

Chapter 10

The Effects of Workplace Incivility on Employee Voice Behavior in EdTech Companies: Implications for HRD Research and Practice

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on stressor-strain outcome (SSO) and conservation of resource (COR) theoretical framework, this study examines employee irritation as a mediator and psychological detachment as the moderator in the relationship between workplace incivility on employee voice behavior. A cross-section design was used, with multi-source data through convenience sampling from 492 EdTech employees and their supervisors. The effect of moderator and mediator is examined by employing the SPSS process macro. Results revealed that the proposed hypothesis was supported. The findings of this study also open up new lines of research in the EdTech industry and provide implications for HRD professionals, practitioners, and scholars.

INTRODUCTION

Education Technology (EdTech) is a multibillion-dollar industry in the context of education. The global EdTech market was worth USD 89.49 billion in 2020, and it is expected to grow at a 19.9 percent annual

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rate from 2021 to 2028. (Grandview Research, 2021). EdTech solutions are projected to progress in line with emerging technologies, such as the use of artificial intelligence (e.g., presentation skills), sensor technology (e.g., interpersonal communication), augmented/virtual reality (e.g., operations management), and chatbots (e.g., negotiation training) and significantly contributing to the market growth and economy. The progression of EdTech companies and its growing share in trade and investment has drawn global attention and competitive pressure. The increase in competitive pressure gives EdTech companies no option than to provide quality services. The only factor that distinguishes EdTech company services from the other is the “Technology advancement”. This technology advancement can have a significant influence on many organizational behavior of these EdTech companies, particularly in terms of employee voice behavior, irritation and workplace incivility.

Nowadays, EdTech companies are aware of the significance of enabling the voice of employees, that creates opportunity to survive and succeed in the rapidly changing business environment. In order to compete and survive in the midst of intense competition, EdTech companies need employees to speak up about their thoughts and ideas. Voice behavior refers to communication of ideas, suggestions, insights and feedback that could benefit the company (Morrison, 2011). In other perspective, it is also defined as “Deliberate withholding of important information, questions, ideas and issues” (Brinsøeld et al., 2009) commonly referred as Employee silence. Voice has been conceptualized in a variety of ways, leading to an ambiguity of the meaning and scope of this variable (E W Morrison, 2011). Moreover, various authors have defined voice in various ways, however, (E W Morrison, 2011) in the review on voice argued that despite distinct variations in the definitions of voice, they have some common underlying characteristics. First, there is a popular belief that voice is an act of verbal expression in which a message is sent from one person to another. Second, the term “voice” refers to the discretionary behavior. When it comes to engaging in this conduct, people have a choice. This choice is influenced by many different circumstances and factors. Third, the idea that voice has a constructive purpose is prevalent. In (Van Dyne et al., 1995) framework, voice can be characterized as “challenging and promotive” extra-role behavior. Challenging, because it aims at upsetting the status quo, whereas promotive, because it has a constructive objective.

Over the past few decades, voice behavior has been of interest to several researchers (Abdullah et al., 2021; Jha, 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Sheng & Zhou, 2021; Stinglhamber et al., 2021). Earlier research results suggest that employee involve in voice behavior when they feel their voice is heard at work. However, many workers choose to remain silent and refrain from providing valuable feedback for the organization due to the fear of adverse social consequences (Elizabeth Wolef Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Prouska & Psychogios, 2018; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). So, it is imperative for the organization to explore the factors that influence an employee’s inclination to speak.

The research on voice behavior mainly focused on employee attitude (commitment, satisfaction felt obligations) and perception of justice, which relate positively to voice or negatively to silence (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; E W Morrison, 2011; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). However, research on the influence of negative events (Workplace Incivility) on organizational factors is still limited. This study fulfills the existing gap by considering the role of understudied factors, namely Employee Irritation and Workplace Incivility as a contextual antecedent of voice behavior.

Employee Irritation is an indicator of strain and thus better suits to capture minor deviations from normal well-being. Irritation is defined as an early stage of psychological impairment triggered by perceived goal discrepancy and includes rumination (cognitive irritation) about problems at work and emotional irritation refers to one’s emotional disposition to feel and respond from an inner state of rage,

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