper 2 provides support for a direct effect of caring climate on turnover intention and its indirect effect on turnover intention through coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion in a serial multiple mediation model. In this paper, the results of SEM analysis to test hypothesized relationships in a multiple mediation model reveal a significant negative relationship between employees' perception of a caring climate and turnover intention. This result is in line with ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), which asserts that providing ethical policies rules, norms, and culture in the workplace can reduce employees' negativity and turnover intention (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Workplace climate has a potential role in influencing turnover intention (Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018; Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015). Specifically, a caring climate has the largest positive effect on employees' ethical behaviors (Fu & Deshpande, 2012) and therefore, it can negatively affect turnover intentions.

Regarding the mediations effects, the results only provide support for a partial mediation effect of emotional exhaustion in the relationship between perception of caring climate and turnover intention. This result complements the finding of a previous study by Yang, Tsai, and Tsai (2014) that indicated partial mediation effect of emotional exhaustion in

the relationship between ethical climate and turnover intention. Coworker incivility in the second paper shows a mediating effect only when emotional exhaustion is not included in the model. This result indicates a stronger mediation effect and a higher positive effect of emotional exhaustion on turnover intention compared to coworker incivility, although it is not possible to underestimate the mediating role of coworker incivility. It can be supported by evidence in previous studies emphasizing the strong role of emotional exhaustion in predicting turnover intention (Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015; Yang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014; Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, 2008; Korunka, Hoonakker, & Carayon, 2008). Emotional exhaustion in employees could be a result of experiencing a variety of different negative factors in the workplace rather than coworker incivility including job insecurity (Lawrence & Kacmar, 2017), increased work demands (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, 2008), or workplace incivility from other sources (Alola, Avcı, & Öztüren, 2021). Considering different sources of workplace incivility (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), perception of coworker incivility as a less threatening – but still significantly harmful – stressor in the workplace may have a lower negative effect on employees' job outcomes than supervisor incivility and/or customer incivility (Cho, Bonn, Han, & Lee, 2016; Sliter, Pui, Sliter, & Jex, 2011).

This paper also reveals that the perception of support and care in the organization decreases the employees' intention to quit their jobs (turnover intention) through serial reduction in both their perception of coworker incivility and their relevant feeling of emotional exhaustion. Based on ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), a caring climate stimulates employees' positive behaviors and friendship and declines their incivility against each other. Positive feeling about the workplace environment leads employees to feel lower levels of emotional exhaustion and to stay longer in their positions. Given the important role of the cognitive, emotional, and physical resources in the conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), coworker

incivility is a key resource-draining component (Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015), which employees' reaction to it may result in their emotional exhaustion (Neveu, 2007). On the other hand, perception of a caring climate may act as a supplementary emotional resource in COR theory, which helps employees to confront workplace incivility and its negative consequences.

5.3 The Role of Personal Factors

The next important result of this thesis is about identifying three distinct groups of frontline service employees whose demographic and behavioral profiles are explored in Paper 3. In this study, individual differences are considered as personal factors that may affect employees' perception of interpersonal interactions (workplace incivility) and social supports at work (perception of a caring climate and LMX quality) as well as their psychological (emotional exhaustion) and behavioral responses in term of job outcomes (job performance and turnover intention).

Paper 3 indicates that the role of perception of social supports at work is noteworthy. High perception of a caring climate and a strong relationship with the manager (high LMX quality) among Integrated employees decrease their emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions even though they experience a high level of incivility from customers, which is in line with previous evidence (Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018; Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013). Even Independent employees who are reluctant to negative interpersonal interactions in the workplace and show low levels of job performance are relatively less likely to quit, which could be due to their high perception of a caring and supportive work environment (Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014). When the perception of social supports at work is very low, employees are most likely to be seriously affected by workplace incivility, be emotionally exhausted, and show very weak job outcomes (Li, Zhu, & Park, 2018; Kim & Koo, 2017). This is the case for Disintegrated employees. COR theory can explain

this process very well; employees' emotional resources are drained when they have to deal with uncivil behaviors in the workplace and to restore these valuable resources, they negatively react by decreasing the level of job performance (Cho, Bonn, Han, & Lee, 2016) and increasing their turnover intention (Huang & Lin, 2019). However, the perception of a caring climate and LMX quality is a supplementary emotional resource, which based on COR theory, enables employees to deal more effectively with workplace incivility.

The results also indicate the role of employees' tenure in predicting service employees' job outcomes. The highest tenure rate among Integrated employees implies that they had plenty of time to build strong positive relationships with their managers, which may, in turn, lead them to show the highest job performance and the lowest turnover intention compared to other groups especially Disintegrated employees who on the other hand, have the lowest tenure rate and the weakest job outcomes (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013; Hartline & Witt, 2004).

It is also important to note that stressors are classified into hindrance stressor and challenging stressor (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000) where the former is perceived as a barrier threatening employees' personal growth goal achievement, and job outcomes, and the latter is perceived as a favorable work demand that supports their goals and positively affect their job outcomes (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). This is the reason behind positive (but very low, almost zero) correlations between workplace incivility and job performance in Paper 3. This indicates that frontline service employees who participated in this study did not perceive customer and coworker incivility as hindrance stressors at some level that resulted in a different correlation with job performance than what was predicted.

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6 Implications and Directions for Future Research

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The current thesis has investigated workplace incivility as a less intensive form of interpersonal mistreatment in organizations, which is one of the most prevalent issues in today's global workplace (Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016; Porath & Pearson, 2013) with positive effects on employees' turnover intention (Huang & Lin, 2019; Chen & Wang, 2019; Alola, Olugbade, Avci, & Öztüren, 2019).

The theoretical implications of this thesis are threefold. First, by conducting an early meta-analytical systematic review study, this thesis contributes to the literature by synthesizing previous research findings (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). The first study in this thesis tries to integrate the existing knowledge in the wide and diverse extant body of research on the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention as well as investigating the consistency of this relation considering different sources of workplace incivility, measures, industries, and countries. This meta-analysis includes studies in 20 years of workplace incivility research (since the first publication in 1999 by Andersson and Pearson) that resulted from searching in nine databases, testing for overall effects, and developing a more accurate estimate of effect magnitude (Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016).

Second, in Paper 2, a serial multiple mediation model is developed to investigate the role of a positive working environment (environmental factors) in employees' intention to leave their job with a focus on their perception of workplace incivility, which provides contribution to both ethical climate theory and COR theory. Unlike the previous studies that mainly concentrated on the moderating effect of a caring climate (e.g., Liu, Xiao, He, Wang, & Li, 2020; Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014),

this thesis (through Paper 2) contributes to the ethical climate literature by considering the antecedent role of employees' perception of a caring climate and its established behavioral mechanism leading to lower levels of turnover intention as a result of a reduction in perception of coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion (serial mediation effect). The confirmed partial mediating role of emotional exhaustion in the second study, which supports previous findings (i.e., Yang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014), provides more insight into the mediation mechanism that exists between employees' perception of a positive work climate and their turnover intention. Moreover, the results of Paper 2 contribute to COR theory by showing the potential role of a caring climate as a supplementary emotional resource for frontline service employees, which helps them to manage their emotions more carefully, dealing more effectively with the damaging effect of perceived incivility at work, and showing higher tolerance to uncivil behaviors from their coworkers (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019). This leads them to be less likely to leave their job and show lower turnover intention.

Third, Paper 3 explores the role of individual differences, as personal factors, in employees' perception of workplace incivility and working environment as well as their responses in terms of turnover intention. This exploratory paper is also an effort to identify distinct groups (clusters) of employees with different demographic and behavioral profiles in this regard. This paper emphasizes the consideration of individual differences in the literature and organizational practices by indicating employees' dissimilarities not only in perceiving interpersonal interactions at work but also in perceiving the working environment and managerial actions. Through the third paper, this thesis again provides further support for COR theory by indicating the important role of perception of social supports at work (i.e., LMX quality and caring climate) as valuable emotional resources for frontline service employees who need to deal with workplace incivility during their daily working life (Sliter, Sliter, Jex, 2012).

6.2 Practical Implications

This thesis provides several implications for service management practice. A large number of studies focus on the relationship between different sources of workplace incivility and employees' turnover intention (e.g., Chen & Wang, 2019; Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016; Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015; Ghosh, Reio, & Bang, 2013; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). The positive effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention is widely evidenced in previous research as well as in the meta-analytical paper of the current thesis. Therefore, managers are required to pay particular attention to negative interpersonal interactions and uncivil behaviors in the workplace. While civility issues in the workplace and more professional etiquette could be addressed through adequate education within the workplace (Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015), managers may try to protect employees from experiencing workplace incivility by stopping the cycle of resource loss and providing more resources and opportunities for employees to move beyond these negative experiences in the workplace (Matthews, & Ritter, 2019).

Providing a positive climate in the organization concerning employees' moral development and ethical behaviors could be helpful, specifically a caring climate, which emphasizes trust, positive attitudes, high moral standards, and tolerance for others' weaknesses (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019). Due to the importance of team working and reliance on coworkers among frontline service employees (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012), especially service managers may benefit from providing an ethical climate based on caring aspects through team interest and friendship development among employees as well as establishing a high-quality manager-employee relationship. In a strong caring climate, frontline service employees would be motivated to behave ethically, are less likely to show uncivil behaviors towards each other and turnover intention (Joe, Hung, Chiu, Lin, & Hsu, 2018).

Service managers are also required to carefully consider individual differences in perception of the same working environment and interpersonal interactions within a workplace. They may need to develop specific policies and programs for different employees (Yang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). For the employees who are more vulnerable to workplace incivility, training programs and workshops could be useful to teach them more effective coping strategies (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010). Managers may motivate frontline employees to stay longer in the organization by providing more straightforward job descriptions, practical guidance, and clear career paths for them (Kao, Cheng, Kuo, & Huang, 2014). The recruitment process focusing on specific selection approaches may be also helpful to identify, attract, and hire more appropriate employees for frontline service jobs who are intrinsically motivated (Wang, Fu, & Wang, 2020).

6.3 Directions for Future Research

Even though the results of this thesis provide answers to some important questions regarding the perception of workplace incivility and the role of working environments and individual differences in this perception and employees' reactions, they provide important avenues and suggest some areas for further research.

Although the meta-analysis and systematic review in the first study provide valuable insight into the workplace incivility literature, the limited number of included studies has a negative effect on the power of the analysis. Thus, more studies on this relationship are required to provide a firmer basis for stronger analysis of the variance in effect sizes and more substantial conclusions. Future studies in different countries and industries as well as conducting comparative or cross-cultural studies are necessary since employees' perceptions and reactions to uncivil behaviors in the workplace could be affected by cultural variation (social and organizational culture) and such studies may guide generalizations across cultures (Zhu, Xing, Lizarondo, Guo, & Hu, 2019;

Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). More studies concerning incivility-turnover relationships may lead scholars to conduct more meta-analytical studies in this area and systematically review the literature to test for overall effects and provide more substantial conclusions (e.g., Schilipzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016).

Additionally, the focus of this thesis is on a sample of frontline service employees from the hotel and restaurant industry in Norway, which may be associated with the potential risk of the generalization of the results to other contexts. To overcome this shortcoming, future studies are again recommended to collect data from frontline service employees working in different service sectors in multiple cultures and countries.

Given the use of cross-sectional designs in the majority of previous studies (included in the meta-analytical review) and in the current thesis (Papers 2 and 3), which urges caution in the interpretation of any causal inferences, directs considerable attention toward using longitudinal designs in future research about the effect of workplace incivility on employees' turnover intention and other job outcomes. Future studies that adopt time-series or time-lagged design can provide more strong evidence for the causal flow (e.g., Matthews & Ritter, 2019; Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018).

Nevertheless, future studies may also contribute to theoretical implications in workplace incivility literature by providing an extension of the adaptation theory in such longitudinal studies, which examine the role of time in repeatedly experiencing workplace incivility (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). Moreover, future research may benefit from conducting exploratory studies about the individual demographical and behavioral differences with larger samples to provide deeper knowledge regarding employees' perceptions and reactions to similar negative interpersonal interactions in similar work environments.

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7 Conclusion

Workplace incivility as a unique and less intensive form of interpersonal mistreatment in organizations has attracted many scholars' attention over the last two decades. The current thesis is an attempt to contribute to workplace incivility literature through three empirical studies emphasizing the important role of employees' perception of workplace incivility in predicting their job outcomes.

By integrating the previous knowledge provided by various inquiries, the results of this thesis provide a better understanding of the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility and their intentions to leave their jobs (turnover intention). This thesis also contributes to both ethical climate theory and COR theory by underlining the importance of workplace climate and directing attention to the positive effect of providing a caring atmosphere in the service work environment on frontline employees, which results in lower levels of turnover intention. Moreover, the findings from the exploratory study in this thesis highlight the fact that not only the working environment can affect employees' perceptions and job outcomes, but also, we can find specific groups of employees that individual differences (in terms of demographic and behavioral profiles) may lead them to perceive similar interpersonal interactions very differently and in turn show different reactions. The advantage of adopting different statistical analyses and methods in the current thesis may be employed by scholars in designing future research.

This thesis raises new questions for further studies. For example, what is the overall effect of workplace incivility on other employees' job outcomes such as job satisfaction or job performance? What type of workplace climate may help frontline service employees to deal with customer incivility? What about the instigators of incivility in the workplace? Can we identify distinct groups of them based on their

individual differences? We can also ask about the perception of workplace incivility among other frontline service employees such as airline cabin crews in Norway and its effects on their job outcomes.

In general, the findings of this thesis may have significant implications for practitioners and inspire scholars to conduct more research on the workplace incivility construct since there are still many unanswered questions that need to be addressed in further research approaches.

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Part II

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List of Papers

Paper I

Namin, B. H., Øgaard, T., & Røislien, J. (2022). Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention in Organizations: A Meta-Analytic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(1), 25. **https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010025**

Paper II

Hejraty Namin, B., Marnburg, E., & Bakkevig Dagsland, Å. H. (2022). The Effect of a Caring Climate on Frontline Employees' Turnover Intention in the Service Industry: A Serial Multiple Mediation Model. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* (published online) **https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2022.2047778**

Paper III

Hejraty Namin, B., Marnburg, E., & Bakkevig Dagsland, Å. H. (2022). Frontline Service Employees' Profiles: Exploring Individual Differences in Perceptions of and Reactions to Workplace Incivility. *Behavioral Sciences, 12*(3), 76. **https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12030076**

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Paper I

International Journal of
Environmental Research and Public Health

MDPI

Review

Workplace Incivility and Turnover Intention in Organizations: A Meta-Analytic Review

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Abstract: Incivility has been identified as a prevalent and crucial issue in workplaces and one that may be associated with detrimental effects on employees and organizational outcomes, such as turnover intention. Many studies have been published regarding the effects of incivility, but there is a lack of integrative reviews and meta-analyses. The aim of the present study is to conduct an early meta-analysis of the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions. Six databases, including ISI Web of Science, PsychInfo, Scopus, Emerald, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, and Soc Index, were searched to identify empirical articles for this meta-analytical paper. The results of statistical meta-analyses and meta-regression suggest that there is a positive relationship between perceived incivility and turnover intentions in employees and that relationship is consistent across different sources of workplace incivility. However, we did observe a possible interaction effect of "supervisor" and "coworker incivility". The results also suggest that the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention is stronger in the academic sector than in other industries and stronger in the United States than in other countries.

Keywords: workplace incivility; turnover intention; organizations; meta-analysis

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, a distinct stream of research has focused on workplace incivility as a unique and lesser form of interpersonal mistreatment, which is prevalent and causes severe problems in various organizations [1–12]. Workplace incivility was first introduced in [12], which identified it by its ambiguity of intent and violation of workplace norms for mutual respect.

Workplace incivility generally encompasses recurrent rude and disrespectful behavior that violates mutual respect in the workplace with a low-intensity and unclear intent to harm the target [12], which is a widespread phenomenon in the working environment [13,14]. It has been reported that 98% of workers have experienced incivility and that half of them experienced it at least once a week [5]. The numbers have caused alarm as they reveal the serious impact of incivility on many employees and the resulting significant financial effects on organizations. Based on estimation in [15], cognitive distraction from work and project delays caused by workers being subjected to incivility lead to an annual cost of $14,000 per employee. In addition, employees who are the target of uncivil behavior in the workplace have to bear considerable human costs, such as emotional exhaustion [16], depression [17], and increased fear, sadness, and anger [18]. Moreover, lower organizational citizenship behavior [19], higher withdrawal behavior [5], turnover intention [20], and organizational exit [18] can all be behavior outcomes of employees who experience workplace incivility. Some studies also considered mediator or moderator variables in the relationship between perception of workplace incivility and turnover intention. For example, emotional exhaustion [1,21,22], job burnout [23,24], perceived organizational

support [25], and job satisfaction [10,26] were considered as mediators, and Motherhood status [27], enactment [19], and role-ambiguity and team-building [28] were considered as moderators in that relationship

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that turnover intention is the immediate antecedent to real turnover behavior, which has become the main concern of service providers due to the higher costs this incurs [29,30]. A minimum of 5% of loss in total annual revenue is considered to be related to the cost of employee turnover [31]. A high level of employee turnover is closely related to a low level of organizational performance and productivity, which together result in rising costs of employee selection, recruitment, and training [31–33]. This clearly shows the important role of investigating antecedents and implementing strategies to reduce turnover intention in organizations.

1.1. Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility is defined in [12] (p. 457) as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others". There is some overlap between workplace incivility and other negative treatments in the organization, including aggression, social undermining at work, deviance, antisocial behavior, violence [12]. However, they are different in their targets, intention to harm, continuation, intensity of the actions, and the type of norm violation, [11]. For example, the perpetrator of aggression has a clear intention to harm while incivility has an unclear intention that can be attributed to other factors, including the perpetrator's personality, oversight, and ignorance, who can, in turn, claim that any harm done to target was accidental rather than intentional [12]. Different theories have been applied for aggression and workplace incivility in the literature. For example, attribution theory [34] and the script theory [35] for aggression and conservation of resource (COR) theory [36], and affective event theory [37] for workplace incivility. Only social learning theory [38] is evidenced to be used in both aggression and workplace incivility studies. In the management literature, rudeness refers to any insensitive or disrespectful behavior in the workplace, which may or may not be intentional, but even so, it violates social norms, and the target perceives it as rude [9,39]. Thus, rudeness can be referred to as incivility [40]. In general, any rude behavior in the workplace that is repeated over a period of time with low intensity that can be easily overlooked and has damaging effects at the individual, group, and organizational level [41] is regarded as workplace incivility. These behaviors are more verbal rather than physical, passive rather than active, indirect rather than direct, and subtle rather than overt. Examples are not saying "please" or "thank you", spreading rumors, ignoring someone in a group, leaving rude messages, talking loudly about personal matters on the phone, taking credit for someone else's efforts [11], blaming someone for no reason, and any body language or gestures that can be perceived as offensive. Given the behavior's low intensity, the instigator of incivility can easily deny any such intention and may thus harm the target accidentally rather than intentionally.

By definition, incivility entails ambiguity and low intensity, but the effects can be quite severe. In fact, workplace incivility is considered to be one of the most harmful forms of mistreatment affecting employees in organizations [16], since employees are usually exposed to a series of emotion–cognition processes, including emotion evaluation (cognition) and cognition selection (response) [42]. An accumulation of unhealthy emotions in employees caused by workplace incivility may further lead to aggression and even trigger severe interpersonal conflicts [12]. This vicious cycle has the capacity to lead to serious negative effects on individuals and organizations [10,18,43]. Empirical evidence demonstrates that rudeness and uncivil behavior have negative effects on how individuals function at work, their creativity, work engagement, and their task performance ability [44,45].

Three main sources of incivility can exist within a work setting: customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility [14]. They are similar in context and definition but have different perpetrators; the perpetrators of supervisor and coworker incivility are internal, while the

perpetrator of customer incivility is external to the organization [2]. Indeed, depending on the source of uncivil behavior and the preparators in the workplace, incivility would be perceived as differentially severe as others have argued (e.g., [44]). According to [46], many jobs in the service industry may be at risk in cases where there are multiple sources of incivility. This is especially true in relation to employees who are dependent on one another for providing customer services.

According to the definition [12], different types/sources of incivility entail the same behavior but from different perpetrators inside or outside the organization [2,46]. In line with this argument, one may expect different sources of incivility to have a similar relationship with job outcomes and turnover intentions. Empirical studies have, however, revealed inconsistent results related to the strength of the relationship between different sources of workplace incivility and employees' turnover intentions. Some studies have reported that supervisor incivility has a stronger relationship with turnover intention compared to coworker incivility [47–50], whereas other studies have shown that supervisor incivility and coworker incivility have a similar relationship with turnover intention, e.g., [7]. To the best of our knowledge, no study has considered customer incivility and its correlation with turnover intention compared to other sources of incivility. Moreover, the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) developed in [14] has been the most common measure of incivility in previous studies.

1.2. Turnover Intention

Turnover intention can be referred to as a "willingness to leave an organization" [51]. In fact, the intention of organizational members to quit their present job and look for other job opportunities because of dissatisfaction with their present job is referred to as turnover intention [52]. Based on this definition, turnover intention was used as a measure of the subjective feeling of organizational members regarding turnover rather than their specific behaviors [52]. According to [32], before making the final decision on turnover, employees usually go through a period of reflection to generate turnover. In this regard, turnover intention can be referred to as employees' generation of the idea of turnover as well as their tendency to leave their present position and try to find another job because of their dissatisfaction [26]. Although many antecedents of turnover intention have been identified in previous studies, in a recent meta-analysis study [53], major antecedents were organized into nine categories, including work engagement (category: work attitudes), burnout (job strains), role conflict (role stressors), abusive supervision (supervisor and leader behaviors), deep acting (emotional labor), organizational citizenship behavior (performance), perceived organizational support (organizational contexts), and self-efficacy (individual differences). The current study focused on the antecedent role of workplace incivility, which is a form of job stress (job strains) according to the mentioned meta-analysis study [53].

Being the target or victim of uncivil behavior in the workplace is directly related to turnover intentions [14,43]. There is considerable evidence that in any individual who has faced workplace incivility, the incivility may be negatively related to job satisfaction, regardless of his/her perspective as a witness, instigator, or victim [10,13,14,17,41,48], which may result in a high turnover intention [10,17,54]. Workplace incivility may also lead to heavy work pressure for employees and generate instability and a high turnover intention in different industries [7,55,56].

One of the resource-based stress theories for understanding workplace incivility is the conservation of resource (COR) theory [36], which emphasizes the important role of valuable personal resources (i.e., objects, personal characteristics, or conditions) in individuals' ability to deal with different stressors. Based on this theory, people are inclined to achieve, protect, and foster their valued resources in order to use them when encountering stressful interpersonal interactions, such as incivility [36]. COR theory asserts the fact that the valuable resources are limited and thus a deficiency in or loss of such resources could become challenging for the individuals who face new sources of stressors [36], and they may, in turn, show more negative job outcomes to compensate their resource loss. This

theory has been mostly applied in cross-sectional incivility studies with a focus on one point in time (e.g., [2,21,24,28,57]). However, adaptation theory can identify the stressor–strain relationships explicitly over time [58]. Unlike COR theory, the notion of habituation in adaptation theory indicates that although an individual may be affected immediately and concurrently by a positive or negative stimulus in his/her life, such an effect should fade over time, and the person should return to present levels of well-being [59]. Based on this theory, it has been claimed in [20] that workplace incivility as an episodic stressor can be experienced again and again for a long time, and people may not only adapt themselves to but also systematically recover from experiencing that.

In a previous review paper [44], it has been suggested that conducting meta-analytic reviews of workplace incivility is required. The aim of this meta-analytic study is to answer two research questions: (a) How does the perception of workplace incivility affect employees' turnover intention? and (b) Is this effect consistent if we check for different sources of workplace incivility (i.e., customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility), different workplace incivility measures, different industries, and different countries? Therefore, we hypothesized that the employees' perceptions of workplace incivility have a positive relationship with their turnover intention and our overall assumption is that since possible effects of perceived incivility are a general phenomenon, the effects will be constant across sources of incivility, across different measures of incivility, different industries, and countries. The investigation starts with a systematic review of relevant literature related to workplace incivility and turnover intention and proceeds with a quantitative meta-analysis [60].

2. Methodology

2.1. Literature Search

This study adopted the method described by *the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Review and Interventions* [61,62] for performing a meta-analysis of empirical studies investigating workplace incivility and turnover intention, along with *The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) *Statement* [60].

First, a systematic review was conducted, which needs sensibility and robustness in summarizing research [63]. The first literature search was conducted in spring 2019 in six electronic databases: ISI Web of Science, PsychInfo, Scopus, Emerald, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, and Soc Index, to identify empirical peer-reviewed articles that have been published in a 20-year period from 1999 (when workplace incivility was first introduced by Andersson and Pearson) to 2019. The selection of the databases was based on the coverage of social science, organizational behavior, and psychology. The following keywords were searched in various combinations: *uncivil behavior*, *organizational mistreatment*, *incivility*, *job outcome*, *customer*, *supervisor*, *coworker*, and *workplace*. This first search resulted in 658 papers. An additional search in Science Direct, Google Scholar, and ProQuest was conducted in summer 2019 to ensure other available articles were not missed. In order to strengthen the quality of the search, the searches were further refined using advanced searches and more specific and controlled search terms. The keywords used in this stage were "*workplace incivility*", "*customer incivility*", "*coworker incivility*", "*supervisor incivility*", "*employees' outcome*". The result from this additional search was 115 papers, resulting in a total of 773 papers from both searches.

In line with PRISMA 2009 statement, checking only the title and the abstract of all papers revealed 71 duplicated papers and 448 irrelevant papers. In line with the exclusion criteria (Table 1), the papers were eliminated if (1) they were review papers, research notes, book chapters, or unpublished dissertations, (2) they had inappropriate data including unsuitable variables, qualitative data, lack of measurement for incivility, and theoretical papers, and (3) they focused on incivility in contexts other than workplace incivility, such as public and criminal incivility, general cyber incivility, political incivility, family incivility, classroom incivility, etc. This excluded 519 papers.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
• Peer-reviewed articles published from 1999 to August 2019 • Organizational behavior context • Publication in English with quantitative design • Papers including at least one source of incivility; customer, coworker, or supervisor incivility • Studies considering the correlation between incivility and employees' outcome (i.e., turnover intention) • Samples with part-time or full-time positions who are in contact with managers/supervisors, coworkers, and/or customers (organizational context)	• Unpublished dissertations, research notes, review papers, and book chapters • Studies with inappropriate data (i.e., papers with qualitative data, unsuitable variables, lack of incivility measurement, and theoretical papers) • Studies using incivility in contexts other than workplace incivility (i.e., political incivility, urban and social incivility, cyber incivility in general, school and classroom incivility, public and criminal incivility, family incivility, etc.) • Studies for which it was not possible to get contact with the corresponding author(s) and obtain missing data

In the next step, the remaining 252 papers were screened in detail, and 206 of them were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria (Table 1). Papers were excluded in this step if (1) they were not published in English, (2) were not in an organizational behavior context, (3) did not focus on at least one specific source of incivility (customer, coworker, supervisor incivility), (4) did not have an appropriate sample such as part-time or full-time employees in direct contact with supervisors, coworkers, and/or customers, and (5) did not investigate the relationship between incivility and employees' outcomes.

The remaining 46 papers were carefully read in order to evaluate their eligibility, and a further 18 papers were eliminated: their main focus was on a different incivility context (i.e., cyber incivility, civility, tolerance for workplace incivility); they did not directly measure a source of workplace incivility or turnover intention (i.e., measuring counterproductive work behavior, negative work outcome); or they did not explicitly reveal necessary statistics, and we were unable to obtain those from the authors (see Figure 1). As a result, 28 papers were included in the final selection [1,6,7,10,17,19–28,49,50,57,64–73]. Some papers included two or three studies, some investigated the relationship between two different sources of incivility and turnover intention, and some compared findings in separate samples and over time. The final sample thus comprised 46 studies, as presented in Table 2. See Figure 1 for a flow chart of the process.

2.2. Data Evaluation and Statistical Analyses

A potential publication bias was first evaluated in a visual inspection of the funnel plot [74,75], see Figure 2. The points—each representing a single study—are evenly distributed on both sides of the summary effect size, indicating symmetry and hence, no bias. In order to further assess potential publication bias, we conducted a rank correlation test [76], which checks the relation between sampling variances and effect estimates for each study, and the alternative Egger's regression test [77], which is more appropriate for smaller meta-analyses [76]. The results of both tests were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that there is no significant publication bias present in the 46 studies.

The studies do not have functionally equivalent designs, and initial analyses of the heterogeneity of the effects suggested that the effects were not homogenous across studies ($I^2 = 89.59\%$, $p < 0.001$), all indicating that a random-effects model was appropriate [74,78]. Consequently, our analysis started with a random-effects meta-analysis including all 46 studies to evaluate our hypothesis.

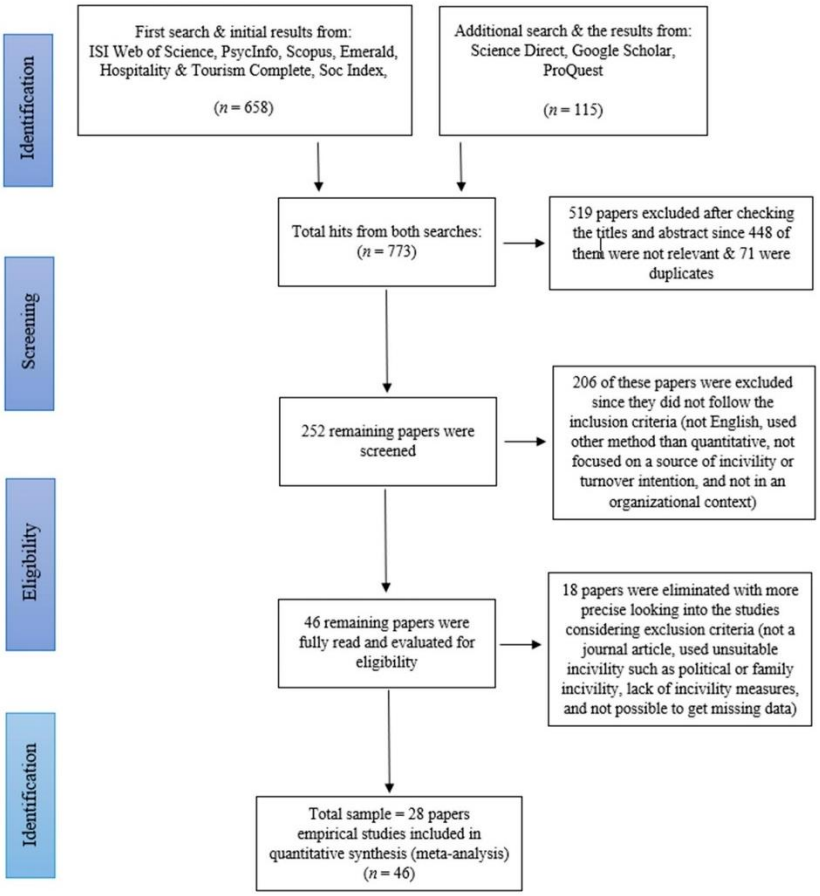

Figure 1. PRISMA 2009 flow chart.

In an attempt to identify sources of effect size variance, we proceeded with meta-regression moderation analyses [74,78]. First, we examined whether the three main sources of workplace incivility have different relationships to turnover intentions (customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility). Then we examined whether (1) the choice of incivility measures affects estimated effect sizes and whether the effect of workplace incivility on turnover intention (2) differs between industries and (3) countries.

Data were analyzed using the metafor package [74], which provides functions for conducting meta-analyses in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, Vienna, Austria) [79].

Table 2. Overview of studies included.

	Authors	Year	Journal	Country	Sample	Sample Size (*n*)	Correlation (r)	Type of Incivility	Incivility Measurement	Employees' Outcome	Industry
1	Rahim and Cosby	2016	Journal of Management Development	U.S.	Employed undergraduate Business students + Colleagues+ Supervisors	223	0.15	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
2	Matthews and Ritter (Time 1)	2019	Journal of occupational health psychology	U.S.	Working adults	625	0.42	Supervisor or Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
3	(Time 2)						0.46				
4	(Time 3)						0.44				
5	Huang and Lin	2019	Review of Managerial Science	Taiwan	High-tech and Banking Ind. employees	512	0.19	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
6	Read and Laschinger	2013	The Journal of Nursing Administration (JONA)	Canada	New graduate nurses	342	0.19	Supervisor Incivility	WIS	Job Turnover	Healthcare Industry
7							0.19	Coworker Incivility			
8	Sguera et al.	2016	Journal of Vocational Behavior	U.S.	Nurses working in a public research hospital	618	0.22	Coworker Incivility	Modified WIS	Turnover Intention	Healthcare Industry
9	Alola et al.	2019	Tourism Management Perspectives	Nigeria	Customer-contact employees in 4- and 5-star hotels	328	0.28	Customer Incivility	6 items from Cho, et al. (2016)	Turnover Intention	Hospitality Industry
10	Miner et al.	2014	Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	U.S.	Law school faculty members (Women)	594	0.44	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Academic work environment
11					Law school faculty members (Men)	640	0.3				
12	Gabriel et al. (Study 3)	2018	Journal of Applied Psychology	U.S.	Junior and senior undergraduate business students (Women)	319	0.17	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
13					Junior and senior undergraduate business students (Men)		0.12				
14	Leiter et al.	2010	Journal of Nursing management	Canada	Nurses	729	0.36	Supervisor Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Healthcare Industry
15							0.19	Coworker Incivility			
16	Chen and Wang	2019	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Taiwan	Tourist hotel chefs	226	0.306	Supervisor and Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Hospitality Industry
17	Mackey et al.	2019	Journal of Business Ethics	U.S.	Manufacturing employees	156	0.07	Coworker incivility	Modified versionof Spector and Jex's (1998) 4-item scale	Turnover Intention	Other
18					Full-time employees	620	0.09				

Table 2. *Cont.*

	Authors	Year	Journal	Country	Sample	Sample Size (*n*)	Correlation (r)	Type of Incivility	Incivility Measurement	Employees' Outcome	Industry
19	Nazir and Ungku	2016	International Review of Management and Marketing	Pakistan	Nurses in 10 selected healthcare settings	395	0.24	Supervisor and Coworker incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Healthcare Industry
20	Miner et al. (Study 1)	2019a	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal	U.S.	Early-career STEM faculty (Women)	96	0.43	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Academic work environment
21					Early-career STEM faculty (Men)		0.43				
22	Miner et al. (Study 1)	2019b	The Journal of psychology	U.S.	Faculty members of different departments at a large university	742	0.44	Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Academic work environment
23	(Study 2)				A nation-wide sample of Law School Faculty members	1300	0.36				
24	Alola et al.	2018	Sustainability	Nigeria	Customer contact employees of 4- and 5-star Hotels	329	0.24	Supervisor Incivility	Five items from Cho et al. (2016)	Turnover Intention	Hospitality Industry
25	Viotti et al.	2018	Journal of nursing management	U.S.	Nurses	341	0.33	Coworker Incivility	Four-item scale adapted bySliter et al. (2012)	Intention to Leave	Healthcare Industry
26				Italy		313	0.29				
27	Lim et al. (Study 1)	2008	Journal of applied psychology	U.S.	All employees of the Federal Courts of one of the larger circuits (Men)	325	0.43	Supervisor and Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
28					All employees of the Federal Courts of one of the larger circuits (Women)	833	0.37				
29	(Study 2)				Employees of a midwestern municipality	271	0.5	Coworker Incivility	Expanded 12 items WIS		
30	Ghosh et al.	2013	Human Resource Development International	U.S.	Full-time employees from different organizations	420	0.36	Supervisor Incivility	Modified version of Reio's (2011) based on WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
31							0.2	Coworker Incivility	Expanded 15 items WIS		
32	Potipiroon and Ford	2019	Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology	Thailand	Employees and their supervisors at a large public agency	401	0.23	Supervisor Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
33	Cortina et al. (Study 1)	2013	Journal of Management	U.S.	City government municipality employees	369	0.49	Supervisor and Coworker Incivility	Expanded WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
34	(Study 2)				Law enforcement agency	653	0.32	Coworker Incivility	Expanded 20 items WIS		
35	(Study 3)				Military "active-duty members of the army"	15497	0.19		10 items from Aggressive Experiences Scale by Glomb and Liao (2003)		

Table 2. *Cont.*

	Authors	Year	Journal	Country	Sample	Sample Size (*n*)	Correlation (r)	Type of Incivility	Incivility Measurement	Employees' Outcome	Industry
36	Miner-Rubino and Reed	2010	Journal of Applied Social Psychology	U.S.	Employees of a property-management company	90	0.24	Supervisor and Coworker Incivility	Modified 8 items WIS	Turnover Intention	Other
37	Fida et al.	2018	Health care management review	Canada	Nurses	596	0.19	Coworker Incivility	The Straightforward Incivility Scale by Leiter & Day (2013)	Job Turnover	Healthcare Industry
38							0.16	Supervisor Incivility			
39	Hur et al.	2015	Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing and Service Industries	South Korea	Retail bank frontline employees	286	0.43	Coworker Incivility	Four items adapted from Sliter, et al. (2012)	Turnover Intention	Other
40	Han et al.	2016	International Journal of Hospitality Management	U.S.	Frontline service employees in independent Florida-based restaurants	228	0.28	Customer Incivility	14 items adopted from Burnfield et al. (2004)	Turnover Intention	Hospitality Industry
41	Kim and Lee	2014	Asian Women	South Korea	Women who work in sales service in clothing industry	239	0.26	Customer Incivility	Original scale developed by Wilson and Holmvall (2013)	Turnover Intention	Other
42	Lim and Lee	2011	Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	Singapore	Full-time employees from various organizations	180	0.37	Supervisor Incivility	Modified WIS	Intent to Quit	Other
43							0.27	Coworker Incivility			
44	Spence Laschinger et al.	2009	Journal of nursing management	Canada	Nurses	612	0.347	Supervisor Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intentions	Healthcare Industry
45							0.19	Coworker Incivility			
46	Reio and Trudel	2013	International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (IJAVET)	U.S.	Healthcare (143) + Manufacturing employees (127)	270	0.49	Supervisor and Coworker Incivility	WIS	Turnover Intention	Other

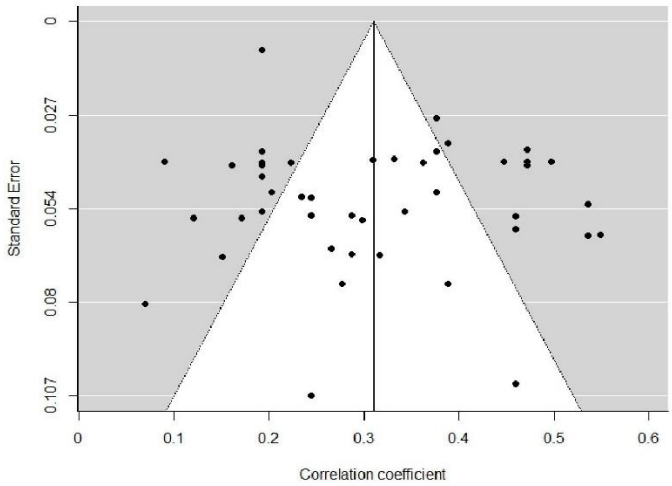

Figure 2. Funnel plot for illustrating publication bias.

3. Results

3.1. Overall Effect

The data are summarized in Figure 3. The random-effects meta-analysis estimated an effect of workplace incivility on turnover intentions of (95% CI) 0.31 (0.26, 0.33), which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

3.2. Sources of Incivility

The studies included were categorized into five groups according to the type of incivility reported. The majority of the studies (25) investigated "coworker incivility", while "supervisor incivility" was reported in eight studies and "customer incivility" in three. The remaining 10 studies reported "supervisor *and* coworker incivility" (9) or "supervisor *or* coworker incivility" (1). Entering this into a meta-regression model as a categorical variable with five categories, and "coworker incivility" as the reference category, showed that the relationship between "supervisor incivility" and turnover intention was not statistically different to the relationship between "customer incivility" and turnover intention, compared to the baseline of "coworker incivility". However, the combination of "supervisor *and* coworker incivility" did have significantly higher "turnover intentions" than the baseline (Table 3). However, the number of studies included in each of the categories was quite low, and results should be interpreted with caution.

3.3. Incivility Measures

The popular measure of incivility (the Workplace Incivility Scale/WIS) [14] was used in 24 studies, while 9 studies used a modified or expanded version of WIS. In order to investigate whether the incivility measures make any difference to the results, we performed a meta-regression with measurement type as a categorical variable (WIS versus WIS-related measures). The estimated effect (95% CI) of using WIS-related measures rather than WIS was −0.04 (−0.12, 0.03) and was not statistically significant ($p = 0.23$).

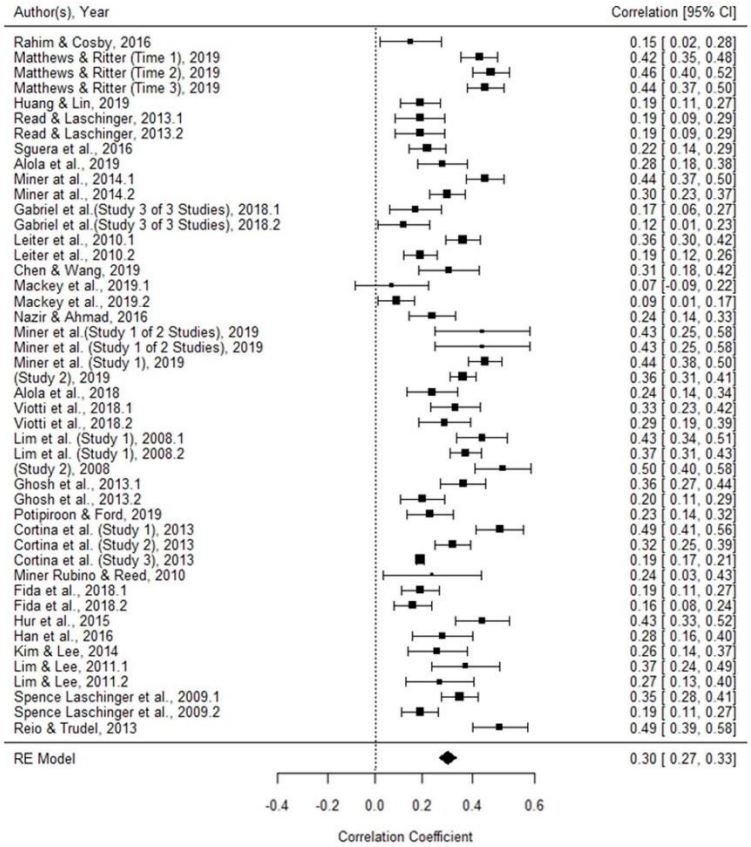

Figure 3. Forest plot for all studies included. Each point estimate (black square) bounded by a 95% CI, represents one study included in the meta-analysis. The black rhombus at the bottom of the plot represents the summary effect size and its width displays the 95% CI.

Table 3. Meta-regression analysis for the different incivility groups of the studies.

Type of Incivility	*n*	Estimate	95% CI		*p*-Value
Intercept/coworker incivility	25	0.27	0.23	0.32	<0.0001
Supervisor incivility	8	0.01	−0.08	0.11	0.745
Supervisor or coworker incivility	1	0.17	−0.05	0.40	0.136
Supervisor and coworker incivility	9	0.14	0.05	0.23	0.002
Customer incivility	3	0.005	−0.14	0.15	0.946

Notes: $tau^2 = 0.01$, SE = 0.00, $I^2 = 86.69\%$.

3.4. Industries

To explore whether the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility and their turnover intentions differ among industries, we performed a meta-analysis with studies categorized according to four industry groups: healthcare (12 studies), academia (6), hospitality (4), and other sectors (24). The results indicated that for the academic sector, workplace incivility was associated with a higher turnover intention compared to the healthcare sector (Table 4)

Table 4. Meta-regression analysis for industry categories.

Type of Incivility	*n*	Estimate	95% CI		*p*-Value
Intercept/healthcare sector	12	0.24	0.18	0.31	<0.0001
Academic sector	6	0.17	0.05	0.29	0.005
Hospitality sector	4	0.03	−0.10	0.17	0.618
Other	24	0.07	−0.01	0.16	0.082

Notes: $tau^2 = 0.0121$, SE = 0.0033, $I^2 = 87.12\%$.

3.5. Countries

Studies from the United States constitute almost half of the data included (19, 41.3%). In order to investigate if there is a difference between the United States and the rest of the world regarding the effect of workplace incivility on employees' turnover intentions, we categorized studies into two groups. In line with the individualism–collectivism framework in [80], we comprised the US (North American) studies and all the other studies, respectively. A meta-regression showed a significantly smaller incivility-turnover relationship for the other countries compared to the United States, with an estimated smaller effect of −0.08 (−0.15, −0.005), $p = 0.03$.

4. Discussion

The aim of the present paper was to provide an early meta-analysis of the relationship between employees' perceptions of workplace incivility on their turnover intentions. Analyses with a random-effects meta-analytic procedure [81] revealed that across the studies, there is a significant positive relationship between incivility and turnover intentions, supporting our hypothesis. Further comparisons of studies including either "coworker", "supervisor" or "customer incivility", respectively, did not reveal significantly different effect sizes. It is the most interesting finding that in studies with a combination of "coworker" and "supervisor incivility", the effect on "turnover intentions" was lower than the sum of the direct effects in studies with only one of the sources. The effects were not additive, suggesting some form of interaction between the two sources. It has been evidenced that employees' outcomes were less affected by coworker incivility compared to other sources of incivility in the workplace (e.g., [3,82]). Employees' expression of negative emotions and their retaliation for uncivil behaviors from coworkers were perceived as less threatening than supervisor and customer incivility. Thus, the presence of coworker incivility may not lead to more resource depletion and surprisingly does not strengthen the negative effect of supervisor incivility on turnover intention. Considering the low-intensity characteristic of incivility and in line with the principles of adaptation theory, in [20], it has been argued that people may habituate to their negative emotions during and after experiencing incivility, and over time, they may return to their previous levels of well-being. This argument may also provide an explanation for our finding given that coworker incivility is also an internal stressor but perceived less risky than supervisor incivility, and its negative effect may fade during a long period. However, this novel finding needs to be more fully explored.

In further meta-regression analyses of moderation effects of *incivility measures*, *industry*, and *country*, we found that there were no significant effect size differences between studies with different incivility measures. Furthermore, we found that only studies in the academic sector (six studies) reported significantly higher effect sizes (0.17, $p = 0.005$), while Effect sizes in the other sectors did not differ (not significant). Finally, we found that only studies

from the United States reported significantly higher effect sizes than studies from other countries: effects were not statistically different in other countries.

Since the studies focus on perceived incivility, we should expect few differences in the effects between different types/sources of incivility [12]. Our results initially indicated that the effects of different types of workplace incivility indeed were not significantly different. However, we observed an interaction between "coworker" and "supervisor incivility". This non-additive effect means that the simultaneous effect of coworker incivility and supervisor incivility on turnover intention is significantly less than the sum of the individual independent effects. The observed combined effect may be due to intercorrelation between coworker and supervisor incivility present in all relevant studies in our sample, implying that the individually estimated main effects of the two are overestimated. Furthermore, the observed effect may be related to ceiling effects in turnover intentions, with either the scale being too short to realistically capture the effects of the simultaneous coworker and supervisor incivility, or the respondents curbing their responses to the turnover intention scale. The observed effect may also be related to simple ceiling effects of the incivility perceptions, all of which would imply that our observed combined effect is underestimated. Finally, we may be observing the results of an underlying, dynamic, unobserved process in employees who feel exposed to simultaneous incivility from coworkers and supervisors.

The test for a moderation effect of incivility measures did not show any significant difference. This could be related to the close similarity between incivility measures used in our data. In fact, more than half of the studies included used the Workplace Incivility Scale [14] or a modified or extended version of this, by using different words for the same behavior, adapting the measurement items, referencing different sources/perpetrators of incivility, or soliciting incivility perceptions over different timespans (e.g., six months, one year, etc.).

The result suggested that among industries, there is a stronger positive relationship between the perception of workplace incivility and the employees' turnover intention in the academic work environment. This may be because the academic members are expected to show higher levels of respectful treatment, truthful relationships, and share knowledge with other members [83]. However, mistrusted relationship in academia and emphasis on competition leads to knowledge hiding behavior [84]. For instance, competition for pro-motions, titles, grant monies, and journal citations is common among faculties and faculty members [85]. Finally, knowledge hiding and competition may increase employees' turnover intention [66,86]. Cultural tightness–looseness may also be relevant here since, in tight cultures with strong norms, there is little tolerance for deviant behaviors, whereas in loose cultures, there are weak norms and a high tolerance for such behaviors [87]. Nevertheless, the number of studies in industry categories was relatively limited, and especially all the studies in the academic sector were conducted in the US; thus, the results are tentative. The result also showed that the US (North American) employees' perceptions of workplace incivility are more strongly related to their intentions to leave their jobs than employees from other countries. One possible explanation could be cultural differences. According to [80], the extent to which the members of a specific culture are able to control their desires and impulses is one of the influential dimensions used to classify that culture. Workplace incivility tends to be higher in "indulgent" cultures (e.g., Anglo-Saxon countries including the United States) that have weaker control over impulses compared with "restrained" cultures (e.g., Mediterranean countries) that have stronger control [80]. In an individualistic culture, such as the United States, the individual may feel more threatened by incivility and more challenged by the uncivil events since they may perceive incivility as an attempt to weaken their competitive strength [88]. In addition to different norms in responses to incivility across cultures, the tightness or looseness of a society (i.e., to what extent people may deviate from social norms) can affect their behaviors [87] as in a loose culture, for example, people are allowed for greater freedom and variety of responses to incivility [89].

5. Conclusions

This meta-analytical paper was an effort to provide a systematic review and integrate the results from previous studies about the relationship between employees' perception of workplace incivility and their turnover intention. A significant positive relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention was confirmed, and this result was consistent when we checked for different incivility measures and different sources of workplace incivility (i.e., customer, coworker, and supervisor incivility). Surprisingly, this positive relationship was not higher in the studies that considered a combination of two sources (supervisor and coworker incivility). Moreover, this was slightly higher in the academic sector compared to other industries, and it was also higher among the US (North American) employees compared to the employees from the category of other countries (i.e., five countries from different regions of Asia, one country from Europe, and one country from Africa). Although more studies are required, the results of this meta-analytical paper may provide sufficient insight into broad literature on workplace incivility as well as provide a basis for future research opportunities.

6. Limitation and Future Research

Similar to other meta-syntheses, the findings of our paper are limited by the quality of the studies and the original researchers' interpretations. We searched nine databases to include as many studies as possible in order to obtain better primary meta-analysis results. Only published journal articles in English within organizational contexts were included in our sample. Thus, this study has a limitation of the language and the countries, especially WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) countries [90], which will affect the results and drawing conclusions. The sample was restricted to full-time or part-time employees who were exposed to and had perceptions of different sources of workplace incivility.

Although our findings are interesting, we need to caution against too comprehensive generalizations of the results. First, we must emphasize that the number of studies included is limited, and when we break the number of studies down into even smaller subsamples for the moderation analysis, the power of the analysis is quite small. Furthermore, we carried out multiple post hoc comparisons on the same data set with the standard 5% significance test, implying that the overall familywise significance will be lower than the standard 5%. Our results should therefore be taken as indicative and tentative rather than a final description. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between incivility and turnover intentions varied between studies. Further studies will form a basis for more substantial conclusions and allow more penetrating analysis of the variance in effect sizes.

Our focus was on the relationship between incivility and only one outcome variable (i.e., turnover intention). Thus, for future research, we recommend studies of the relationship between workplace incivility and other employees' job outcomes, such as well-being, affective commitment, burnout (e.g., [20]), psychological distress, and physical health (e.g., [66]), job satisfaction (e.g., [67]), organizational deviance and job performance (e.g., [25]), actual turnover, and eventually, further meta-analyses. The process in employees, starting with perceived incivility and ending in turnover intentions and eventual turnover, involves a long cause-and-effect chain of intervening emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physiological phenomena [20,25,66]. This lack of knowledge regarding the mediating mechanisms in existing empirical data emphasizes the need for closer scrutiny of the mentioned processes to deepen the understanding of the effects of incivility (e.g., [28,67]). Deeply penetrating explorative, qualitative, descriptive, and causal studies are much needed to investigate and identify the nature and dynamics of these cause-and-effect processes.

The interesting non-linear effect of the combination of coworker and supervisor incivility offers great opportunities for future studies to investigate the interaction effects of multiple sources of workplace incivility and provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of their interplay and relative roles. Specifically, future research could benefit from

contribution to both theoretical and practical implications. This can be achieved through extension to adaptation theory considering the role and effect of time by investigating repeated exposure to different sources of workplace incivility [20]. This should also inspire further research into the processes underlying the observed effect, as well as more studies evaluating the joint effect of all sources of workplace incivility on turnover intention.

Since the majority of workplace incivility-related studies have been conducted in Western countries and the United States [91,92], and because cultural variation may affect employees' perceptions and lead to variation in individual responses to incivility [93], knowledge building would benefit from more studies from the same culture as well as comparative, cross-cultural studies. Cross-cultural studies would guide generalizations across cultures [44] and could also shed light on whether differences in effects of incivility are due to cultural differences or differences in organizational policies and practices. Our result regarding the incivility–turnover relation across industries provides an important avenue for future research to explore such a relationship more fully in different industries, especially in the academic sector, where the role of working environment and culture seems to be very important in employees' response to workplace incivility (i.e., turnover intention). Moreover, it could be interesting to investigate the relationship between the perception of incivility and turnover intention in the organizations with high versus low power distance culture and/or considering cultural tightness-looseness [94] to explore how employees interpret the treatment.

All studies included applied a common method (survey), and except for three studies [28,64,70], they are based on simultaneous measurement of both incivility and turnover intentions. The overall correlation will, therefore, most likely be inflated by common method variance [95]. Moreover, the survey/correlational design solely provides evidence of correlation with limited control for spurious correlations and relatively poor evidence for the actual causal flow. To establish more solid evidence for the causal flow, more time-series/time-lagged studies (e.g., [20,28,64,70]) and experimental designs are much needed. With more longitudinal studies using a different theoretical framework, such as adaptation theory (e.g., [20]), it would be possible to have more comprehensive meta-analytic studies in the future. Furthermore, well-planned and studied interventions aimed at changing the level of incivility in an organization and at empowering the employee to manage causes of incivility (e.g., [28,70]) are examples of applied studies that would be of great value to a practitioner in organizations with detrimental levels of incivility and provide insight into incivility-related processes and causal flows.

Even though our findings should be interpreted with the utmost caution, our analyses establish quite unequivocally, and across measures, types of incivility, industries, and countries, that there is a significant and substantial relationship between incivility and turnover intentions (e.g., [10,20]). Incivility thus warrants continued interest from practitioners as well as further research. This early meta-analysis shows that incivility is relevant and does have effects. We need additional studies to deepen our understanding of this negative factor in working life, to develop evidence-based recommendations for management and practice, and eventually, recommendations for public policy.

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The effect of a caring climate on frontline employees' turnover intention in the service industry: a serial multiple mediation model

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon ethical climate theory and conservation of resource theory, this study provides a theoretical model to explain the effect of a perceived caring climate in the workplace on the employees' turnover intention through the serial multiple mediation of workplace incivility (caused by coworkers) and employees' emotional exhaustion. A total of 291 frontline employees from the service industry in Norway participated in this study, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that a caring climate has a significant negative effect on turnover intention. The mediating effect of coworker incivility was not supported in the multiple mediation model; however, it was supported if it was considered as the only mediator in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. Moreover, emotional exhaustion mediated the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. The serial mediation effect of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion was also supported in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. The results of this study enable managers to create a caring climate in the workplace and minimize the detrimental effects of incivility and turnover intention in the service industry.

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Introduction

Today's intense competition and pressure to expand productivity in the service industry reveals the crucial role of frontline employees who are in charge of delivering high-quality services and complaint-handling processes. They act as the face of the organization through their frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with customers (Yavas et al., 2011) and form the core of the customer's service experience (Paek et al., 2015). Frontline employees' high level of job performance is a key factor in organizational performance and in gaining a competitive advantage (Dessler, 2011). However, employee turnover is a challenge in the tourism and hospitality industry (Gjerald et al., 2021) since its rate is "nearly twice the average rate for all other sectors" (Deloitte, 2010,

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p. 35), which leads to excessive costs for recruiting and training employees (Panwar et al., 2012). Thus, it is crucial to investigate the antecedents of turnover intention and to find the best way to decrease it.

The quality of the service work environment and the role of emotions are significant issues in hospitality management (Gjerald et al., 2021; Lundberg & Furunes, 2021). Negative workplace experiences, especially those with a social relationship theme (e.g. interpersonal treatment, workplace climate, and peer relationships), result in employees' emotional exhaustion and their intention to leave their jobs (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011). One of these negative interpersonal interactions is workplace incivility, which could frequently happen over long periods of time in the organization (Cortina & Magley, 2009) and leads to negative behavioral responses such as turnover intentions among targeted employees (Griffin, 2010; Lim et al., 2008; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013). The concept of workplace incivility is introduced and defined by Andersson and Pearson (1999, p. 457) as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others." Based on this definition, the intention to harm, the targets, the intensity of the actions, and continuation are the most important factor in differentiating between workplace incivility and other types of negative work behavior such as aggression, violence, and antisocial behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Generally, workplace incivility refers to any repetitive rude and low intensive behavior at work, which could be easily overlooked and cause harmful effects at the individual, and the organizational level (Reio & Ghosh, 2009). Moreover, uncivil behaviors are more verbal, passive, indirect, and subtle compared to other negative treatments in the organization (Pearson et al., 2005). Since the reliance on coworkers is an important aspect of service jobs, being a victim of coworkers' uncivil behaviors and having poor relations with them lead service employees to feel unhappy, angry, tired, and consequently exhausts them emotionally (Hur et al., 2015). Emotionally exhausted employees, in turn, may show negative job outcomes such as turnover intention (Hur et al., 2015).

On the other hand, however, the perception of social support in the organization is a critical emotional resource for employees to positively manage their emotions and deal more effectively with job stressors (Lai & Chen, 2016). Kao et al. (2014) considered a caring climate as one of the most significant factors in addressing the relationship between social stressors and the resulting negative behaviors. The focus of a caring climate is on how the perceptions of organizational policies and procedures affect employees' behavior in relation to team interest, friendships, and concern for coworkers' well-being (Cullen et al., 1993; Victor & Cullen, 1988). In the current study, a perceived caring climate is considered as a significant preventive remedy and control mechanism for stressors and negative behaviors in the workplace.

The main purpose of the current study is to develop a theoretical framework, where the link between employees' perceptions of a caring climate and turnover intention is explained by the serial multiple mediation effect of both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion. This study contributes to the relevant literature in two ways. First, although scholars have broadly studied turnover intention from different lenses in past research, it is only just beginning to attract close academic attention from the perspective of an ethical climate in recent literature (e.g. Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015; Joe

et al., 2018). Thus, the current study is an effort to complement the relevant literature by investigating how turnover intention is affected by a caring climate – an important type of ethical climate – in the workplace, which can help managers to evaluate employees' turnover intention in a more timely fashion and improve personnel reviews. More explanation is available in the next section "theoretical underpinning and hypotheses".

Second, the general focus of workplace incivility literature is on the social, psychological, and financial consequences of negative behavior that harms the interpersonal relationship of employees and organizational outcomes (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bai et al., 2016; Cortina et al., 2001; Jin et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2019; Namin et al., 2022; Porath & Pearson, 2013; Schilpzand et al., 2016). However, research into the antecedents of workplace incivility is scarce. In particular, our knowledge about the effect of a caring climate on social stressors is severely limited (Kao et al., 2014). One of the important research areas in workplace incivility literature that deserves scholars' attention is understanding how the organizational climate as a situational attribute can affect the pervasiveness of incivility in the working environment. In a review study, Schilpzand et al. (2016) encouraged researchers to examine different organizational climate characteristics and their effects on workplace incivility. Moreover, previous studies (e.g. Abubakar et al., 2017; Arasli et al., 2018; Namin et al., 2022) revealed that perceived incivility among service employees has highly detrimental impacts on individual and organizational outcomes such as well-being, emotional exhaustion, and retention of staff, which is especially true for the service sector with its high employee turnover rate. Thus, this study investigated the antecedent of workplace incivility from an organizational climate perspective to reveal how the perception of a caring climate can influence workplace incivility and its detrimental results, including employees' emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the effect of a caring climate on frontline service employees' turnover intention through testing both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion as mediation mechanisms in the service industry in a Norwegian context.

Theoretical underpinning and hypotheses

Perception of a caring climate and turnover intention

As a type of workplace climate, the ethical climate was defined by Victor and Cullen (1987) as "the shared perceptions of what is regarded ethically correct behaviors and how ethical situations should be handled in an organization" (p. 51). Five important types of theoretical ethical climate are instrumental, law and code, independence, rules, and caring climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). A meta-analytic review subsequently revealed that these five types of ethical climate are also found in most of the other relevant empirical studies (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Fu and Deshpande (2012) indicated that the biggest positive correlation exists between the perception of a caring climate and employees' ethical behavior. According to Victor and Cullen (1988), a caring climate, which encompasses the benevolence criterion of ethical climate, refers to employees' shared perceptions of policies, procedures, and systems within the organization that influence employees' behaviors by emphasizing friendship and team interest (Cullen et al., 1993). In fact, the main aspect of a caring climate is to find the best for everyone in the organization. Working

in a caring climate generates a range of positive behaviors among employees; they show good manners toward others, protect each other's rights, participate in social responsibility programs, and strive for the benefit of the organization (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019).

According to ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), providing an ethical climate in the organization in terms of norms, rules, culture, and policies may decrease the level of negativity in individuals. This theory describes detailed feelings that employees have about the organizational environment and its ethical content and issues, which may help to change employees' turnover intention (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Previous studies indicated that a caring climate had a significant positive direct and indirect impact on a number of organizational outcomes, including employees' job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and well-being (e.g. Filipova, 2011; Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Martin & Cullen, 2006; Okpara & Wynn, 2008). Based on ethical climate theory, Joe et al. (2018) demonstrated that a strong perception of caring climate decreases employees' turnover intention. It forms the basis of hypothesis 1 in the current study. People are less likely to quit their positions when they feel that they are working in a supportive environment with strong caring or benevolent values (e.g. Sims & Keon, 1997). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

(H1) A perceived caring climate is negatively related to employees' turnover intention.

The mediating role of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion

Workplace incivility has been reported to be a highly prevalent interpersonal mistreatment in various workplaces (Lim et al., 2008; Porath & Pearson, 2013). According to previous studies, 77.6% of nurses in Canada (Spence Laschinger et al., 2009), and around 75% of 3000 employees in Sweden have experienced coworker incivility at work. Frontline service employees are particularly prone to coworker incivility in their daily working life. Coworker incivility refers to uncivil behavior by an employee towards his/her fellow coworker(s), such as not saying "please" or "thank you", raising their voice, leaving rude messages, blaming others, spreading rumors, ignoring a coworker in the group, or any gestures that could be perceived as offensive (Pearson et al., 2001; Pearson et al., 2005).

Based on ethical climate theory, a perceived caring climate may create awareness and develop positive attitudes among employees (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019), and improve their morality, responsibility, and positive behaviors (Yang et al., 2014). It can stimulate employees to internally combine consistent, employee-supporting, and caring-oriented organizational values, which in turn affects internally directed outcomes (Kao et al., 2014). This means that working in a caring climate motivates employees to think more before acting, by considering the impact of their behaviors on others, especially their coworkers.

On the other hand, workplace incivility has been recognized as a factor in the undermining of social relationships and increasing employee turnover (Cortina et al., 2001; Lim et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2017). Frontline employees require social acceptance and support from colleagues, especially those who work in service teams. Thus, coworkers' unpleasant behaviors break down respect and social support and cause an imbalance in the network (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), which in turn results in turnover intention (Viotti et al., 2018).

It has been previously demonstrated that a caring climate mitigated the negative effects of social stressors (e.g. workplace incivility) (Kao et al., 2014) and decreased employees' misconduct (Mayer et al., 2010). Therefore, the perception of a caring climate may lead to a lower level of uncivil behavior among service employees. In addition, in organizations that develop caring systems through emotional support and social care, even when employees experience workplace incivility they are less intended to leave the organization (Kao et al., 2014). Therefore, in this study, we argue that coworker incivility could be considered as a mediator in the relationship between the perception of caring climate and turnover intention. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

(H2) The relationship between perception of caring climate and turnover intention is mediated by coworker incivility.

In the framework of spiraling incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), the behavioral response of individuals to incivility illustrates a social interaction process involving interpersonal mistreatment (Lim et al., 2008; Sakurai & Jex, 2012), where the victims of incivility are more likely to become distressed (Lim et al., 2008) and eventually experience emotional exhaustion (Spence Laschinger et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2017), which refers to a situation where an employee feels overextended emotionally and exhausted by his/her work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Reduced or low quality in workplace life caused by emotional exhaustion is a strong factor resulting in turnover intention (Korunka et al., 2008). Employees who experience emotional exhaustion are most likely to show turnover intention and try to find job opportunities in other organizations (Bridger et al., 2013). However, based on ethical climate theory, providing an ethical climate in an organization may also reduce emotional exhaustion (Yang et al., 2014). Working in a caring climate and perception of support from the organization could be a significant emotional resource for the employees, which may help them to deal more effectively with emotional exhaustion resulting from experiencing uncivil behaviors in the workplace.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) is also a good theory to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the cause of stress and the loss of resources. Moreover, previous studies considered this theory as a useful theory for justifying emotional exhaustion as a mediator for turnover intention (e.g. Cole et al., 2010). COR theory posits that people try hard to acquire, maintain, and secure their resources including their emotional energy and socio-emotional support in the workplace (Hobfoll, 1989). However, these valuable resources are restricted in most cases and according to COR theory, the cognitive, emotional, and physical resources could be gradually lost when employees try to protect themselves while, for example, dealing with work stressors such as coworker incivility in the workplace (Hur et al., 2015). Such a decline in resources is an important part of emotional exhaustion (Neveu, 2007) and leads employees to become emotionally drained (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007).

In service work environments with a caring climate, where managers provide emotional support for their employees and are concerned with their well-being, frontline employees who suffer from distress may end up with fewer resource losses and recover more quickly (Rathert et al., 2022; Stiehl et al., 2018). Based on COR theory this study proposes that providing a caring climate in the workplace facilitates a "pool" of emotional

and psychological resources (Hobfoll, 2011), which helps employees to conserve their valuable resources and in turn, decreases their emotional exhaustion. Therefore, in this study, emotional exhaustion is also considered as a mediator in the relationship between the perception of caring climate and turnover intention by the following hypothesis:

(H3) The relationship between perception of caring climate and turnover intention is mediated by emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, given the arguments related to H2 and H3 and the relationship between the variables, we proposed the following hypothesis considering the serial mediating mechanisms of both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion:

(H4) The relationship between perception of caring climate and turnover intention is serially mediated by employees' perceptions of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion.

Figure 1 demonstrates the direct and indirect effects of a caring climate on turnover intention through serial multiple mediation of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion.

Methodology

Sampling and procedure

The study used a quantitative approach with cross-sectional design and the non-probability purposive sampling technique (non-random), which relies on the judgment of the researcher (deliberate choice) to select people who are able and willing to provide necessary and relevant information for the study based on their knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002). The respondents were undergraduate students studying tourism management and hotel management at a university. Based on the purpose of the study, eligible respondents were only the students who had work experience in the hotel or restaurant sectors in Norway, as full-time or part-time frontline service employees, for a minimum of six months prior to participation in the study. These frontline employees were front-desk agents, reservations agents, waiters or waitresses, and bartenders. The rationale for selecting frontline employees rather than other hotel and restaurant staff is because of their frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with the customers/guests, which highlights their key role in improving customer satisfaction, building loyalty, managing customers' requests, and solving their problems (Daskin, 2015). Due to

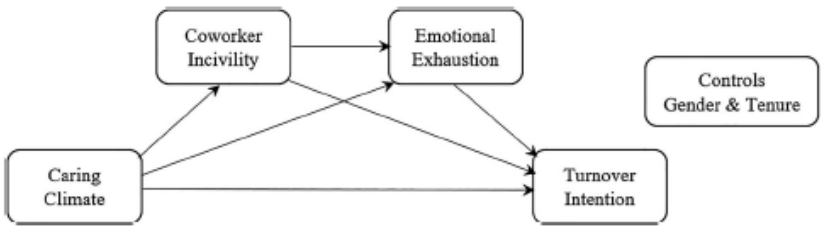

Figure 1. The conceptual model of the study.

the specific features of service jobs, including deep-rooted stress (Arasli et al., 2018), and a heavy reliance on coworkers (Sliter et al., 2012) to provide quality service for the customers, these employees are more likely to experience workplace incivility in their daily working life.

Data collection

A self-administrated questionnaire in English was distributed among respondents. Prior to survey distribution, the researcher provided a brief introduction of the study for the students and emphasized the eligibility conditions for the right respondents (as mentioned earlier). Thus, only eligible students received the survey and participated in the study. To pre-test the questionnaire, 10 master's degree students in the same field were asked to complete the questionnaire two weeks before data collection in order to check the understandability of the items. Required changes were considered in the questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire contained information about the purpose of the study and contact information, as well as a polite request encouraging them to participate in the research, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation, and informing them of full anonymity and that the data would be treated confidentially. Completing the questionnaire took approximately 10–15 min.

The completed questionnaires were placed in a special box, which was subsequently collected by a researcher in order to make responses anonymous and confidential. This was done to reduce the potential threat of common method bias (CMB), which is highlighted in previous studies (Line & Runyan, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). From 465 distributed questionnaires, 322 were returned, which corresponds to a 69.2 percent response rate. Questionnaires with more than 20 percent unanswered questions were considered as missing data. Consequently, 291 responses were used for data analysis.

Measurement

All constructs were measured using scales that are well-established in existing research. In order to measure the perception of a caring climate, 4 items were taken from Cullen et al. (1993). A sample item states, "Our hotel primarily cares about what is best for each person". The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used.

An extensive literature review was conducted to find the latest validated measurements for coworker incivility. To measure perceived coworker incivility, 4 items were used from Martin and Hine (2005), who developed and validated the Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ) by evaluating several facets of perceived incivility related to hostility, privacy invasion, exclusionary behavior, and gossiping. They showed convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity of the measurement by collecting data from 368 employees of different workplaces in Australia. A sample item asks, "How often have your coworkers spoken to you in an aggressive tone of voice?". The 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often) was used.

Three items were used from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) to measure emotional exhaustion. A sample item includes "I feel frustrated with my job". Additionally, three items from Mitchel (1981) were considered to measure turnover

intention. Sample item: "I often think about leaving my job." The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used for the last two variables. Gender and tenure were included as demographic variables.

Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (IBM SPSS) and AMOS, version 26, was used to analyze the collected data. First, descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliability were provided. A confirmatory test of the operationalization of constructs in the measurement model was then conducted in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS (Hair et al., 2010). The model fit was also assessed in AMOS. Moreover, in order to test the hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used, which has the advantage of being more parsimonious than other methods, such as regression, as well as using both measurement and a structural model to test all the hypotheses at the same time (Hair et al., 2010).

Sixty-six percent of the respondents (n = 291) were female. More than half of the respondents (65%) were working in hotels and 35% were working in restaurants. Forty-four percent of them were waiters/waitresses, 41 percent were receptionists, 12 percent were bartenders, and only 2 percent were housekeeping staff. The majority of the respondents (78%) were part-time employees. More than 45 percent had one to three years of work experience, followed by 22 percent who had six to eleven months, 17 percent had four to five years, and only 15 percent had more than five years of experience (see Table 1).

Results

Measurement results

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are available in Table 2 including standardized factor loadings (FL), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and maximum shared squared variance (MSV). The study measurements were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale and the reliability was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha. Values were all above the threshold value of 0.60 (from 0.70–0.89). The first test for model validity showed convergent and discriminant validity issues for turnover intention since the AVE

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents (n = 291).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 291)	Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	98	33.7
	Female	193	66.3
Tenure	6–11 months	65	22.3
	1-3 years	132	45.4
	4–5 years	50	17.2
	More than 5 years	44	15.1
Industry	Hotel	190	65.3
	Restaurant	101	34.7
Job title	Waiters/Waitresses	129	44.3
	Receptionists	120	41.2
	Bartenders	36	12.4
	Housekeeping staff	6	2.1
Work status	Full-time	63	21.6
	Part-time	228	78.3

Table 2. The confirmatory factor analysis results.

Scale items	α	FL	CR	AVE	MSV
Caring Climate (*CC*)	0.89		0.89	0.66	0.22
CC1		0.88			
CC2		0.80			
CC3		0.90			
CC4		0.84			
Coworker Incivility (*Co-Inc*)	0.70		0.70	0.37	0.14
Co-Inc1		0.72			
Co-Inc2		0.73			
Co-Inc3		0.69			
Co-Inc4		0.76			
Emotional Exhaustion (*EE*)	0.82		0.82	0.61	0.51
EE1		0.83			
EE2		0.93			
EE3		0.82			
Turnover Intention (*TI*)	0.71		0.75	0.61	0.51
TI2		0.90			
TI3		0.52			

Notes: Model fit statistics: $\chi 2 = 76.65$, df = 59, $\chi 2/df = 1.30$, NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.03, PClose = 0.94, SRMR = 0.04; (FL) standardized loadings; (CR) composite reliability; (AVE) average variance extracted; (MSV) maximum shared squared variance; (CFI) comparative fit index.

(0.48) was less than 0.50, which indicated a convergent validity issue, while its MSV (0.53) was more than AVE indicating a discriminant validity issue (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Thus, we dropped the first item for turnover intention (TI1) as this was the most problematic item, and removing it has the least impact on the reliability of turnover intention (Cronbach's α = 0.71, still ideal). We then checked the model validity again, and both issues had been solved as the AVE was higher (0.61) and the new MSV (0.51) was less than the AVE (see Table 2). The AVE for coworker incivility was also less than 0.50, indicating convergent validity. However, the average variance extracted is often very strict compared to composite reliability, which is a more forgiving measure. Since the CR value for coworker incivility was equal to its minimum recommended threshold of 0.70, we, therefore, concluded that this showed convergent validity for multi-purposing based on CR alone (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Malhotra & Dash, 2011). According to Kline (2005), discriminant validity is also confirmed when the estimated correlations between the variables are less than 0.85 (see Table 3). The descriptive statistics and correlations are also demonstrated in Table 3. Based on the results available in Table 2 and Table 3, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for the current study are established.

Table 3. Mean, standard deviations, correlations, and collinearity statistics of the study variables (n = 291).

									Collinearity statistics	
Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	Tolerance	VIF
1. Caring Climate	3.44	0.89	–						0.84	1.19
2. Coworker Incivility	1.61	0.54	−0.25**	–					0.86	1.15
3. Emotional Exhaustion	2.70	1.00	−0.35**	0.28**	–				0.82	1.21
4. Turnover Intention	3.06	0.98	−0.45**	0.17**	0.52**	–			0.72	1.38
5. Gender	0.66	0.47	−0.12*	−0.09	0.13*	0.05	–		0.95	1.05
6. Tenure	2.25	0.97	−0.07	0.11	0.05	−0.002	0.06	–	0.98	1.02

Notes: M = mean, SD = standard deviation, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, Gender: male = 0 & female = 1, VIF = variable inflation factors.

The model fit indices for the four-factor structure ($\chi 2 = 76.65$, df = 59, $\chi 2/df = 1.30$, NFI = 0.95, RMR = 0.03, GFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.98) were acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). As suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), the comparative fit index (CFI = 0.99, values > 0.95 indicate excellent fit), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.03, values < 0.06 indicate excellent fit, and PClose = 0.94, values > 0.05 indicate excellent fit), and (SRMR = 0.04, values < 0.08 indicate excellent fit) are perfectly acceptable.

To measure the problem of common method bias (CMB) we used Harman's single-factor test, which is about a condition in which a single latent factor explains more than 50 percent of the total variance of the construct measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The result was 30.19 percent. Moreover, in line with a new approach suggested by Kock (2015), we used multicollinearity as a test for method bias through checking the variable inflation factors (VIF). This approach is used due to the fact that multicollinearity is a symptom of method bias and if a collinearity test shows that all VIFs are equal or less than 3.30 it can be concluded that the model is free of potential CMB (Kock, 2015, p. 7). The results of the collinearity test are shown in the last two columns of Table 2. All tolerance values are more than 0.20 and all VIFs are less than 3.30, indicating that there is no multicollinearity problem and consequently no common method bias.

Test of the hypotheses

The results of the Pearson correlation in Table 3 showed that a perceived caring climate had a significant negative correlation with coworker incivility, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention. Coworker incivility had a significant positive correlation with emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. The correlation between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention was also positive and significant. Thus, the result shows preparatory support for H1.

In order to test the mediating hypotheses, the SEM analysis was performed in AMOS and the hypothetical structural model (Figure 2) was tested. Additionally, gender was included as a control variable since it was closely associated with emotional exhaustion in the current data. Furthermore, the coefficients of the three-path mediated effect

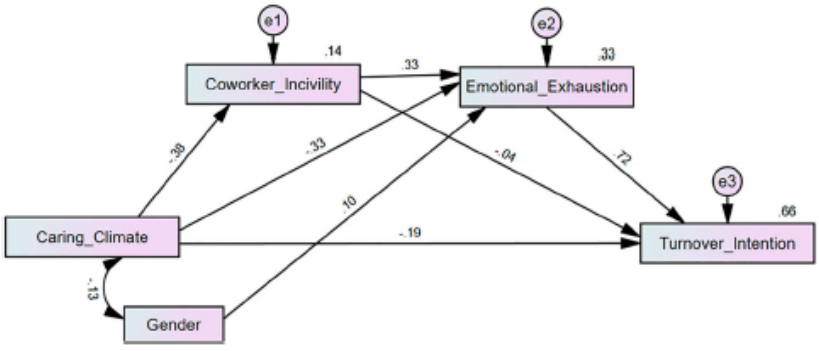

Figure 2. Mediating effect model.

were simultaneously estimated (Hayes et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2008) through the plugin (Gaskin et al., 2020) in the structural equation modeling (Figure 2) and the results are presented (see Table 4). This approach separates the indirect effect of the mediators: coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion, as well as finding the indirect effect passing through both mediators in a serial multiple mediation (Taylor et al., 2008). To estimate the significance of the indirect effect, 5000 bootstrap resamples were run (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), and to consider the effect as significant, the 95% CI should not include zero. Estimated direct and indirect effects for all the paths are shown in Figure 2 and Table 4.

According to the results, a perceived caring climate had a significant negative effect on turnover intention directly ($\beta = -0.52$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [−0.58, −0.44]) and indirectly ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [−0.26, −0.12]), which provides collateral evidence for H1, and thus H1 was supported. H2 predicted a mediation effect of coworker incivility in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. The coefficient value for this relationship is $\beta = 0.01$ with the insignificant p-value ($p = 0.33$, 95% CI = [−0.01, 0.03]), and thus H2 was not supported. However, when we ran this model independent of emotional exhaustion, the mediation of coworker incivility in this path became significant ($\beta = -0.07$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [−0.09, −0.03]). H3, which predicted the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention was supported since $\beta = -0.24$ and it is significant ($p < 0.01$, 95% CI = [−0.24, −0.12]).

Finally, in H4 we predicted that the relationship between a perceived caring climate and turnover intention is serially mediated by coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion. The result revealed that coworker incivility mediates the relationship between caring climate and emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -0.12$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [−0.16, −0.08]), and subsequently emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between coworker incivility and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.24$ $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.25, 0.45]). The formal test for H4 showed a significant coefficient value for this serial mediation path ($\beta = -0.12$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [−0.09, −0.04]), and thus the result provided evidence for H4 supporting the serial mediation effect of coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. The effect size was 66.20%.

Table 4. Structural equation modeling (SEM) results for the serial multiple mediation model.

Direct and indirect effects	Standardized coefficients (β)	SE	p-Value	95% CI
Direct effect				
CC→TI (*H1*)	−0.52	0.04	***	(−0.58, −0.44)
CC→Co-Inc	−0.38	0.03	***	(−0.46, −0.30)
CC→EE	−0.33	0.05	***	(−0.42, −0.23)
Co-Inc→EE	0.33	0.09	***	(0.24, 0.42)
Co-Inc→TI	−0.04	0.06	0.35	(−0.11, 0.03)
EE→TI	0.72	0.03	***	(0.66, 0.78)
Indirect effect				
Total: CC→TI	−0.19	0.03	***	(−0.26, −0.12)
CC→Co-Inc→TI (*H2*)	0.01	0.01	0.33	(−0.01, 0.03)
CC→EE→TI (*H3*)	−0.24	0.03	**	(−0.24, −0.12)
CC→Co-Inc→EE→TI (*H4*)	−0.12	0.02	***	(−0.09, −0.04)

Note: N = 291, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < .001$, SE = standard error, 95% CI = 95% confidence interval, CC = caring climate, Co-Inc = coworker incivility, EE = emotional exhaustion, TI = turnover intention.

Discussion

Given that there is still a lack of research on the antecedents of service employees' turnover and the potential role of workplace climate in relation to turnover intention (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015; Joe et al., 2018), this study focused on how employees' turnover intention is deeply affected by their perception of a caring climate in the workplace.

Our results showed that a perceived caring climate decreases the employees' turnover intention in line with ethical climate theory. Employees who feel cared for and supported in the workplace are less likely to leave their current job. This results from a reduction in both coworker incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion (Yang et al., 2014). Working in a caring climate stimulates positive behavior and friendship among employees through concern for the rights, interests, and well-being of others, while simultaneously reducing uncivil behavior towards coworkers. We also showed that if employees believe that the organization really cares about them and their well-being in a supportive work environment, they will be less likely to feel emotionally exhausted. Emotional exhaustion caused by workplace incivility is a resource-draining component of COR theory while a positive atmosphere within a caring climate, which helps to reduce employees' uncivil behaviors and negative feelings, is a supplementary emotional resource, that consequently leads them to stay in the organization.

Based on the results, a perceived caring climate had a significant negative effect on employees' turnover intention directly (H1) and indirectly only through emotional exhaustion (H3), and serially through both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion (H4). Moreover, the results revealed that emotional exhaustion partially mediated the negative effect of a caring climate on turnover intention since the beta for caring climate decreased but remained significant after adding emotional exhaustion as a mediator in the model. This result complements the study by Yang et al. (2014), which found that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the effect of ethical climate on turnover intention. H2 was rejected and the findings showed that coworker incivility did not show a mediation effect in the relationship between caring climate and turnover intention. However, the mediating effect of coworker incivility became significant when we removed emotional exhaustion from the model and checked the model only with one mediator (i.e. coworker incivility). This indicates that emotional exhaustion has a higher positive effect on turnover intention than coworker incivility as well as a stronger mediating effect between caring climate and turnover intention. Yet, we should not underestimate the importance of coworker incivility as a mediator in the mentioned relationship, since the results clearly confirmed the exclusive mediating effect of coworker incivility (independent of emotional exhaustion) as well as its mediating effect in the serial mediation model (H4). Considering the sources of workplace incivility (Cortina et al., 2001), some previous studies showed that employees' outcomes are less affected by coworker incivility compared to supervisor and customer incivility, because coworker incivility may be perceived as a less threatening – but still significant harmful– job stressor (e.g. Cho et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2011). It has been also clearly evidenced in previous studies that emotional exhaustion is a strong factor leading to turnover intention (Babakus et al., 2008; Hur et al., 2015; Korunka et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2014). Moreover, employees could feel emotionally exhausted not only through workplace coworker incivility but also through other sources of incivility such as customer incivility (Alola et al.,

2021) or other negative factors or events in the workplace, such as increased work demands (Babakus et al., 2008) or job insecurity (Lawrence & Kacmar, 2017).

Theoretical implications

Supported by ethical climate theory and COR theory, our serial multiple mediation model provides useful findings to complement the turnover and workplace incivility literature. This study contributes to our knowledge of frontline service employees' perceptions of a caring climate, and extends our understanding of the role of workplace climate on individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015; Joe et al., 2018).

Most previous studies concentrated on the moderating effect of a caring climate in the organization (e.g. Chen et al., 2013; Kao et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2019). However, this study contributes to ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988) by focusing on the effect of caring climate perception (as a specific type of ethical climate) and its established behavioral mechanism, which leads to lower levels of turnover intention among frontline service employees (Joe et al., 2018). Our results develop a better understanding of the conditions under which uncivil behaviors are less likely to occur while providing further support for earlier studies about the antecedent role of a caring climate in the formation of turnover intention (e.g. Joe et al., 2018; Sims & Keon, 1997).

Moreover, the result of this study contributes to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Our model assumed that a caring climate in the workplace serves as a resource pool (Hobfoll, 2011), which could compensate for employees' resource loss resulting from dealing with workplace incivility. Our result shows that the perception of a caring climate could work as a supplementary emotional resource for employees, which enables them to have more control over their emotions, increases their tolerance toward others' uncivil behaviors (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019), and leads them to be less emotionally exhausted (Sakurai & Jex, 2012) and reduces the level of turnover intention (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Finally, our novel result regarding a serial mediation effect provides a broader view of the relationship between a caring climate and employees' turnover intention. With a contribution to ethical climate theory and COR theory, this study revealed the mediation mechanism of both coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion, from the frontline service employees' perspective (Namin et al., 2022; Poddar & Madupalli, 2012).

Managerial implications

The current study gives the following suggestions for service managers to improve the workplace environment and decrease employees' turnover intention.

It would be helpful to provide a positive climate in the organization. The moral content of the organizational climate can influence employees' moral development as it teaches them appropriate behavior in the organization through climate perceptions (Liu et al., 2019). The ethical climate is a specific work climate that steers ethical behavior within an organization, and among its dimensions, the caring climate has the strongest correlation with ethical behavior (Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011), including responsibility, trust, high moral standards, well-being, increased tolerance for others' weaknesses, and positive attitudes (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut, 2019; Martin & Cullen, 2006).

A caring climate seems particularly important for frontline service employees because of their serious roles in providing a service to customers through team working and a strong reliance on each other (Sliter et al., 2012). Thus, service managers may benefit from establishing a particular ethical climate in the workplace mainly based on caring aspects, in which employees' main consideration is the effect of beneficial decisions on others who are involved in the decision-making as opposed to their self-interest (Cullen et al., 2003). A strong caring climate prevents unethical and uncivil behaviors whilst simultaneously motivating frontline employees to behave well by improving their values, assumptions, and belief systems, which in turn will minimize their turnover intention (Kao et al., 2014). Since the high turnover rate in the service industry is a major issue, harming both the individual and organizational outcomes (Deloitte, 2010), managers can use a caring climate to steer the employees into the intention to stay in their current job rather than quitting (Joe et al., 2018).

Given that coworker incivility has a detrimental effect on employees' turnover intention, it should be considered not only as a personal-level conflict but also as a structural issue that requires serious attention. It is necessary to control the hiring process by being aware of employees' attributes, and those displaying uncivil behavior towards coworkers could be identified and stopped. Managers may formulate policies and establish appropriate regulations and behavioral criteria (Yang et al., 2014). Service managers first need to properly identify unique types and patterns of uncivil behavior among employees in the workplace and recognize how they feel and react to coworker incivility. Providing adequate education within the organization is, therefore, an important task for the managers. This education could increase awareness of the damaging effects of employees' uncivil behavior towards others in the workplace and teach them more professional etiquette (Hur et al., 2015).

When employees perceive there to be a caring climate and feel supported by the organization, their depletion of emotional resources will gradually decrease while their work devotion will increase. Service managers' promotion of personal ethics may prevent individual employees from engaging in uncivil behavior. Moreover, care and social support from managers to those employees who have faced workplace incivility would substantially improve their work effort (Sakurai & Jex, 2012). Organizing meetings or weekend gatherings could be beneficial for employees and raise their awareness of the expected and correct ethics and the relevant measures in the organization. The CREW (Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce) initiative is one of the programs that can be implemented to facilitate civil interactions among employees (Taylor & Kluemper, 2012), and includes recognizing and improving controversial workplace interactions and reforming teamwork and cooperation.

Limitations and future research suggestion

Although this study provided useful results and discussed theoretical and practical implications, it is not without limitations. The first limitation is related to the cross-sectional design that is required to maintain caution when discerning a causal relationship between the variables. A longitudinal study would be necessary to control this limitation.

The number of the respondents was quite good however, the replication of this study with a larger dataset would resolve the lack of generalization of the findings. Using the

self-reported measures for the variables in the current study is another limitation, which may result in unavoidable response biases. Moreover, since this study was an early effort to investigate the relationship between a perceived caring climate and employee turnover intention, it is recommended that the results from similar studies of frontline service employees are compared in different national contexts to provide collateral evidence for our results. Workplace climate is an interesting area to be examined in relation to workplace incivility (Kao et al., 2014; Schilpzand et al., 2016), therefore future studies could investigate the effect of other workplace climates (e.g. ethical climate) on different sources of workplace incivility. One suggestion could be testing the relationship between caring climate and supervisor incivility, or how the perception of a caring climate can affect the employees' incivility towards customers.

Future studies could also focus on the cultural differences in perceptions of the workplace climate and workplace incivility (Vasconcelos, 2020). The investigation is also recommended into the effect of a caring climate on other work-related outcomes, such as employees' job performance and satisfaction in the same serial multiple mediation model.

Conclusion

This study emphasized the significant role of the work environment (i.e. workplace climate) in decreasing the frontline employees' turnover intention in the service industry. Providing a caring climate focused on employees' well-being and emotional support in the workplace negatively affects employees' uncivil behaviors (towards each other) and their emotional exhaustion caused by experiencing workplace incivility. Service managers need to consider a caring climate as a good solution for reducing incivility and negative feelings among employees, which consequently helps to minimize the level of turnover intention in the organization.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Paper III

behavioral sciences

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Article

Frontline Service Employees' Profiles: Exploring Individual Differences in Perceptions of and Reactions to Workplace Incivility

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Abstract: Employee turnover is a big issue in the service industry, which can be significantly affected by job stressors including workplace incivility. This exploratory study aims to identify the frontline service employees' profiles exploring to what extent individuals may have different perceptions of incivility and social supports at work and showing different reactions (job outcomes). In a cross-sectional study, 291 completed questionnaires from a sample of Norwegian frontline service employees were subjected to correlation analysis, K-means clustering, and post hoc ANOVA analysis with Bonferroni correction. Cluster analysis revealed three distinct clusters of employees with different profiles, which indicated that those who perceived the highest level of workplace incivility and the lowest level of social supports at work showed the highest turnover intention compared to that of others. Moreover, employees with longer tenure and the highest perception of social supports at work coped better with workplace incivility and showed the lowest turnover intention.

Keywords: workplace incivility; turnover intention; social supports at work; frontline service employees; cluster analysis

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1. Introduction

The "turnover issue" in tourism and hospitality has received enormous research interest in the last decade. The reason is obvious: tourism, hotel, and restaurant sectors report very high turnover figures (e.g., [1–3]). Although the significant role of frontline service employees is confirmed by both managers and scholars, research has consistently indicated that service employees are generally untrained, overworked, and highly stressed [4]. Not surprisingly, therefore, their turnover intentions have been asserted as one of the important and continuous challenges for service managers [1,5], since high turnover gives high recruiting costs, problems with a stable level of service delivery, and may have a negative influence on the work environment. Researchers have studied various factors influencing turnover, for example, external job alternatives, work–life balance, employment conditions, and the work environment [6]. Studies into the work environment are especially interesting because the work environment may be influenced not only by the industries and local management that are taking active roles in HR systems, but also by how jobs are organized, what culture employees experience, and how well managers do their jobs.

Frontline service employees have to deal with multiple interpersonal stressors from different sources in the work environment [2]. A stressful situation can be created when these employees experience negative social interactions with customers and coworkers [7]. As a very widespread phenomenon in the work environment, workplace incivility is the major factor in job stress [8]. A research track has studied occurrences and effects of uncivil behaviors from coworkers and customers on frontline employees (e.g., [9,10]).

Research has identified workplace incivility from customers and coworkers as a negative stressor in work environments for frontline employees, which may lead to emotional exhaustion and, in turn, negative job outcomes such as low performance [11] and high turnover [12–14]. Some managerial decisions and actions may significantly improve the work environment for the employees. According to [15], with the perception of social support(s) in the organization, employees will have a significant emotional resource, which helps them to control their emotions more effectively and allows them to cope well with job stressors. Research within this track has also demonstrated how a caring organizational climate and a good relationship between frontline employees and their managers can reduce the negative effects of incivility [16,17]. However, most of this research holds a functional perspective of how organizations work in forming employees' attitudes and behaviors by considering people as a product of social groups and organizational environment. From such a perspective, problems are solved by organizational policies, HR management, or local management. Individual differences in employees' responses to organizational actions and their coping behavior are not given much attention. Although some employees respond very well to managerial actions and support at work, there could be some other employees who do not. This may arise a question about the role of individual differences in employees' perceptions and reactions to negative interpersonal interactions in the workplace.

In this exploratory paper, we explored differences in individual behaviors and reactions against the perception of workplace incivility among a sample of frontline employees in the hotel and restaurant industry. Our main question was whether it was possible to identify groups of employees that behave differently from other groups. If so, then could we recognize a behavioral pattern and demographic profile of such groups of individual employees? We believe that such insights into individual differences in (a) how employees perceive and cope with stressors and (b) to what extent the organization and managers affect their behaviors will be of great interest for both research and practice. Individual differences explain the variance when measuring the effects of, for example, the mediating role of managements' effort to reduce employees' turnover.

In the next section, previous research-based knowledge of incivility behavioral effects will be elaborated with a focus on studies that identify individual differences among frontline service employees.

2. Background Literature

2.1. Workplace Incivility and Job Outcomes

Workplace incivility refers to "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" [18] (p. 457). Examples of workplace uncivil behaviors include one's negligence in saying "please" or "thanks", using snippy voice, disrupting meetings, verbal attacks, withholding important information, spreading rumors, taking credit for other's efforts, and leaving rude messages [19,20]. Perception of incivility in the organization affects employees by different negative behavioral, physiological, and psychological outcomes [21]. As a consequence of the specific attributes of service jobs including deep-rooted stress [9], reliance on coworkers [7], and the close connection between frontline employees' performance and customer encounters in the service industry [10], these employees are specifically targeted to incivility from two main internal and external sources (i.e., coworker and customer) in their daily working life.

According to previous research (e.g., [9,13,22,23]) workplace incivility perception among service employees has damaging effects on individual and organizational outcomes. Sustained exposure to workplace incivility results in emotional exhaustion [24], which in turn, decreases employees' job performance [11,23] and increases their turnover intention [25]. The positive association between incivility and absenteeism, lateness, and

job-quitting behavior as well as its antecedent role in the formation of turnover intention has been identified in previous research (e.g., [2,14,26,27]).

2.2. The Role of Individual Characteristics and Personality Traits

In an investigation of how individual characteristics (i.e., age, education, job tenure, and experience) affect service employees' job-related responses, [28] indicated that the employees who are older, better educated, and have higher service experience tend to be more satisfied and committed while coping better with job stressors, which may result in lower absenteeism and turnover. With a focus on Big Five factors and the Dark Triad of personality as individual differences, [29] demonstrated that they are potential predictors of uncivil meeting behaviors including inappropriate interpersonal behavior (e.g., offending others) and dominant communication behavior (e.g., interrupting others). Moreover, [30] showed a double-edged effect of narcissism, that is, narcissistic employees reacted to workplace incivility with higher levels of anger on the one hand that results in lower family satisfaction. On the other hand, they were less likely to feel guilty when experienced incivility and thus, maintained family satisfaction. According to [30], family satisfaction is an indicator of non-professional well-being characterized by individuals' satisfaction level with their family relationships [31].

Another study about individual differences based on personality traits showed that employees who are high in neuroticism and low in agreeableness experience more incivility in the workplace [32]. In a recent study, the role of individual differences in generating specific emotions and behaviors in response to workplace incivility was investigated [33]. The result showed that the employees with higher internal attribution orientation can care more about others' feelings and take more responsibility for unpleasant interactions. Thus, they are more likely to feel guilty when they perceive incivility from coworkers, and to reduce this feeling, they show more positive behaviors.

2.3. Workplace Social Supports

The role of service managers is particularly notable in creating a more favorable work environment for the employees. Leader-member exchange (LMX) quality [34] is an important social support in the organization, which emphasizes the leaders and followers' dyadic relationship. It refers to the employees' perception of the quality of their interpersonal social exchange with their managers [35]. In high-quality LMX, managers may provide social support for the employees by showing empathy and support for their needs [36]. Employees with a high perception of LMX quality are more likely to accomplish challenging tasks [37] and show higher performance [38,39] and lower turnover intention [40]. The result of a recent time-lagged study demonstrated that employees with low-quality LMX relationships with the manager instigated more uncivil behaviors toward their coworkers [41]. Previous studies also revealed damaging effects of high LMX differentiation on group performance and employees' relationships [42,43].

Moreover, the caring climate has been considered as a significant factor to address the association between job stressors and related job outcomes [17]. A caring climate refers to shared perceptions of organizational policies, procedures, and systems among the employees that affect their behaviors by emphasizing friendship and team interest [44]. Through establishing a caring climate, managers would be able to develop positive attitudes among employees, motivate them to consider the effect of their behaviors, lead them to make decisions according to the interest of others' well-being [16], and feel obliged to help other members and coworkers [45]. In such an atmosphere, even by experiencing a high level of stressors, the employees are more likely to show positive job outcomes [17] through higher job performance [46] and lower intention to quit their jobs [26].

A theory that can provide a foundation for a deeper understanding of the relationship between workplace incivility and its impacts on different job outcomes is the conservation of resource (COR) theory [47]. Resources are an essential part of COR theory and refer to any valuable objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that an

individual uses to attain these resources again [47]. The main issue is the limitation of such priceless resources, and that is why people seek to achieve, maintain, conserve, and foster them [47,48] to cope with stressors. However, these resources could be gradually lost while, for example, someone needs to deal with workplace incivility. In the dark tenets of COR theory, employees may try to restore loss of resources by reducing their performance [49] and showing withdrawal behaviors [7] including turnover intention. Based on this theory, frontline service employees who are exposed to incivility from customers and coworkers in their daily working life (resource drain), experience more stress and emotional exhaustion and finally seek to restore their resources [47]. That is, the emotionally exhausted employees may show negative reactions that could adversely affect their job outcomes. In this study, we considered the employees' perception of a caring climate and LMX quality as two supplementary resources and social supports at work.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling and Procedure

A cross-sectional design with purposive sampling was applied for this study. Purposive sampling is used as a nonrandom sampling technique depending on the deliberate choices and judgments of the researcher about selecting a sample of individuals who agree to voluntarily provide required information based on their knowledge and experience [50]. The questionnaires of the present study were distributed among frontline service employees who work as receptionists, waiters or waitresses, or bartenders in several hotels and restaurants in Norway. Frontline service employees have been selected for this study because of their frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with the customers/guests that imply their key role in building loyalty and improving customers' pleasure through managing their requests and resolving their problems [51]. Moreover, being heavily reliant on coworkers [7] and having deep-rooted stress [9] in providing high-quality service for the customers as the specific features of service jobs expose these employees to workplace incivility more than any other staff in the hotel and restaurant industry.

3.2. Data Collection

The data was collected from undergraduate students in tourism/hotel management at a university in Norway. Only the students who had been working for at least six months in a hotel or a restaurant before participation in this study were eligible to complete the self-administrated questionnaire. The questionnaires were in English. The understandability of the questionnaire items was checked in a pre-test among 10 Master's students in the same field, and the necessary changes were made accordingly. On the first page of the questionnaire, the aim of the study, contact information, the voluntary nature of participation, and full anonymity and confidentiality were emphasized. Participants needed approximately 10–15 min to fill out the questionnaire.

As highlighted in previous studies (e.g., [52,53]), to decrease the potential threat of common method bias (CMB), a special box was provided to keep the completed questionnaires. One of the researchers obtained this box after data collection. A total of 465 questionnaires were distributed and 322 were returned, resulting in a 69.2 percent response rate. The questionnaires with more than 20 percent unanswered items were considered as missing data and after their deletion, 291 responses were used for data analysis.

3.3. Measures

The Perception of customer incivility was measured through 4 items adapted from [54], who have validated the Incivility from Customer Scale (IFCS). One of the included items was "How often have customers blamed you for a problem you did not cause?". The perception of coworker incivility was measured through 4 items adapted from [55], who have developed and validated the Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ). "How often have your coworkers made unkind/mean remarks about you in a

clever indirect way?" was among the included items. The 5-point Likert scale measure ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often) was used for these two variables.

The perception of a caring climate was measured through 4 items from [44]. One of the included items was "The managers are very concerned about what is generally best for the employees in this workplace". To measure LMX quality, 3 items were adapted from [56]. "I characterize my working relationship with my supervisor as very effective" was one of the included items. Emotional exhaustion was measured through 3 items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory [57]. One of the included items was "I feel used up at the end of the workday". Job performance was measured through 3 items adapted from [58]. "I am a top performer" was among the included items. The turnover intention was measured through 3 items from [59]. One of the included items was "I will accept a contract offer from another organization if it comes tomorrow". The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used for all of these variables.

For personal characteristics and working conditions, respondents' gender (male = 0, female = 1), tenure (6–11 months = 1, 1–3 years = 2, 4–5 years = 3, and more than 5 years = 4), industry (hotel = 1 or restaurant = 2), and supervising responsibility (dichotomous response of yes = 1 or no = 2) were considered in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic profiles of the respondents. The majority of the participants were female (66%), worked at hotels (65%), with 1–3 years of experience (45%), and did not have a supervising position (75%).

Table 1. Demographic profiles of the respondents (n = 291).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 291)	Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	98	33.7
	Female	193	66.3
Tenure	6–11 months	65	22.3
	1–3 years	132	45.4
	4–5 years	50	17.2
	More than 5 years	44	15.1
Industry	Hotel	190	65.3
	Restaurant	101	34.7
Supervising position	Yes	74	25.4
	No	217	74.6

3.4. *Data Analysis*

The collected data were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Science (IBM SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation analysis, K-means cluster analysis, and one-way ANOVA were conducted. Cluster analysis aims to group the participants who similarly responded to the questions and explore the considerable heterogeneity in their characteristics [60]. Accordingly, K-means cluster analysis [61] was performed to find out a structured view of the participants. The advantage of a K-means clustering is to enable cases to be relocated to new clusters in an iterative process, so their locations would be potentially improved with no changes in the specific number of clusters during iterations. We checked different theoretically relevant numbers of clusters in several runs, and it revealed that a solution with three distinct clusters was the most informative. Finally, one-way ANOVA was performed to discriminate between the clusters using post hoc Tukey's pairwise comparisons.

4. Results

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficient between all included variables in the present study. Significant positive correlations were found between workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion (0.28 for both customer and coworker incivility). However, customer incivility did not show a significant correlation with both turnover intention (0.08) and job performance (0.10), while coworker incivility showed a significant correlation with turnover intention (0.17). Emotional exhaustion had a positive and significant correlation with turnover intention (0.52), but a positive and insignificant correlation with job performance (0.06). Both customer (−0.13) and coworker incivility (−0.25) had a significant negative correlation with caring climate, but only coworker incivility had the same correlation with LMX quality (−0.16). Correlations between social supports and emotional exhaustion were negative and significant (−0.39 for LMX quality and −0.36 for caring climate). They also showed significant negative correlations with turnover intention (−0.49 for LMX quality and −0.45 for caring climate). However, only LMX quality showed a significant correlation with job performance (0.28).

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients between the study variables (n = 291).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Customer incivility	-										
2. Coworker incivility	0.29 **	-									
3. Emotional exhaustion	0.28 **	0.28 **	-								
4. Job performance	0.10	0.001	0.06	-							
5. Turnover intention	0.08	0.17 **	0.52 **	−0.02	-						
6. LMX quality	−0.09	−0.16 **	−0.39 **	0.28 **	−0.49 **	-					
7. Caring climate	−0.13 *	−0.25 **	−0.36 **	0.06	−0.45 **	0.53 **	-				
8. Gender	0.05	−0.09	0.13 *	0.04	0.05	−0.12 *	−0.12 *	-			
9. Tenure	0.19 **	0.11	0.06	0.14 *	−0.002	−0.01	−0.07	0.06	-		
10. Industry	−0.07	0.07	0.02	−0.02	0.08	−0.07	−0.17 **	0.08	0.03	-	
11. Supervising position	−0.06	−0.13 *	−0.05	−0.24 **	−0.09	−0.07	0.05	0.03	−0.25 **	−0.04	-

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

The reliability of the variables was checked through Cronbach's alpha test, which showed 0.76 for customer incivility, 0.70 for coworker incivility, 0.82 for emotional exhaustion, 0.73 for job performance, 0.73 for turnover intention, 0.85 for LMX quality, and 0.89 for the caring climate. In line with [61], the reliability of our constructs was satisfactory since all Cronbach's alpha scores were higher than 0.60.

Prior to performing K-means cluster analysis, the numbers of final groups (clusters) should be decided. Considering the exploratory nature of cluster analysis, we analyzed several solutions in this study. After evaluating the validity coefficient Kappa for two-to five-cluster solutions, the three-cluster solution was identified as the best solution with the highest value compared to two, four, and five clusters. In line with the purpose of this study to find different groups of employees with clear distinction, the three-cluster solution could achieve the most informative and meaningful results. The three profiles of frontline service employees that emerged from the final cluster solution were designated based on employees' perception of workplace incivility and social supports at work as well as their job outcomes. The clusters were labeled as "Independent employees", "Integrated employees", and "Disintegrated employees", respectively. These terms (i.e., Independent, Integrated, and Disintegrated) have been selected based on general behavioristic and demographic differences among three clusters considering employees' profile characteristics, final inference from their behaviors, and the relationships established at work. A detailed description of these differences is presented in the next subsections for each cluster. These three clusters are clearly illustrated in Figure 1, and

their initial comparison is available in Table 3. The ordinal ratios in Table 3 (i.e., low, medium, and high) are based on grouping the values into three groups by reducing the medium and defining three score range brackets (33.33% in each group).

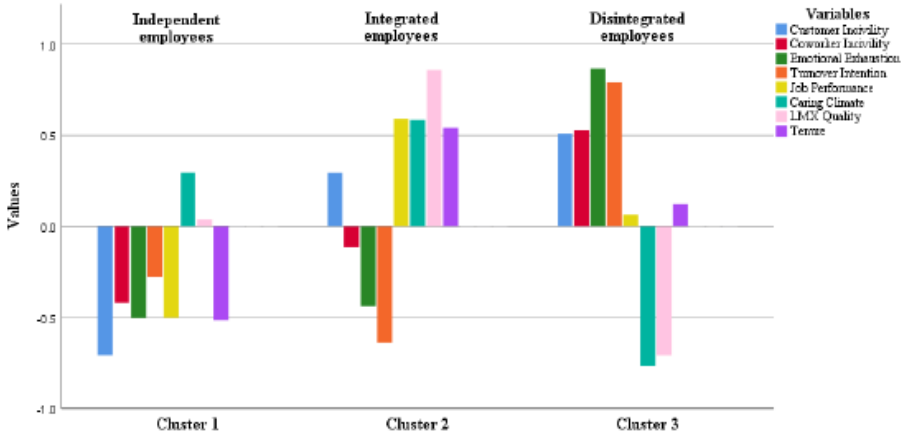

Figure 1. Final cluster solution for frontline service employees' profiles (three-cluster solution).

Table 3. Initial comparison of three clusters.

Variables	Clusters		
	(1) Independent Employees	(2) Integrated Employees	(3) Disintegrated Employees
Customer incivility	Low	Medium	High
Coworker incivility	Low	Medium	High
Emotional exhaustion	Low	Medium	High
Job performance	Low	High	Medium
Turnover intention	Medium	Low	High
LMX quality	Medium	High	Low
Caring climate	Medium	High	Low

Notes: Low < 33.33%; 33.33% < Medium < 66.66%; High > 66.66%.

4.1. Independent Employees

Tables 4 and 5, respectively, present the demographic and behavioral profiles of the three clusters and their comparison. Based on the results, the majority of the employees in cluster 1 were female (59%) and worked at hotels (56%). Most of them did not have a supervising position (91%), which is the highest rate compared to those in other clusters. Moreover, they had the lowest tenure, and 85% of them had less than three years of work experience.

Table 4. Demographic profiles of the three clusters and their comparison.

Personal Characteristics and Working Conditions	Clusters						Overall (n = 291)			Between Clusters		
	(1) Independent Employees (n = 108)		(2) Integrated Employees (n = 80)		(3) Disintegrated Employees (n = 103)					Post Hoc Tests (Bonferroni Correction)		
										(1)	(2)	(3)
	n	%	n	%	n	%	Mean (SD)	χ^2	p	p	p	p
Gender (M/SD)	(0.59/0.49)		(0.61/0.49)		(0.78/0.42)		0.66 (0.47)	16.95	***	***	0.81	***
Male	44	40.70	31	38.75	23	22.30						
Female	64	59.30	49	61.25	80	77.70						
Tenure	(1.75/0.77)		(2.78/0.90)		(2.37/0.96)		2.25 (0.97)	44.26	***			
6–11 months	46	42.60	2	2.50	17	16.50				***	***	0.58
1–3 years	46	42.60	37	46.25	49	47.60				0.63	0.18	0.33
4–5 years	13	12.00	18	22.50	19	18.45				0.18	0.35	0.74
More than 5 years	3	2.80	23	28.75	18	17.50				***	***	0.71
Industry	(1.44/0.50)		(1.14/0.35)		(1.41/0.49)		1.35 (0.48)	9.00	**	**	0.49	**
Hotel	60	55.60	69	86.25	61	59.20						
Restaurant	48	44.40	11	13.75	42	40.80						
Supervising position	(1.91/0.29)		(1.55/0.50)		(1.73/0.45)		1.75 (0.44)	100.20	***	***	***	0.10
Yes	10	9.25	36	45.00	28	27.20						
No	98	90.75	44	55.00	75	72.80						

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$, p from post hoc ANOVA for mean comparison (two-tailed) and from Chi square test for percentage comparison.

Table 5. Behavioral profiles of the three clusters and their comparison.

Main Variables	Clusters						Overall (n = 291)	Between Clusters		
	(1) Independent Employees (n = 108)		(2) Integrated Employees (n = 80)		(3) Disintegrated Employees (n = 103)			Post Hoc Tests (Tukey)		
								1 to 2	1 to 3	2 to 3
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M (SD)	p	p	p
Customer incivility	2.09	0.57	2.86	0.63	3.03	0.72	2.64 (0.77)	***	***	0.20
Coworker incivility	1.38	0.41	1.55	0.48	1.90	0.58	1.61 (0.54)	0.06	***	***
Emotional exhaustion	2.20	0.74	2.27	0.75	3.58	0.83	2.71 (1.01)	0.83	***	***
Job performance	3.06	0.68	3.83	0.61	3.46	0.62	3.41 (0.71)	***	***	***
Turnover intention	2.80	0.88	2.43	0.70	3.84	0.75	3.06 (0.98)	**	***	***
LMX quality	3.70	0.60	4.34	0.58	3.12	0.66	3.67 (0.78)	***	***	***
Caring climate	3.71	0.76	3.96	0.65	2.76	0.76	3.44 (0.89)	**	***	***

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$, p from post hoc ANOVA for mean comparison (two-tailed).

Regarding the perception of workplace incivility, the results demonstrated that Independent employees perceived both customer and coworker incivility at the lowest rate compared to the other clusters. They perceived a lower level of customer incivility than coworker incivility, though. They also felt the lowest emotional exhaustion. Their perception of social supports at work was not very high, however, they perceived a caring climate much more than LMX quality. Finally, they showed weak job outcomes since they had the lowest job performance, but their turnover intention was low too.

4.2. Integrated Employees

In the second cluster, 61% were female, 86% worked at hotels (the highest rate compared to those of other clusters), and 55% did not have a supervising position. More than half of them (51%) had more than four years of work experience, which was the highest tenure rate compared to those of other clusters.

Based on the results, these Integrated employees perceived a high level of customer incivility but a lower level of coworker incivility at the workplace and felt low emotional exhaustion. They also had the highest rate in the perception of social supports at work in both caring climate and LMX quality among the clusters. They perceived LMX quality at a higher level than caring climate, though. Eventually, they demonstrated the best job outcomes, since, compared to the other clusters, they had the highest job performance and the lowest turnover intention at the same time.

4.3. Disintegrated Employees

Like the other two clusters, the majority of employees in cluster 3 (78%) were female (also the highest rate compared to the other clusters), worked at hotels (59%), and did not have a supervising position. Only 35% of them had more than four years of work experience.

The results showed that Disintegrated employees had the highest perception of workplace incivility compared to the other clusters, as they perceived both customer and coworker incivility relatively at the same level. They also felt the highest emotional exhaustion. In addition, they perceived the lowest social supports at work among the clusters, where their perception of a caring climate was lower than LMX quality. Consequently, they showed the weakest job outcomes since they had low job performance and the highest turnover intention rate compared to those of the other two clusters.

We performed a chi-squared test and post hoc ANOVA analyses, using Bonferroni correction [62,63] to investigate any significant differences in demographic characteristics and working conditions between the three clusters (Table 4), as well as using Tukey's test to check any significant mean differences for behavioral variables between the clusters (Table 5). The chi-square test for gender, tenure, industry, and supervising position of the respondents was statistically significant. There was no significant mean difference for the perception of customer incivility between Integrated and Disintegrated employees (cluster 2 and 3, $p = 0.20$). Independent and Integrated employees (clusters 1 and 2) did not have significant mean differences for the perception of coworker incivility ($p = 0.06$) and emotional exhaustion ($p = 0.83$). More details of the chi-square, ANOVA, and post hoc analyses are demonstrated in Tables 4 and 5.

5. Discussion

In line with the aim of this explorative study, we explored the demographic and behavioral profiles of frontline service employees concerning their perception of workplace incivility and social supports at work and their relevant job outcomes in the hotel and restaurant industry. We identified three distinct clusters: (1) Independent employees, (2) Integrated employees, and (3) Disintegrated employees. Independent employees had a low perception of workplace incivility and a mid-range perception of social supports. They experienced low emotional exhaustion, and their very low job performance and low turnover intention led us to conclude that they showed weak job outcomes in general. Integrated employees showed a mid-range perception of workplace incivility and a high perception of social supports. They experienced low emotional exhaustion, and their job performance was very high while their turnover intention was very low, which implies highly satisfactory job outcomes of Integrated employees. Disintegrated employees, on the other hand, had a high perception of workplace incivility and a low perception of social supports. With a high level of emotional exhaustion, lower job performance, and a very high level of turnover intention, they demonstrated the weakest job outcomes.

This study confirmed previous research findings of the positive association between workplace incivility from both internal and external sources (i.e., coworkers and customers), emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention [2,11]. It also confirmed the negative association between both sources of social support (i.e., LMX quality and caring climate) and employees' turnover intention [26,64]. Interestingly, job performance was not found to have any negative correlations with workplace incivility (0.10 for customer and 0.001 for coworker incivility) and emotional exhaustion (0.06). The rational explanation behind this result could be in the classification of stressors into hindrance and challenging stressors [65]. Although hindrance stressors are perceived by employees as barriers that threaten their personal growth and accomplishment of goals with detrimental effects on their job outcomes, employees perceive challenging stressors as work-related demands or encounters that are favorable and beneficial to support their goals [65,66]. Challenging stressors have a positive effect on employees' job outcomes, increasing their positive work attitudes [65,66]. Accordingly, it seems that participant employees in this study perceived workplace incivility as a challenging stressor at some level, which, in turn, did not negatively affect their job performance.

Interpersonal interactions and stressful situations at work did not significantly affect Independent employees, and therefore, they did not become emotionally exhausted. However, despite their low level of job performance, they were relatively less likely to leave their job. This is inconsistent with the previous result showing a negative relation between job performance and turnover intention (e.g., [67]). A low level of turnover intention among Independent employees could be due to their perception of social supports at work. Specifically, their perception of a caring climate was quite good. Working in a decent environment with a caring orientation and perception of a relatively good relationship with the managers (LMX quality) could lead Independent employees to stay in the organization [17,26]. On the other hand, their low tenure and the fact that most of them (85%) had less than three years of work experience (one half with 6–11 months and the other half with 1–3 years) may lead them to stay in their current positions since it could be more difficult for them (than long-tenured employees) to find another job in the near future.

In contrast to the previous evidence about the negative effect of workplace incivility on employees' psychological outcome and emotional exhaustion (e.g., [10,13,21]), Integrated employees in this study experienced low emotional exhaustion, although they perceived a high level of customer incivility. This was strongly due to their high perception of social supports. They perceived even higher LMX quality than caring climate, which represented the strong relationships they had with their managers compared to other employees. Not surprisingly, Integrated employees did not show negative reactions to stressful situations (i.e., workplace incivility) and demonstrated a low level of turnover intention, which is inconsistent with the previous result showing a positive relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention (e.g., [2,68]). The reason behind this finding could be again in their high perception of social supports. There is strong evidence that perception of LMX quality is negatively related to turnover intention [3,69] and positively related to job performance [70]. The caring climate is also identified to have an antecedent role in reducing turnover intention [64] and increasing job performance [46]. Moreover, Integrated employees had the highest tenure rate compared to others, and more than half of them (51%) were long-tenured employees (22% had 4–5 years, and 29% had more than 5 years of experience). This is in line with previous research (e.g., [28,71]), which demonstrated the relationship between employees' higher tenure and lower turnover intention.

The high level of emotional exhaustion among Disintegrated employees could be explained by COR theory, since dealing with negative interpersonal interactions at work (i.e., incivility from customers and coworkers) drains emotional resources that employees need for using later [24]. As an effort to restore valuable resources, Disintegrated employees showed very negative reactions through reducing their job performance and

showing a very high level of turnover intention. This is in line with previous studies that applied COR theory and demonstrated the negative effect of workplace incivility on employees' emotional exhaustion, lower job performance [23], and higher turnover intention [25]. In addition to the short tenure of Disintegrated employees (only 35% had more than 4 years of work experience), their very low perception of social supports (in both LMX quality and caring climate) could be another reason for their negative job outcomes. When the employees' perception of their relationships with managers is negative, they could become demotivated and dissatisfied, not feel obliged to work harder, and in turn, show lower performance [38,39] as well as higher turnover intention [40]. A lack of support and not being considered in the organizational decision-making process may lead Disintegrated employees to feel that the management and the organization do not care about their well-being. Thus, based on the results in this study, the low perception of a caring climate negatively affected their performance [46] and increased their turnover intention [17,64].

6. Knowledge and Research Implications

This study was an attempt to explore to what extent frontline service employees who work in similar working environments, may have different perceptions and behaviors, which could enable us to categorize them in distinct groups with specific profiles. Although workplace incivility and its related job outcomes including turnover intention have attracted scholars' attention in previous research, still little is known about the role of individual demographic and behavioral differences in explaining their perceptions and responses to negative interpersonal interactions in the workplace. Our analyses indicated that employees were not only dissimilar in perceiving interpersonal interactions at work, but they also perceived the working environment and managerial actions very differently, which resulted in their different job outcomes. Therefore, this study advances the understanding of workplace incivility research by showing that individual differences merit careful attention in organizational practice and future research. With emphasizing the role of valuable emotional resources, this study lends further support to COR theory [49] and illustrates that perception of social supports at work can compensate for the resource depletion resulting from dealing with workplace incivility. Integrated employees versus Disintegrated employees in the current study is a good example of such a process. Independent employees also showed that even a lower level of perception of social supports led to lower turnover intention.

6.1. Practical Implications

The findings of the current paper provide new insight into the service managers' awareness of the employees' individual differences in perception of the same interpersonal interactions and working environment. This should be carefully noticed by the service managers at the time of providing a well-designed organizational structure, effective management intervention, and supporting improvements in frontline employees' working life to prevent negative job outcomes and decrease turnover rate. Here, we offer a number of practical suggestions for our distinct clusters.

The second cluster in this study (Integrated employees) was the *premier* group, which included the best employees from the service managers' perspective due to their best job outcomes compared to other clusters. Service managers are extremely required to keep them motivated and involved in the organization through, for example, effective communication and feedback process as well as using staff retention strategies. Training and preparation for effectively coping with customer incivility are useful [13]. Obtaining detailed information about customer incivility incidents and employees' aftermath feelings could also help the managers to understand the magnitude of the damage and develop a response strategy to diminish the negative effects [12].

The first cluster (Independent employees) was the *potential* group, which included employees who perceived low social supports while showing low turnover intention. As

a big advantage for the service managers, these employees had the potential for improvement to get into the second cluster and become Integrated. Managers may provide ongoing education with practical guidance for them to manage their emotions at work. Managers can also provide clear career paths and explicit job descriptions, promote healthy interpersonal interactions, establish an effective manager–employee relationship, and develop friendship and team interest to encourage positive behaviors [17,38]. All of these would help Independent employees to feel cared for and secured in the job positions, which may, in turn, increase their performance and keep them longer in the organization [46,64] since according to our results, longer-tenured employees are more Integrated.

The third cluster that included Disintegrated employees was the *problematic* group with the highest negative perceptions and the highest level of turnover intention. Dealing with such employees requires a tremendous effort. Managers should cultivate positive emotions that provide personal resources for these employees through HR practices including training programs, workshops, and arranging personal growth and competence to intrinsically motivate these employees [72]. Perhaps, focusing on an appropriate recruitment process could be more effective, which can be done by identifying, attracting, hiring, and retaining intrinsically motivated staff from the beginning [72]. Some selection approaches, such as asking for employees' referrals and clarifying expectations in advance, could be helpful here.

6.2. Limitation and Future Research

Despite interesting results, this study still has its limitations. The cross-sectional design of this study imposes a potential limitation of causal inferences since it does not lead to conclusions about causal directions of the relationships. It also cannot identify the factors that lead to the gradual movement of an individual from a cluster to another one during a long period. These issues can only be explored with longitudinal design in future studies. The generalization of our results might be limited due to the sample of 291 frontline service employees working in the hotel and restaurant industry in Norway. Future studies may consider other frontline service employees such as airline cabin crews in Norway or the same employees in other countries to investigate if there is the same pattern in profiles of the employees' clusters. In future research, supervisor incivility could be also included to provide more comprehensive information about the effect of the perception of workplace incivility on turnover intention and to investigate the contradiction between the positive and negative sides of the managerial role in the service industry. While cluster analysis has the strong ability to generate meaningful subgroups in data, the characteristics of these subgroups were strongly affected by the choice of variables. This can be considered as a limitation, since a clear theoretical underpinning was not available to show the best way of selecting variables for subject classification. Thus, different experimental studies should be conducted to explore the role of individual differences in perceptions and responses in a service context. It is also interesting to go to the other side of workplace incivility and explore if it is possible to identify different groups of *instigators* with different demographic and behavioral profiles.

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