

Supervisor incivility and counterproductive work behavior: the role of job and personal resources

Supervisor
incivility and
CWB

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Abstract

Purpose – Studies show that supervisor incivility can have detrimental consequences for subordinates. However, little is known about the job and personal resources that can reduce the effect of supervisor incivility on subordinates' counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Based on the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model, we investigate social job crafting (job resource) and internal locus of control (LOC; personal resource) as buffers on the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinates' CWB toward the organization.

Design/methodology/approach – Two field studies to test our proposed hypotheses were conducted. A two-wave time-lagged design was used and data was collected from 115 supervisors and 318 subordinates from a large electricity provider company (study 1) and 121 employee-coworker dyads from a large insurance company (study 2).

Findings – Across the two studies it was found that supervisor incivility positively relates to subordinates' CWB toward the organization. Further, this relationship was weaker for individuals with high internal LOC and those who engaged in social job crafting.

Practical implications – The findings are helpful for HR managers to figure out how to stop supervisor incivility through civility training and motivating employees to social job crafting behavior.

Originality/value – This study implies that social job crafting (job resource) and internal LOC (personal resource) are essential factors that can reduce the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinates' CWB toward the organization.

Keywords Supervisor incivility, Social job crafting, Locus of control, Counterproductive work behavior, Job demand-resource model

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing concern in HRM literature about understanding the harmful effects of supervisor incivility on employees and organizations (Potipiroon and Ford, 2019). Supervisor incivility can be defined as a less intense form of deviant behavior by the supervisor “with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (Andersson and Pearson, 1999, p. 457). Examples of uncivil behaviors by a supervisor may include disrespectful and condescending remarks about subordinates, ignoring their opinions and doubting their judgment (Cortina *et al.*, 2001). Workplace incivility, including supervisor incivility, is ubiquitous and has become a common workplace phenomenon (Ilies *et al.*, 2020). For example, the study by Porath and Pearson (2013) estimated that 98% of sample participants experienced workplace incivility, and half received uncivil treatment at least once a week. Similarly, Spence Laschinger *et al.* (2009) found that 67.5% of the study participants experienced supervisor incivility in the last month. Furthermore, a recent national survey in the US on workplace mistreatment reported that supervisors are the primary source of workplace aggression (61%), compared to peers (33%) and subordinates (06%) (Namie, 2017). Even though supervisor incivility is a ‘milder’ form of interpersonal mistreatment with ambiguous intent (Andersson and Pearson, 1999), it is related to adverse employees outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, lower commitment and citizenship performance, reduced task performance, deviant behavior and turnover intention (Jawahar and Schreurs, 2018; Spence Laschinger *et al.*, 2009; Potipiroon and Ford, 2019). Although past research on the adverse outcomes of supervisor incivility has been well-documented, scant attention has been paid to the job and personal resources that could buffer the harmful effects of supervisor incivility on employee job-related outcomes (e.g. Schilpzand *et al.*, 2016). Since supervisor incivility is a frequently reported workplace behavior, we need to devise a potential solution to this problem and thus minimize the detrimental consequences of the uncivil behavior of the supervisor. By doing so, human resource (HR) managers and practitioners can be offered an evidence-based solution to control the damages of supervisor incivility in organizations. Thus, the current study aims to investigate social job crafting (job resource) and locus of control (LOC; personal resource) as buffering factors that may reduce the effects of supervisor incivility on counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) toward the organization, an employee behavior intended to harm the legitimate interest of an organization (Spector and Fox, 2005).

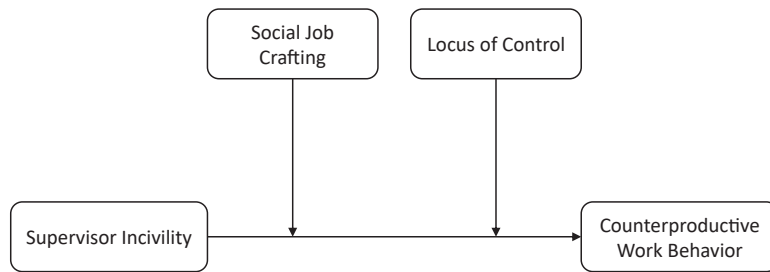
Given that supervisor incivility is an inevitable psychosocial job demand (Crawford *et al.*, 2010) that depletes an individual’s mental, emotional and social resources, which subsequently causes negative work attitudes and behaviors. The job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001) suggests that an individual must expend physical, mental and emotional effort to cope with excessive job demands such as supervisor incivility. This effort activates a *health impairment process* as the individual depletes valuable physical, mental and emotional resources. The long-term activation and overtaxing due to supervisor incivility may lead individuals to adverse job-related outcomes such as CWB (Beattie and Griffin, 2014). By contrast, the JD-R model also presents a *motivational process* that suggests that the availability of job and personal resources mitigates the effects of job demand on adverse job-related outcomes. Due to their (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivational potential, job and personal resources foster positive employee jobs outcomes such as organizational commitment and work engagement (for a review, see Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the extended JD-R model also proposes that job and personal resources buffer the relationship between job demand and employee job-related outcomes (Sonnentag *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, we reason that employees who experience uncivil treatment from the supervisor may strategize their behavior through social job crafting; proactive changes made by individuals to balance job demands and job resources such as seeking support, feedback information and colleague advice. Previous research also supports our contention that employees experiencing suboptimal situations at work are more likely to engage in crafting behaviors

(e.g. Breevaart and Tims, 2019; Fritz and Sonnentag, 2009; Wang *et al.*, 2020). A recent meta-analytical review (Yao *et al.*, 2022) argues that employees who receive social support (instrumental or emotional) perceive uncivil events as less harmful than those lacking such support. Thus, based on the motivational processes of the JD-R model, we argue that the availability of job resources (social job crafting) may reduce the effects of psychosocial job demand (supervisor incivility) on subordinates' CWB toward the organization.

In line with the idea that why some individuals are more effective than others in dealing with high job demands (Ng and Feldman, 2011) and that the consequences of supervisor incivility (as a psychosocial job demand) may differ between persons (e.g. Cortina *et al.*, 2001), we argue that individuals' LOC (as a personal resource) may also reduce the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinates' CWB toward the organization. According to Weiner (1985), individuals may differ in their locus of causality – the extent to which individuals perceive the control of experienced events as internal or external. Individuals with an internal LOC believe that internal factors (e.g. effort and ability), rather than external factors (e.g. luck and powerful others), control their work outcomes (Rotter, 1966). JD-R model suggests that internal LOC (being a personal resource) not only indicate an individual's positive self-evaluation but also reflects a sense of ability to control their work environment effectively (Judge *et al.*, 2004). In addition, personal resources include personality characteristics and attitudinal and cognitive factors that provide proper psychological context to cope with high job demands (Beattie and Griffin, 2014). Therefore, we argue that in situations of supervisor incivility, individuals with internal LOC might feel greater control over their work environment and feel they can meet high job demands more effectively than those with external LOC. Previous research revealed that individuals with high internal LOC are better able to cope with job demands and generate positive work outcomes (Ng and Feldman, 2011; Zhou *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, consistent with the JD-R model and previous research findings, we put forward that individuals with high internal LOC are likely to respond to supervisor incivility less severely (e.g. Siu *et al.*, 2002) and that internal LOC may weaken the positive relationship of supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization.

In sum, our study makes two significant contributions to the HRM literature. First, we contribute to the workplace incivility literature by investigating the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization. Supervisor incivility may be more detrimental than other forms of incivility (i.e. co-worker or customer incivility) because supervisors have legitimate authority to reward or punish a subordinate and have more control over the organizational resources (e.g. Schilpzand *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, we investigated this relationship in two independent time-lagged studies utilizing the data from two sources: employees and supervisors (study 1) and employee–co-worker dyads (study 2). A time-lagged and multi-source research design would enable us to avoid personal biases of cross-sectional and single-source data (detail is discussed in the search overview' section). Second, our study examines the moderating role of job and personal resources, such as social job crafting and internal LOC, on the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinates' CWB toward the organization. Previous research argued that crafting activities are primarily aimed at improving person–job fit and work motivation (Tims *et al.*, 2012) and have the potential to buffer the adverse effects of supervisor incivility on employee outcomes (Hakanen and Roodt, 2010). Moreover, internal LOC is an essential personal resource that can reduce the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinates' CWB toward the organization. Previous research revealed the moderating effect of internal LOC on different stressor–strain relationships and found that individuals with high internal LOC deal experienced adverse events in a positive light than those with external LOC (Ng and Feldman, 2011; Siu *et al.*, 2002). Thus, echo the call for more research on the buffers of supervisor incivility–CWB relationship (e.g. Marchiondo *et al.*, 2018; Sguera *et al.*, 2016). Figure 1 shows theoretical framework of this study.

Figure 1.
Theoretical framework



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Supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB

CWB is a type of antisocial work behavior that costs millions of dollars annually to organizations (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). CWB refers to “employees’ volitional acts that harm or are intended to harm organization” (Spector and Fox, 2005, p. 151). CWBs include withdrawal behavior, withholding of efforts, theft, sabotage and refusal to cooperate (Meier and Spector, 2013; Welbourne and Sariol, 2017). Extant research shows that CWB results in reduced productivity, increased cost, damaged property, increased employee dissatisfaction and turnover, thus adversely affecting both individuals and organizations (Jones, 2009; LeBlanc and Kelloway, 2002; Spector *et al.*, 2006). However, limited research attention has been given to examining the potential antecedents of CWB (Bai *et al.*, 2016). The little investigation of CWB’s antecedents reduces the chances of developing strategies to combat these antisocial behaviors. In this study, we propose that supervisors are more powerful individuals in the organizational setting, and their uncivil behaviors might lead subordinates’ CWB toward the organization because employees tend to refrain from directly engaging in aggressive behaviors against high-power offenders (Cortina *et al.*, 2017) but instead might act in ways that are viewed as less heinous and more morally acceptable, such as decreasing task performance and increasing turnover intention (Greenbaum *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, deviant behavior directed at the organization can be seen as a mild form of retaliation that enables target employees to avoid confrontation with the source of mistreatment.

Supervisor incivility is a less intense form of interpersonal mistreatment exhibited by a supervisor characterized by rudeness and lack of regard for others (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). However, supervisor incivility can become a crucial source of psychosocial job demand because supervisors have legitimate power (i.e. reward and punishment) and control over the organizational resources (Potipiroon and Ford, 2019). Individuals who suffer from supervisor incivility, such as disrespectful remarks, being ignored and little attention for their opinions, would feel the loss of physical, emotional and social resources, which is stressful and draining (Sguera *et al.*, 2016). JD-R model suggests that excessive job demands (i.e. supervisor incivility) would deplete an individual’s valued personal resources, leading to negative job-related behaviors (Rhee *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, previous studies (Jawahar and Schreurs, 2018; Spence Laschinger *et al.*, 2009; Potipiroon and Ford, 2019) found that supervisor incivility is positively associated with subordinates’ deviant behavior. Therefore, based on the JD-R model and arguments above, we propose the following:

H1. Supervisor incivility is positively related to subordinate CWB toward the organization.

The moderating role of social job crafting

Job crafting is a specific form of self-initiated proactive behavior (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). It is defined as proactive changes undertaken by individuals to balance their

job demands and resources according to their abilities and needs (Tims *et al.*, 2012). Individuals regulate their job demands and resources to shape their work environment that better fits their preferences and values (Petrou *et al.*, 2015). In line with the JD-R model, Tims *et al.* (2012) define four independent dimensions of job crafting: (a) increasing social job resources; (b) increasing structural job resources; (c) increasing challenging job demands and (d) decreasing hindering job demands. Since supervisor incivility is a psychosocial job demand that may lead subordinates' CWB toward the organization, we opted to focus only on increasing social job resources (a) that may include behaviors such as seeking support, feedback information and colleague advice. Individuals engage in these behaviors to balance their job demands and resources and mobilize other resources to cope with their psychosocial job demands (Tims and Bakker, 2010). Utilizing the JD-R model, we argue that individuals who perceive their colleagues as supportive are better able to redefine uncivil events (supervisor incivility) in a way they perceive to be less harmful and within their ability to cope or use this social resource to reduce the negative outcome of such an event. Previous research argued that social support from colleagues creates a positive work environment (Yao *et al.*, 2022) and allows individuals to access other helpful resources in effectively dealing with uncivil events at work (Sguera *et al.*, 2016). Based on the JD-R model, we expect that social job crafting (as a job resource) buffers the positive effects of supervisor incivility on subordinate CWB toward the organization. Thus, we posit the following hypothesis:

- H2. Social job crafting moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization such that the positive relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB will be weaker for subordinates with high levels of social job crafting.

The moderating role of locus of control

One's locus of control can influence personal and environmental factors on employee outcomes (Galvin *et al.*, 2018). Individuals with internal LOC believe they control their work outcomes (Chen *et al.*, 2016). Previous research found that individuals with internal LOC are more likely to cope actively with different job demands. For example, Hay and Diehl (2010) studied workplace stressors in relation to LOC and found that individuals with high internal LOC respond to stressors more positively. Similarly, Li *et al.* (2020) found that a leader's negative emotional expressions had a less harmful effect on individuals with high levels of internal LOC. Drawing on the JD-R model, we reason that internal LOC (being a personal resource) provides a psychological context to cope with the supervisor incivility (a psychosocial job demand) and buffer the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinates' CWB toward the organization. Previous research (e.g. Ng and Feldman, 2011; Zhou *et al.*, 2015) suggested that internal LOC encouraged individuals to take protective measures in response to high job demands.

Furthermore, Zhou *et al.* (2015) argued that individuals with high internal LOC experience less psychological distress when encountering high job demand situations. Lim and Tai (2014) found that individuals with high core-self evaluations (LOC is one dimension of this higher-order construct) were less likely to experience psychological distress when encountering family incivility. In addition, research has revealed that the availability of personal resources (i.e. internal LOC) is helpful for employees to deal with demanding situations and stimulate personal growth and development (Tims *et al.*, 2015; Xanthopoulos *et al.*, 2013). Hence, we argue that high internal LOC will buffer the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinate CWB toward the organization. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. Internal LOC moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization such that the positive relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB will be weaker for subordinates with high levels of internal LOC.

Research overview

The majority of CWB research, except for a few studies, has relied on a single source of data, typically self-reported (Penney and Spector, 2005). As CWB is a negative behavior, there is a possibility that individuals try to portray themselves positively and may underreport CWB behaviors. Hence, the observed relationships might inflate due to participant biases common across measures. Therefore, to address these issues, we conducted two studies to test our hypotheses using a multi-source and time-lag research design. In study 1, using a two-wave survey design, we tested our hypotheses among the supervisor and subordinates from a large electricity provider company in Pakistan. We use supervisor-rated CWB in study 1. To enhance the generalizability of study 1, we conducted study 2 by collecting data from employee–coworker dyads working in a large insurance company in Pakistan. In study 2, we examined the same relationships using co-worker-rated CWB.

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedure. The data were collected from supervisors and their subordinates from a major state-owned enterprise (electricity provider) having sub-offices across the country (Pakistan). The data were collected in two waves. We invited 550 full-time employees through a paper–pencil survey in the first wave. We gathered information about the participants' demographic and control variables and their ratings of supervisor incivility. A total of 423 employees responded to the Time 1 (T1) survey, yielding a response rate of 76.9%. In the second wave, that is Time 2 (T2), one month after the T1 survey, we obtained the rating of social job crafting and internal LOC from the 342 employees, with a response rate of 80.1%. Each participant received a survey with their unique ID number on the front page. At T2, we also collected CWB ratings from the supervisors of each subordinate (employee). Supervisors filled out a separate survey for each of their subordinates. We subsequently matched the two-wave surveys by comparing the corresponding subordinate's unique ID on both supervisor and employee surveys. We obtained CWB ratings from the supervisors of 318 employees. The final sample contained 115 supervisors and 318 subordinates. For the confidentiality of the respondents, the initially mentioned IDs of the respondents were erased during the data entry process. The final sample comprised 64% male and 36% female; the average age was 32 years and 5.77 years of job experience.

Measures

Supervisor incivility

We measured supervisor incivility using Cortina *et al.* (2001) seven-item scale. Participants were asked to indicate how often their supervisor subjected them to uncivil behaviors over the past six months on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). A sample item is “addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately.” ($\alpha = 0.76$).

Social job crafting

We measured social job crafting using Tims *et al.* (2012) five-item scale. These items were adapted such that they referred to seeking social resources from colleagues to deal with

demanding situations. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is “I ask colleagues for advice.” ($\alpha = 0.83$).

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB)

We measured employees' CWB towards the organization using Dalal *et al.* (2009) eight-item scale. Items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is “spent time on tasks unrelated to work.” ($\alpha = 0.79$).

Internal LOC

We measured internal LOC using a four-item shortened version of the work locus of control scale developed by Spector (1988). All the items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score represents higher internal LOC. Sample item is “most people are capable of doing their jobs well if they make an effort.” ($\alpha = 0.74$).

Controls

We controlled for participants' general job stress to see if supervisor incivility may still have a unique effect on employees' CWB (Lim and Tai, 2014). Six-item from a general stress scale (Stanton *et al.*, 2001) were used to measure job stress (described with adjectives such as irritating, pressured and hectic). General job stress was measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) ($\alpha = 0.73$). In addition, we also controlled for participants' gender, age, job experience and education level because previous research suggests that they might influence employees' CWB (e.g. Bai *et al.*, 2016).

Data analysis

We performed missing value analysis, normality, multivariate outliers, descriptive statistics and correlation analyses in SPSS 21. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations of the study variables.

To minimize common method variance (CMV), we used multi-sourced and multi-waved data, which provides the best assessment of each variable and reduces the threats of CMV and self-report bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, we performed Harman's single factor test to identify the CMV. The results illustrated that the first factor explains only 27.3% of the variance after categorizing all items into three factors. Therefore, our results indicated that CMV was not a major issue for this study.

Confirmatory factor analysis

Similar to other HRM studies (Tariq *et al.*, 2021; Islam *et al.*, 2023), we analyzed construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS 21. To examine the goodness of model fit, the following fit indices were used (Byrne, 2016): CMIN/df, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI). Previous studies have suggested that a good model fit should have CFI and TLI scores greater than 0.90 and an RMSEA value below 0.80 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The findings of the first model (incorporated into all items of four factors) showed good model fit statistics (CMIN/df = 1.87, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93). Two additional models were tested to further assess the appropriateness of the proposed measurement model (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). The first alternative model was evaluated by incorporating all the indicators into a single factor. The findings illustrated relatively poor fit statistics of the data (CMIN/df = 5.65, RMSEA = 0.11, CFI = 0.58, TLI = 0.53). In the second alternative model, we introduced a three-factor solution in which social job crafting and internal LOC were

Table 1.
Means, standard
deviations, correlations
and scale reliabilities
(Study 1)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender: T1	–								
2. Age: T1	-0.035	–							
3. Education-T1	-0.146	0.104	–						
4. Experience-T1	-0.079	0.023	0.242	–					
5. General job stress-T1	-0.031	-0.017	0.103	-0.030	–				
6. Supervisor incivility-T1	0.149	-0.032	-0.234	-0.139	0.208*	–			
7. Internal locus of control-T2	-0.078	0.001	0.351	0.208	-0.063	-0.618**	–		
8. Social job crafting-T2	-0.135	-0.015	0.333	0.112	-0.141*	-0.483**	0.500**	–	
9. Counterproductive work behavior-T2	0.004	0.046	0.053	0.042	0.234**	0.550**	-0.546**	-0.237**	–
Mean	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.86	2.10	3.32	3.08	2.42
Standard deviation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.55	0.53	0.57	0.84	0.58
α	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.73	0.76	0.74	0.83	0.79

Note(s): N = 318, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Source(s): Created by author

combined. These findings also illustrated poor fit statistics to the data (CMIN/df = 4.76, RMSEA = 0.09, CFI = 0.78, TLI = 0.74). Therefore, we continued with the four-factor model, which showed better-fit statistics than alternative models.

We used multiple moderated regression analyses to test hypotheses. We included the control variables, the independent variable, the moderators and the interaction terms in Models 1 to 5, respectively. The results of study 1 (see Table 2) show that while controlling the demographics of the participants and general job stressors, supervisor incivility has a positive effect on subordinate CWB ($\beta = 0.61, t = 11.69, p < 0.01$); thus, the hypothesis 1 was supported. Our results also illustrate that the interaction term (supervisor incivility x internal LOC) is significantly related to subordinate CWB toward the organization. Figure 2 demonstrates this relationship; thus, our hypothesis 2 was supported. Moreover, the results of study 1 also indicate that the interaction term (supervisor incivility x social job crafting) is significant in predicting subordinate CWB toward the organization, supporting hypothesis 3. Figure 3 shows this relationship. The simple slope results in

	Counterproductive work behavior				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender	0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	-0.04
Age	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03
Education	0.07	0.16	0.25**	0.24**	0.21**
Experience	0.02	0.08	0.12*	0.12*	0.11*
General job stress	-0.24**	-0.01	0.06	0.04	0.07
Supervisor incivility		0.61**		0.39**	0.34**
Internal LOC			-0.45**	-0.46**	-0.45**
Social job crafting				-0.08	-0.10*
Supervisor incivility × Internal LOC					-0.19
Supervisor incivility × Social job crafting					-0.13
F	4.15	27.78	37.98	33.51	35.40
ΔR^2	0.06	0.28	0.11	0.03	0.07

Note(s): N = 318; LOC = Locus of control; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
 Source(s): Created by author

Table 2.
The results of multiple moderated regression (study 1)

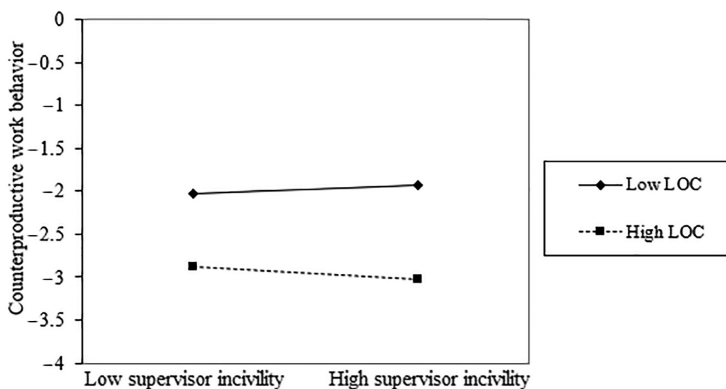
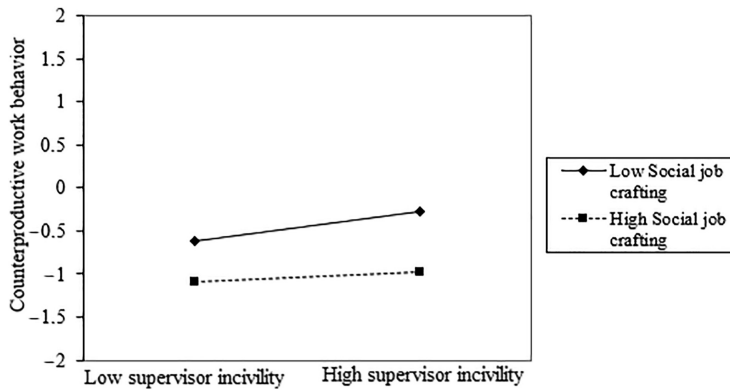


Figure 2.
Interaction effect of supervisor incivility and Internal LOC on counterproductive work behavior (study 1)

Source(s): Created by author

Figure 3.
Interaction effect of supervisor incivility and social job crafting on counterproductive work behavior (study 1)



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Table 5 show that supervisor incivility is weakly related to CWB for subordinates high in internal LOC/social job crafting but strongly related to CWB for subordinates low in internal LOC/social job crafting.

Discussion

Study 1 provided support for our hypotheses. Participants who experienced supervisor incivility felt a depletion of valuable resources that led them to display CWB toward the organization, and the availability of job and personal resources buffered this relationship. Despite the study's strengths, such as the time-lagged survey design and supervisor-rated CWB, the design of this study might be susceptible to CMV (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, to generalize the findings of study 1, we conducted study 2 on a different sample (employee–coworker dyads) and investigated the same relationships by collecting CWB ratings from co-workers.

Study 2

Participants and procedures

In study 2, employee–coworker dyads were collected in two waves from a large insurance company in Pakistan. With the help of postgraduate students, we identified full-time employees who had daily interaction with their co-workers and were willing to invite their co-workers (having the same direct supervisor) to participate in the survey. In the first wave, we distributed 520 paper-pencil surveys containing measures of supervisor incivility and control variables. A total of 338 participants completed the T1 survey, yielding a response rate of 65%. In the second wave, one month after T1, we obtained the ratings of social job crafting and internal LOC ratings from 288 employees (with a response rate of 85.2%). At T2, we also collected employees CWB rating from their co-workers. We employed a matched data-set approach to combine the two-wave surveys. In addition, we assigned a unique ID number to each survey so that both surveys (e.g. employee–coworker) were matched. We dropped 22 surveys due to incomplete information from the participants or the co-workers, leaving a final sample of 242 employees (121 employee–coworker dyads). A total of 67% of participants were male; the average age was 36 years, and with 9.10 years of job experience.

Measures

We used the same scale items in study 2 as in study 1. The CWB toward the organization was measured with coworker-rated surveys. Descriptive statistics, intercorrelation and scale reliability are reported in Table 3.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender -T1	—								
2. Age-T1	0.035	—							
3. Education-T1	-0.007	-0.015	—						
4. Experience-T1	-0.020	0.010	0.413**	—					
5. General job stress-T1	-0.037	-0.015	0.052	-0.029	—				
6. Supervisor incivility-T1	-0.056	0.130	-0.308	-0.288**	0.026	—			
7. Internal locus of control-T2	-0.036	-0.057	-0.049	-0.266**	-0.028	-0.012	—		
8. Social job crafting-T2	0.046	-0.180	0.155*	0.039	-0.136*	-0.353**	0.239**	—	
9. Counterproductive work behavior-T2	-0.051	0.004	-0.081	-0.174*	0.121*	0.340**	-0.287**	-0.300**	—
Mean	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.72	3.38	3.10	3.35	2.96
Standard deviation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.86	1.11	0.96	1.07	0.93
α	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.71	0.86	0.82	0.78	0.85

Note(s): N = 242, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Source(s): Created by author

Table 3.
Means, standard
deviations, correlations
and scale reliabilities
(Study 2)

Results

We performed Harman’s single factor test to identify the CMV. The results illustrated that after categorizing all items into four factors, the first factor explains only 20.4% of the variance, indicating CMV was not a significant issue for this study.

Confirmatory factor analysis

The CFA findings of the first model (incorporated into all items of four factors) showed good model fit statistics (CMIN/df = 1.54, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92). Two additional models were also tested to further assess the appropriateness of the proposed measurement model (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). The first alternative model was evaluated by incorporating all the indicators onto a single factor. The findings illustrated relatively poor fit statistics of the data (CMIN/df = 5.23, RMSEA = 0.12, CFI = 0.52, TLI = 0.48). In the second alternative model, we introduced a three-factor solution combining social job crafting and internal LOC. These findings also illustrated poor fit statistics to the data (CMIN/df = 2.74, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.78, TLI = 0.76). Therefore, we continued with the four-factor model, which showed better-fit statistics than alternative models.

The results of study 2 (see Table 4) show that after controlling the demographics of the participants and level of general job stressors, supervisor incivility had a positive effect on CWB ($\beta = 0.33, t = 4.36, p < 0.01$), thus, hypothesis 1 was supported. Further, our results exhibited significant interactions (supervisor incivility x internal LOC) and (supervisor incivility x social job crafting) in predicting employees CWB, supporting hypotheses 2 and 3. Figures 4 and 5 show these relationships. The simple slope results in Table 5 indicate that supervisor incivility is weakly related to CWB for individuals high in LOC/social job crafting and strongly related to CWB for individuals low in LOC/social job crafting. Thus, both studies found significant association between supervisor incivility and CWB for employees low in LOC/social job crafting.

General discussion

Our research draws on the JD-R model to demonstrate, across two studies, that experienced supervisor incivility leads to subordinates’ CWB toward the organization. This finding adds to a growing body of HRM literature that focuses on revealing the harmful effects of supervisor incivility on employees and organization (Potipiroon and Ford, 2019; Schilpzand

	Counterproductive work behavior				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender	0.01	-0.03	-0.03	-0.07	-0.07
Age	-0.05	0.03	-0.03	-0.01	0.01
Education	-0.02	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.11
Experience	-0.16	-0.09	-0.07	-0.08	-0.11
General job stress	-0.12	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.08
Supervisor incivility		0.33**	0.33**	0.24**	0.28**
Internal LOC			-0.07	-0.14*	-0.12*
Social job crafting				-0.29**	-0.14*
Supervisor incivility × Internal LOC					-0.28**
Supervisor incivility × Social job crafting					-0.19**
F	2.30	6.31	5.61	7.66	10.73
ΔR^2	0.05	0.09	0.005	0.06	0.11

Table 4. The results of multiple moderated regression (study 2)

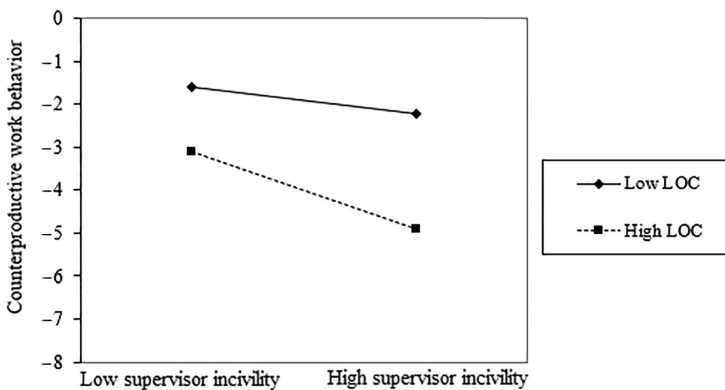
Note(s): N = 242; LOC = Locus of control; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Source(s): Created by author

et al., 2016). Our research implies that supervisors hold essential resources and legitimate power in the organization, and uncivil behavior from a supervisor can adversely affect subordinate work outcomes. Previous research argued that supervisor incivility is more

	Counterproductive work behavior
Internal LOC	
High	Study 1: $b = 0.07, t = 1.01, p > 0.05$ Study 2: $b = 0.02, t = 0.29, p > 0.05$
Low	Study 1: $b = 0.60, t = 9.37, p < 0.01$ Study 2: $b = 0.54, t = 7.95, p < 0.01$
Social job crafting	
High	Study 1: $b = 0.33, t = 4.31, p < 0.01$ Study 2: $b = 0.11, t = 1.44, p > 0.05$
Low	Study 1: $b = 0.57, t = 10.74, p < 0.01$ Study 2: $b = 0.43, t = 4.50, p < 0.01$

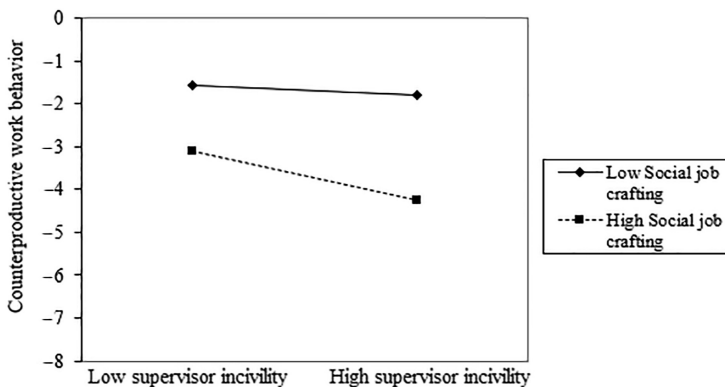
Source(s): Created by author

Table 5. The simple slope between supervisor incivility and counterproductive work behavior at high and low levels of internal LOC and social job crafting



Source(s): Created by author

Figure 4. Interaction effect of supervisor incivility and internal LOC on counterproductive work behavior (study 2)



Source(s): Created by author

Figure 5. Interaction effect of supervisor incivility and social job crafting on counterproductive work behavior (study 2)

damaging than other forms of incivility (Hershcovis and Barling, 2010; Matthews *et al.*, 2022; Potipiroon and Ford, 2019). Since supervisor incivility has a severe human and financial cost, HR managers should know how to put a stop to supervisor incivility and train employees to cope with uncivil situations by effectively utilizing job and personal resources. Thus, our research suggests that social job crafting (job resource) and internal LOC (personal resource) may reduce the effects of supervisor incivility on subordinates' CWB toward the organization.

Theoretical contributions

Our research contributes to the studies of supervisor incivility and the JD-R model. We used a new perspective, the JD-R model, to investigate how supervisor incivility being a psychosocial job demand increases a subordinate CWB toward the organization (e.g. Schilpzand *et al.*, 2016) and the potential boundary conditions, examining these relationships in two independent contexts. The JD-R model suggests that every job has demands and resources that impede or facilitate employee behaviors. Our research argued that supervisor incivility being a psychosocial job demand has physiological and psychological consequences on a subordinate that requires continuous physical or mental effort. Additionally, it is difficult for the subordinates to avoid or ignore supervisor incivility because of the power and influence of the supervisor in an organizational setting. Thus, subordinates who experience supervisor incivility might engage in more CWB behaviors toward the organization to protect their job efforts. While incivility research often considers supervisor incivility as harmful (e.g. Ghosh *et al.*, 2013; Jawahar and Schreurs, 2018; Potipiroon and Ford, 2019; Shin *et al.*, 2022) because it has severe human and financial costs (Porath and Pearson, 2013; Tariq *et al.*, 2022), little research considers job and personal resources as a buffer of supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization. Here, we proposed social job crafting as important means to attain job resources or ameliorate psychosocial job demands that buffer the detrimental effects of supervisor incivility on subordinate CWB toward the organization. Moreover, social job crafting extends the JD-R model, providing a comprehensive view of how an individual can strategize (e.g. seek advice, feedback, information and support from colleagues) their behavior in the face of psychosocial job demands. We found that social job crafting being a job resource weakens the positive relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization. This finding is consistent with the previous research that job crafting can be helpful for an individual to cope with suboptimal situations such as work overload (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017), exhaustion (Breevaart and Tims, 2019) and career dissatisfaction (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, seeking social job crafting is instrumental in enhancing employees' subjective well-being (Kim and Beehr, 2020) and reducing negative work behaviors (e.g. Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). Another possible explanation of why social job crafting has a moderating effect is that an individual with social support may perceive their work as less threatening and more manageable (e.g. Hobfoll *et al.*, 1990; Sguera *et al.*, 2016).

In addition, our research found internal LOC as an essential personal resource that can buffer the positive effects of supervisor incivility on subordinate CWB toward the organization. This finding adds to our knowledge of how people with different personality traits react to supervisor incivility. Extant research demonstrates that an individual's locus orientation can alter the effects of personal and environmental factors on their work outcomes (Galvin *et al.*, 2018). We found that the positive relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization was weaker for the individuals with high internal LOC. Because individuals with internal LOC tend to believe that they can control and change their work environment, it is more likely that they have more resource to begin with, to be more capable of gaining further resources, of being less threatened by resource depletion and

thus have fewer adverse emotional reactions to uncivil events. This is consistent with the JD-R model, which suggests that the availability of personal resources is helpful in adapting to the work environment (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007) and helps individuals achieve work goals. Previous research argued that people with high internal LOC respond to job demands more positively (Hay and Diehl, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2020) and engage in problem-focused coping (e.g. Ng and Feldman, 2011; Zhou *et al.*, 2015). Given the pattern of results, our studies suggest that individuals with high internal LOC have a positive attitude toward problem-solving; thus, it makes sense for HRM practitioners to select and hire employees based on their levels of internal LOC.

HRM implications

Our research findings suggest that supervisor incivility might lead subordinates to deviant behaviors toward the organization because one might perceive as he/she is not respected and supported. Although incivility is a less intense form of mistreatment, it can be highly noticeable to those subject to it, especially when it is exhibited by people with significant formal power (i.e. supervisors). Hence, HR managers will have to figure out how to stop supervisor incivility. One possible solution is that HR managers should undertake civility training for supervisors and promote a culture of respect in interpersonal contacts. Furthermore, our findings suggest that social job crafting might help employees to cope with supervisor incivility. HR managers must introduce crafting interventions to enhance employees' motivation to engage in crafting behaviors that will help reduce the effects of supervisor incivility. Previous research revealed that individuals seek more job resources (Van Wingerden *et al.*, 2017) and experience positive work outcomes (Gordon *et al.*, 2018) from crafting interventions. Since workplace incivility is ubiquitous and sometimes it is unavoidable (Zhou *et al.*, 2015), our findings suggest that HR managers should use personality tests in their selection process to obtain a better understanding of subordinates' level of internal LOC and select employees with high internal LOC because they might react less negatively to excessive job demands.

Limitations and directions for future research

Despite its contribution, our research has several limitations that suggest valuable directions for future research. CMV might not allow strong causal inferences because of self-reported assessment of certain variables. However, we believe that supervisor incivility, internal LOC and social job crafting are perceptual constructs best captured by self-reports. Furthermore, we also employed different procedural (time-lagged and multiple data source design) and statistical (Herman's single-factor) measures to protect against CMV. Future studies need to use longitudinal research design with extended time intervals to better comprehend our hypothesized relationships. In addition, we focused only on the relational aspect (social job crafting) of job crafting; however, one can also change the task boundaries of the job, such as reducing the job demands – the number of activities performed on a job (Tims *et al.*, 2016). We argue that supervisor incivility is an interpersonal stressor (psychosocial job demand), and seeking support from colleagues is helpful to cope with the effects of supervisor incivility. Previous research argued that social job crafting is instrumental in dealing with demanding situations at work (e.g. Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Breevaart and Tims, 2019; Tims and Bakker, 2010). Future researchers can also consider the task crafting dimension as a potential moderator to cope with the supervisor's incivility. Although internal LOC is particularly relevant in the context of supervisor incivility and subordinates' CWB research, other personality traits that facilitate the development of social relationships are also relevant (such as extroversion and agreeableness). Thus, future researchers can focus on these personality traits to better comprehend our proposed framework.

Conclusion

In summary, our research flourishes the JD-R model by exploring the boundary conditions that mitigate the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization. Our multi-source and time-lagged data from two studies revealed that the relationship between supervisor incivility and subordinate CWB toward the organization was less distinct under high social job crafting and internal LOC. The moderating effects of social job crafting and internal LOC were strong enough to predict subordinates' CWB one month later. Our findings extend the body of research on supervisor incivility by demonstrating social job crafting (job resource) and internal LOC (personal resource) as critical boundary conditions affecting subordinate CWB toward the organization.

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