

Supervisor incivility and turnover intention of the employees in the hospitality industry of China

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Abstract

Purpose – As supervisor incivility and its negative effect may impact employees' psychological health and even the sustainable development of hospitality enterprises, this study aims to explore the channels through which it affects employee turnover intention in China's hospitality industry and suggest possible mitigation measures.

Design/methodology/approach – This study adopted exploratory factor analysis, measurement model analysis and the mediation and moderation model and used SPSS and PROCESS for the analysis.

Findings – This study found that the impact of supervisor incivility on the employees' turnover intention would be through employees' ego depletion and revealed that organizational support would alleviate such a negative effect. However, organizational support might not mitigate the impact of supervisor incivility on the employees' ego depletion, which is inconsistent with previous studies. This study inferred that organizational support might be somewhat related to organizational pressure, thereby enhancing the impact of supervisor incivility on the employees' ego depletion.

Research limitations/implications – This study not only enriches incivility literature but also suggests new insights into the mixed role of organizational support.

Originality/value – Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on workplace pressure from colleagues or customers, this study broadens our understanding of the employees' turnover intention affected by supervisors' workplace incivility and the mixed role of organizational support.

Keywords Organizational support, Turnover intention, Supervisor incivility, Ego depletion theory, PSR model

Paper type Research paper



1. Introduction

The general consensus is that workplace incivility, which negatively impacts employee performance, is widespread in the hospitality industry (Sarwar and Muhammad, 2020; Baker and Kim, 2021). Due to its impact on employees and their turnover intention (Raza et al., 2021), workplace incivility has been attracting increasing attention recently.

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Supervisor incivility is the term used to describe uncivil actions taken by specific supervisors, such as hurtful remarks, snarky emails, gossip and purposeful avoidance (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017). Tepper (2000) argued that incivility from supervisors might be perceived as a threat to individuals with low power. Shin and Hur (2019) stated that supervisor incivility hurts employees more than employee incivility because supervisors are in charge of judging and rewarding employees' performance. However, previous studies mainly focus on the negative effects of supervisor incivility including increasing insecurity (Shin *et al.*, 2021), emotional exhaustion (Han *et al.*, 2019) and work engagement (Jawahar and Schreurs, 2018). Thus, supervisor incivility affects employees' emotions and wastes their limited work resources, thereby likely increasing employees' turnover intention (Baumeister *et al.*, 2007), which might not be beneficial to the sustainable development of hospitality enterprises (Xie *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, revealing the influence processes and interference conditions of how supervisor incivility affects employees' intention to leave (i.e. turnover intention) would be worthwhile for further investigation.

Employee turnover, a common phenomenon in the hospitality industry (Ampofo and Karatepe, 2021; Wang and Chen, 2020), has a negative impact on an organization (Varga *et al.*, 2021). Thus, turnover issues, especially their antecedents, are steadily receiving increasing attention in the industry of hospitality (Raza *et al.*, 2021). Past research showed that organizational factors such as organizational justice (Jung and Yoon, 2013), management factors such as supervisor support (Jang and Kandampully, 2017) and employee personal factors such as psychological capital personality (Karatepe and Karadas, 2014) are considered as antecedents. Furthermore, workplace relationships played a crucial role in employees' turnover intention (Nielsen *et al.*, 2000). Previous research has also shown that employee states such as ego depletion (Bazzy and Woehr, 2017) and emotional fatigue (Han *et al.*, 2019) influenced by workplace incivility may increase turnover intention. However, previous research has focused on the impacts of incivility behavior from clients and colleagues (Karatepe, 2011), but few studies have revealed the effect of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave, as well as the mechanism of how supervisor incivility affects turnover intention via employee states (i.e. ego depletion). Therefore, we argue that investigating the channels affecting supervisor incivility's negative effect on employees' turnover intention and how to moderate the negative effect is necessary.

Concerning the effects of supervisor incivility on employees' psychological states, such as increasing emotional exhaustion (Han *et al.*, 2019), we investigate whether the negative effect on employees' turnover intention would be affected by employees' psychological states (e.g. ego depletion) or moderated by organizational factors (e.g. organizational support). We then used ego depletion – the state in which individuals perform poorly on self-control due to limited resources (Frieze *et al.*, 2018) due to emotions and pressure – to assess employees' psychological state because of its negative effects on mental health (Baumeister *et al.*, 2007), including decreasing trust (Ainsworth *et al.*, 2014) and increasing counterproductive behavior (Bazzy and Woehr, 2017), are likely to reduce employees' performance (Englert and Bertrams, 2012). In sum, the study focused on ego depletion caused by supervisor incivility and its consequences.

The Job Demand–Control–Support (JDCS) model proposed by Johnson and Hall (1988) says that social support helps relieve employees' stress overload (Ariza-Montes *et al.*, 2018). Organizational support, employees' perception of how their employers value their contributions and concern for their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), provides emotional support, approval, affiliation and positive self-esteem for employees as the benevolent intent of an organization (Lee and Peccei, 2007). Thus, organizational support may improve employee–organization relationships, thereby playing an important role in organizational

relationship management (Baranchenko *et al.*, 2019). As a result, we argue that organizational support may play a moderating role between supervisor incivility and turnover intention, because employees may have confidence in their work as a result of positive feedback from an organization (Tsai *et al.*, 2015).

We thus endeavor to examine the impact of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave for the hotel industry of China by addressing two concerns. First, we explore the impact of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave and further examine if it would affect employees' turnover intention through ego depletion. Second, we investigate whether organizational support would moderate the effect of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave. Furthermore, whether organizational support would moderate either the association between supervisor incivility and the employees' ego depletion or that between the employees' ego depletion and the employees' turnover intention would be examined as well.

This research may contribute to the literature in the following ways. First, unlike previous research that mainly focused on workplace pressure from colleagues or customers (Chen and Wang, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2016; Bani-Melhem *et al.*, 2019), we expanded our knowledge of how supervisor incivility affects employees' intention to leave, as well as the mixed role of organizational support in China. Second, few studies have explored how supervisor incivility influences employee turnover intention through ego depletion based on the pressure–state–response (PSR) model. We clarify how supervisor incivility affects turnover intention by incorporating the mediation of ego depletion and the moderation of organizational support since dealing with the negative impact of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave is vital for hospitality enterprises. We thus may extend the application of the PSR model from ecology to organizational behavior in the hospitality industry. Third, we show that organizational support can alleviate the negative impact of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave, thereby providing a possible solution for managers to effectively deal with the negative effect. However, contrary to previous research (Baranchenko *et al.*, 2019), organizational support may not entirely alleviate the effect of supervisor incivility on employees' ego depletion. Organizational support, despite its good intentions, does not always have a positive effect. Thus, this study, to our knowledge, is the first attempt to shed light on the different moderating effects of the benevolent intent of organizational support, providing new knowledge on the mixed role of organizational support.

2. Literature review and hypotheses proposed

2.1 Pressure–state–response model

Because the PSR model can effectively reflect the causal relationship of pressure, state and response (Rapport and Friend, 1979), we use the PSR model to analyze the dynamic evolution and internal logic relationship between pressure, state and response, indicating that an individual's physical and psychological state may change after suffering external pressure, likely resulting in a response of alleviating his/her current state. According to the PSR model, a conceptual framework can be designed to explain what happened (pressure), what the current status is (state) and what action should be taken (response).

LePine *et al.* (2004) indicated that work pressure generally exists in the workplace of hospitality, influencing employees' working attitudes and behaviors by affecting their emotional state. Additionally, according to stimulus–organism–response (SOR) paradigm (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), an environmental stimulus (S) induces a cognitive feeling in an organism (O), and this emotional and cognitive reaction elicits the corresponding response (R). Shin *et al.* (2021) claimed that supervisor incivility is an important factor

depleting employees' social and personal resources in their work. Hussain *et al.* (2021) identified ego depletion as a loss of volitional capacity or motivation caused by earlier volitional activity, which may result in turnover behavior (Barlett *et al.*, 2016). However, we believe the PSR model can be used for employees in the hospitality industry who are experiencing workplace tension. Further, based on the PSR model, these three processes (i.e. pressure, state and response) are best suited for explaining the process of employees facing stress (e.g. supervisor incivility). Thus, considering the attributes of the variables used (i.e. supervisor incivility, ego depletion, employees' turnover intention), the PSR model would be more fit compared with the SOR model.

The JDCS model by Johnson and Hall (1988) states that high job demands and low job control reduce a person's coping ability, causing psychological strain. As such, the JDCS model mainly focuses on the influence of work stress on psychological states, such as burnout (Gupta and Srivastava, 2020). Ariza-Montes *et al.* (2018) stated that the JDCS model is commonly used to understand the relationship between work characteristics, health and well-being, indicating the model focuses more on the work itself; that is, it emphasizes the impact of work characteristics on employees. However, this study focused on supervisor incivility's impact (pressure outside of the work itself) on employee behavior intention. We then stated that the PSR model might be superior to the JDCS model based on its ability to be extended to organizational behavior (e.g. supervisor incivility) instead of mainly focusing on work like the JDCS model.

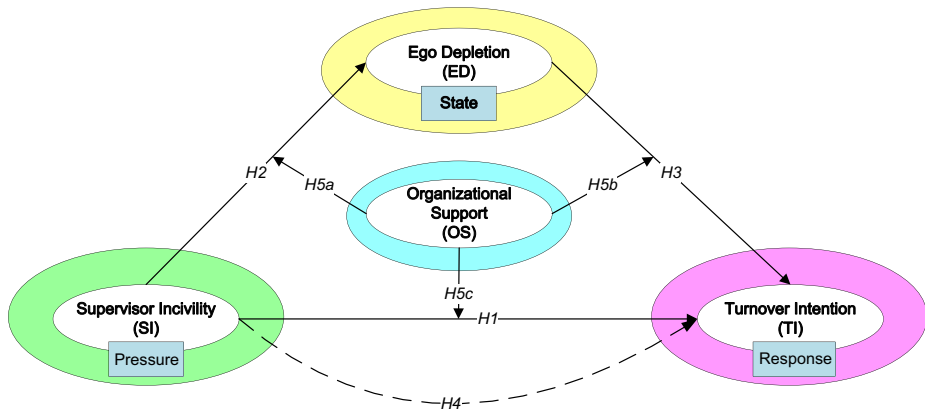
According to Hobfoll (1989), the conservation of resources (COR) theory provides a foundation for understanding the connections between stressors and their impacts on various employment outcomes (Arasli *et al.*, 2018) from the resource perspective. It emphasizes individual tension and pressure resulting from resource loss, which leads to individuals' psychological changes and behavioral responses. However, the COR theory might not be able to explain the pressure from supervisor incivility, as it focuses on the pressure from individuals' resource loss. As such, the PSR model is more appropriate than the COR model in this study. Moreover, according to the PSR model, external pressure (e.g. supervisor incivility) is likely to trigger psychological and physical state changes in employees (e.g. employees' ego depletion), as it is one of the critical factors affecting employees' ego depletion (Oaten and Cheng, 2005), thereby likely affecting employees' turnover intention – one of the most typical response behaviors after ego depletion (Grandey and Melloy, 2017).

Furthermore, compared with the SOR model, PSR focuses more precisely on a series of effects triggered by pressure rather than stimuli. The COR theory emphasizes stress caused by resource loss rather than external factors (e.g. supervisors) and its psychological and behavioral effects. The JDCS model focuses on stress resulting from work characteristics rather than supervisors. We argue that, when compared to other models, the PSR model is better suited to elucidating how supervisor incivility affects turnover intention. However, the SOR, COR and JDCS models will provide additional evidence to back up hypotheses. As a result, we develop our conceptual framework and present hypotheses (Figure 1).

2.2 Ego depletion theory

The ego depletion theory proposed by Baumeister *et al.* (1998) explains why people are so prone to failing at tasks (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007). It claims that exercising self-control depletes a cognitive resource on such tasks, potentially lowering judgment and decision-making quality (Hurley, 2017). Furthermore, because cognition and behavior consume self-control resources, excessive use of such resources causes individuals to enter a state of self-depletion, leading to behavior deviation (Baumeister *et al.*, 2000). Individuals' resources will

Figure 1.
Research conceptual
framework



be depleted when they engage in a self-control activity that may deplete their resources (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007). Thus, ego depletion theory provides a model framework for explaining why individuals may regulate their emotions and behaviors in response to external environmental pressure, which may help us in understanding how external environmental pressure and practices affect individuals' emotions and behaviors (Baumeister *et al.*, 2007).

According to the ego depletion theory, individuals exhaust all of their psychological and physical resources dealing with negative interpersonal relationships, which could result in employees avoiding activities (Baumeister *et al.*, 2000). As a result, we employ the ego depletion theory to investigate the possibility of supervisor incivility influencing employees' turnover intention. Furthermore, because the availability of other resources may alleviate the depletion of self-control resources (Gunz and Heslin, 2005), Hobfoll (2001) stated that organizational support is an effective supply of external resources that may meet employees' physiological needs while compensating for the depletion of self-control resources. Therefore, we further investigate whether organizational support moderates the association between supervisor incivility, employee ego depletion and turnover intention (Figure 1).

2.3 Research hypothesis

2.3.1 Supervisor incivility and turnover intention. Workplace incivility is a widespread issue, primarily perpetrated by supervisors, colleagues and subordinates (Loh *et al.*, 2019; Yorulmaz and Sevinc, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that supervisor incivility has a detrimental impact on a range of employee consequences, including employee satisfaction, employee performance, work engagement and fairness perceptions (Shin *et al.*, 2021; Han *et al.*, 2019; Chen and Wang, 2019; Im and Cho, 2021). Cortina *et al.* (2001) indicated that supervisors were the most frequent perpetrators of incivility behaviors that may result in employees' intention to leave. Previous research has shown that work incivility results in the turnover intention of employees (Chen and Wang, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2016). Thus, based on the PSR model, individuals' states may change because of external pressure, triggering their corresponding responses. We thus argue that supervisor incivility may result in responses, such as employees' intention to leave. Accordingly, H1 is proposed as below:

H1. Supervisor incivility has a positive impact on employees' turnover intention.

2.3.2 Mediating role of ego depletion. Previous research has linked workplace incivility to low organizational self-esteem and emotional exhaustion (Huang and Kwok, 2021; Cho *et al.*, 2016). Scott and Bruce (1994) found that supervisor incivility would cause serious negative emotions to employees, such as frustration, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. As a psychological state, ego depletion refers to the state after an individual adopts self-regulation behavior under limited resources (Baumeister *et al.*, 2007), we thus inferred that supervisor incivility may reduce employee psychological status resulting in ego depletion. Based on ego depletion theory, employees may consume their self-control resources dealing with negative emotions resulting from supervisor incivility, thus leading to ego depletion. Furthermore, according to the PSR model, external pressure may trigger changes in individuals' states, we state that supervisor incivility, as an external pressure factor, may affect the employees' states (i.e. ego depletion). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. Supervisor incivility has a positive impact on employees' ego depletion.

When individuals feel self-depletion, they may reduce resource use and even adopt some irrational behaviors such as destruction and deviation (Christian and Ellis, 2011). Baumeister *et al.* (2007) argued that under the state of resource depletion, employees might not be able to concentrate on completing tasks and instead adopt defensive behaviors to prevent the loss of remaining resources, thus likely generating turnover intention to avoid resource depletion (Diestel *et al.*, 2015). Based on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), people seek to acquire, maintain, protect and promote resources whenever they need to deal with stressors (Arasli *et al.*, 2018). Based on ego depletion theory, individuals develop an avoidance tendency (e.g. turnover intention) due to a lack or depletion of self-control resources. Furthermore, employees' ego depletion (regarded as an employee's psychological state) may increase turnover intention (regarded as a behavior response) based on the PSR model. Therefore, combining the PSR model and ego depletion theory, we infer that the employees in the state of ego depletion may trigger their intention to leave. Consequently, we offer the following hypothesis:

H3. Employees' ego depletion has a positive impact on employees' turnover intention.

According to COR theory, when confronted with supervisor incivility, employees may use their resources to cope with either the negative effects of external pressure or the negative emotions caused by supervisor incivility. Specifically, coping with supervisor incivility would consume employees' self-control resources, resulting in resource loss, the lack of energy to complete work tasks and even work withdrawal behavior (Muraven and Baumeister, 2000). Therefore, we argue that ego depletion may play the "middleman" (i.e. the mediator) between supervisor incivility and turnover intention. Additionally, the PSR model may be the logical model for "external pressure-state change-behavioral response," which would explain how employees generate their turnover intention after they face supervisor incivility. As supervisor incivility (i.e. external pressure, P) may result in employees' ego depletion (i.e. state change, S), thereby triggering their turnover intention (i.e. behavioral response, R), we infer that employees' ego depletion may mediate the association between supervisor incivility and employees' intention to leave. We thus propose the following hypothesis:

H4. Employee' ego depletion mediates the impact of supervisor incivility on employees' turnover intention.

2.3.3 Moderating role of organizational support. Organizational support gives employees support, high self-esteem and affinity (Lee and Peccei, 2007). As such, organizational support can supplement the resources depleted by external pressure (Fuller *et al.*, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2016) and stimulate the work vitality of employees (O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999). As the benevolent intent of an organization (Lynch *et al.*, 1999), the role of organizational support is crucial (Baranchenko *et al.*, 2019). As organizational support may help decrease the negative effect of employees' improper treatment in their workplaces (Raza *et al.*, 2021), we argue that it may play a moderating role in this study. We thus posit that organizational support might mitigate the impacts of external pressure (i.e. supervisor incivility) on both employees' ego depletion and employees' turnover intention, and even the impact of ego depletion on the employees' turnover intention based on the PSR model and JDCS model. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H5a.* Organizational support moderates the impact of supervisor incivility on employee' ego depletion.
- H5b.* Organizational support moderates the impact of employees' ego depletion on employees' turnover intention.
- H5c.* Organizational support moderates the impact of supervisor incivility on employees' turnover intention.

3. Data and methodology

3.1 Measurement items

All variables were measured using validated English measures that have shown strong scale validity in prior investigations. Because all of the participants were Chinese, appropriate back-translation techniques were used to assure the survey instrument's reliability and validity (Chen and Boore, 2010). To measure the essential variables employed including supervisor incivility (SI), ego depletion (ED), organizational support (OS) and turnover intention (TI), all measurements use a seven-point Likert scale. Supervisor incivility was measured by eight items developed by Cortina *et al.* (2001). Ego depletion was measured by five items modified by Lin and Johnson (2015). Organizational support was measured by six items that were proposed by Rhoades *et al.* (2001). Turnover intention was gauged by four items recommended by Scott *et al.* (1999).

3.2 Sample and data collection

COVID-19's impact prevented face-to-face interaction, so we used an online survey to gather information about how Chinese hotel employees felt about their supervisors' incivility and whether they planned to leave. The Wenjuanxing platform (www.wjx.cn/) was used to distribute the online questionnaire. To confirm the online questionnaire's quality, we accepted responses only once for a questionnaire in the same internet protocol address, and only one of the respondents' occupations in the hospitality industry was counted. We collected the data in January 2021 in eight upscale hotels in four cities (including Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xiamen and Quanzhou) in China. From 367 questionnaires distributed, we collected 318 valid responses after eliminating 49 invalid questionnaires with the same answers, with less than 60 s of filling time and self-contradictory answers. A majority of respondents were females (50.31%; slightly more than males), aged 18–30 years (77.36%), educated undergraduate or associates degree (44.97%), earning less than 5,000

monthly (63.28%), less than 2 years of hotel working experience (81.45%) and from the front office (18.55%), catering department (29.56%) and housekeeping department (14.78%).

Then, in two steps, we analyzed the data and tested our hypotheses. First, we used SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 22.0 to conduct reliability and factor analysis, and we tested the reliability and validity of each construct to ensure a good model fit. Second, using model 59 in PROCESS 3.4, we generated path coefficients for all paths in the mediation model to analyze the structural model and clarify the causal associations between these constructs and moderating effects. We used the PROCESS macro plugin to analyze the mediating and moderating effect, which is widely accepted and used in the field of hospitality research.

4. Results

4.1 Common method bias analysis

A type of variation impacted by the similarity in data collection methods is common method bias (Hsiao *et al.*, 2020). By using Harman's (1976) single-factor test to assess the seriousness of common technique bias and an initial series of exploratory factor analyses with a maximum likelihood estimation to determine the initial factor structure, we found that, based on the unrotated factor analysis, the first factor contributed for 31.29%, which is less than the typical 50% (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), did not account for half of the total variance (64.23%), representing that common method bias might not be a potential problem. The final factor structure was determined using the following combination of criteria (Hair *et al.*, 1988): retaining items with factor loadings > 0.50 ; deleting all items with cross-loadings > 0.40 ; retaining factors that had at least three items; internal consistency of multi-item were > 0.50 . Table 1 shows that 18 measurement items were formed after eliminating items SI7, OS3 and TI3, the eigenvalue of four factors extracted from the 18 measurement items were greater than 1, and the cumulative explained variance was 68.78%, which indicates that the scale had an ideal structural validity.

4.2 Measurement model

Table 2 showed that the four-factor model (i.e. SI, ED, OS and TI) met acceptable criteria (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996; Hu and Bentler, 1999) and represented a good model fit because the results (i.e. these statistics shown in Table 2) revealed satisfactory overall fit of the proposed model to the data. Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to validate the underlying structure of constructs of the proposed model. Results (Tables 1 and 3) show that based on Cronbach's α coefficients greater than 0.70, all constructs included in the proposed model achieved acceptable levels of reliability, including supervisor incivility (0.91), ego depletion (0.89), organizational support (0.86) and turnover intention (0.80). To further verify convergent validity and discriminant validity, we checked the composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loading. Results show that factor loading was statistically significant at no less than 0.7 (Table 1), AVE was no less than 0.5 and CR was no less than 0.7 (Table 3), indicating that convergent validity is verified. Moreover, the square root of correlations ranging from -0.20 to 0.40 for each construct was smaller than the AVE values ranging from 0.75 to 0.76.

Table 3 shows that supervisor incivility is significantly correlated with ego depletion, organizational support and turnover intention; ego depletion is significantly correlated with organizational support and turnover intention; organizational support is significantly correlated with turnover intention. These initial results support our hypotheses.

Table 1.
Results of
exploratory factor
analysis

Table 2.
Competition model
fitting index
situation

4.3 Testing hypotheses

4.3.1 Direct effects testing. We employed Model 59 in PROCESS 3.4 to conduct the regression analysis. Table 4 revealed that supervisor incivility had a positive impact on the employees' intention to leave, supporting *H1*; supervisor incivility also had a positive impact on the employees' ego depletion, supporting *H2*; employees' ego depletion had a positive impact on employees' turnover intention, supporting *H3*.

4.3.2 Mediating effect testing. We used bootstrapping to examine the statistical significance of supervisor incivility's indirect effects on employees' turnover intention via the mediation of employees' ego depletion. Following Edwards and Lambert (2007), we bootstrapped 5,000 samples using the PROCESS macro plugin. Table 5 showed that supervisor incivility had a positive indirect impact on employees' intention to leave via employees' ego depletion with a 95% confidence interval (CI) that excluded zero, supporting *H4*.

4.3.3 Moderating effect testing. Table 4 showed that the interaction term, supervisor incivility by organizational support, had a significant positive effect on ego depletion while having a significant negative effect on turnover intention, thereby supporting *H5a* and *H5c*.

Dimension	M	SD	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Discriminant validity			
						SI	ED	OS	TI
SI	2.94	1.33	0.91	0.91	0.63	0.80			
ED	3.84	1.39	0.89	0.89	0.61	0.40**	0.78		
OS	4.53	1.43	0.86	0.86	0.56	-0.27**	-0.20**	0.75	
TI	4.27	1.23	0.80	0.80	0.58	0.27**	0.35**	-0.06*	0.76

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. SI = supervisor incivility; ED = ego depletion; OS = organizational support; TI = turnover intention; M = mean; SD = standard Deviation; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average Variance Extracted. Correlations are shown below the diagonal. The diagonal represents the discriminant validity

Table 3.
Discriminant validity
and correlation
coefficient results

Variables	Model 1 (ED)			Model 2 (TI)			Model 3 (ED)			Model 4 (TI)		
	β	SE	p	β	SE	p	B	SE	p	β	SE	p
constant	0.72	0.40	0.07	4.61	0.40	0.00	3.49	0.42	0.00	2.93	0.46	0.00
SI	0.40***	0.06	0.00	0.16**	0.06	0.01	0.42***	0.05	0.00	0.17**	0.06	0.01
ED				0.31***	0.06	0.00				0.28***	0.06	0.00
OS	-0.06	0.06	0.32	0.08	0.06	0.18						
SI \times OS	0.10**	0.04	0.01	-0.12**	0.05	0.01						
ED \times OS				0.04	0.04	0.30						
Gender	-0.15	0.15	0.33	0.26	0.16	0.09	-0.17	0.16	0.27	0.29	0.16	0.07
Age	0.07	0.16	0.69	0.32	0.16*	0.05	0.08	0.16	0.60	0.30	0.16	0.07
Education	-0.15	0.10	0.13	0.08	0.10	0.43	-0.18	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.36
Income	-0.08	0.10	0.41	-0.20	0.10*	0.04	-0.08	0.10	0.40	-0.20*	0.10	0.05
Experience	-0.05	0.17	0.75	-0.76	0.17***	0.00	-0.16	0.16	0.33	-0.64***	0.16	0.00
R^2	0.21			0.25			0.18			0.23		
Adj. R^2	0.20			0.25			0.18			0.22		
F	10.08			10.26			11.67			13.03		

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. SI = supervisor incivility; ED = ego depletion; OS = organizational support; TI = turnover intention

Table 4.
Hypothesis testing

However, the interaction term, ego depletion by organizational support, insignificantly influence turnover intention, contradicting *H5b*. To explain the moderating impact, we plotted predicted ego depletion or turnover intention against higher or lower organizational support. Part A of Figure 2 shows that supervisor incivility would enhance employees' ego depletion to a higher degree at high levels of organizational support than at low levels, implying that supervisor incivility positively interacts with organizational support in predicting employees' ego depletion. Part B of Figure 2 indicates that supervisor incivility promoted turnover intention to a greater extent at low levels of organizational support than its high levels, implying that supervisor incivility negatively interacts with organizational support in predicting employee turnover intention.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

We aimed to identify the influencing process of supervisor incivility on employees' turnover intention in the industry of hospitality through the mediation of ego depletion and the moderation of organizational support. We discovered that supervisor incivility has a significant and positive effect on employees' intent to leave. We argued that supervisor incivility and burnout are important determinants of turnover intention (Spence Laschinger et al., 2009), and that employees' intention to leave would increase under work pressures such as supervisor incivility (Chen and Qi, 2022). Additionally, we also revealed that

Table 5.

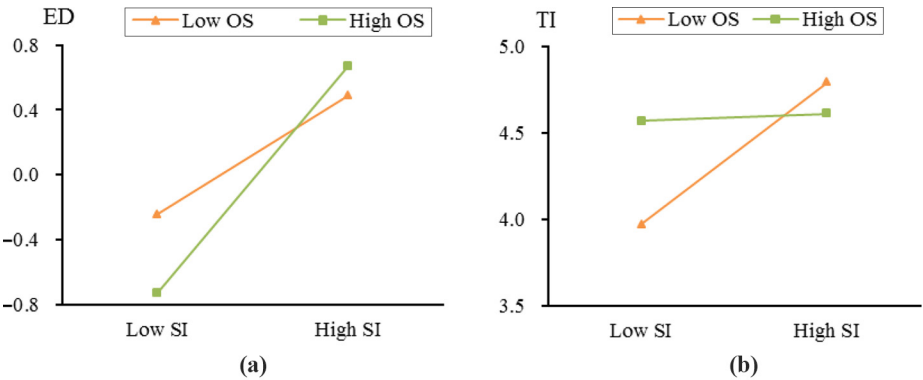
Bootstrap results of intermediate effect

Effect type	Effect coefficient	Boot SE	Bootstrap 95%CI		% of effect
			LLCI	ULCL	
Total effect	0.28	0.06	0.17	0.39	100.00
Direct effect	0.17	0.06	0.05	0.28	58.65
Indirect effect	0.12	0.03	0.06	0.19	41.35

Notes: CI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval

Figure 2.

Moderating effect of organizational support



Notes: Part A. The moderating effect of OS between SI and ED; Part B. The moderating effect of OS between SI and TI

supervisor incivility would increase employees' ego depletion, indicating that supervisor incivility would hurt the employees' psychological state, consistent with the previous findings (Cortina and Magley, 2009; Scott and Bruce, 1994). Besides, we also disclosed that employees' ego depletion increases employees' turnover intention, which aligns with the findings that reducing self-control resources triggers employee turnover intention (Bazzy and Woehr, 2017). Furthermore, we also revealed that the employees' ego depletion mediated the association between supervisor incivility and turnover intention, indicating that supervisor incivility indirectly impacted employees' intention to leave via employees' ego depletion – which corresponds with the PSR model (Salemi *et al.*, 2019). That is, those who are under the influence of external pressure (i.e. supervisor incivility) may generate their state change (i.e. ego depletion), thus increasing their turnover intention (Burris *et al.*, 2008).

In addition, this study confirmed that organizational support enhances the positive effect of supervisor incivility on employees' ego depletion, which differs from our cognition. Because eastern culture emphasizes collectivism (Hofstede, 1980), employees who receive organizational support may feel obligated to repay the organization (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Despite the fact that organizational support theory states that when employees perceive organizational support, they believe their organization values and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), previous research has revealed that organizational support has a negative impact on job satisfaction (Zhao *et al.*, 2020), indicating that the impact of organizational support is not always positive. Based on social exchange theory, employees perceiving organizational support are more likely to invest in extra-role activities (Sun *et al.*, 2015), because they may feel obligated to repay the organization. Thus, due to an individual's limited resources, organizational support may reduce resource depletion of work roles while increasing resource depletion of non-work roles, which may result in ego depletion and the positive moderation of organizational support in this study.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. Previous research on workplace incivility has primarily focused on colleagues (Wang and Chen, 2020) or customers (Baker and Kim, 2021) by investigating the effects of incivility behaviors on emotions, psychological states and behaviors. In contrast to previous studies, we have provided incivility from the supervisor's perspective. Furthermore, this study investigated the process of supervisor incivility influencing turnover intention via the mediating role of ego depletion, which has received little attention. This study specifically advances the literature on supervisor incivility by investigating the mediating mechanism underlying the impact of supervisor incivility on intention to leave. We used a new theoretical framework based on the PSR model and ego depletion theory to investigate the mediation of ego depletion between supervisor incivility and intention to leave and found that hotel employees' ego depletion was a key factor linking the relationship. Our findings not only aid in assessing the impact of supervisor incivility on hotel employees' emotions, psychological states and behaviors, but they also contribute to workplace incivility research by expanding the existing hospitality literature.

Furthermore, this study extends the application of the PSR model from the field of ecology to that of hospitality, which improves understanding of the uncivilized influence of supervisors on hotel employees and adds to the literature on the PSR model. Based on the PSR model, we showed that the influence of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave would be mediated by ego depletion. However, contrary to previous findings that organizational support reduces the positive association between supervisor incivility and ego depletion (Lee and Madera, 2019), our findings show that organizational support

strengthens the positive relationship. As a result, to our knowledge, this study may be the first attempt to highlight the mixed moderating effect of organizational support. In other words, while ego depletion and turnover intention may not be positive for employees in the hospitality industry, we discover that the effect of supervisor incivility on both constructs (i.e. ego depletion and turnover intention) may not be the same.

5.3 Practical implications

The following are the managerial implications of this study. Concerning the positive impacts of supervisor incivility on employee ego depletion and intention to leave, the organization should pay close attention to the supervisory team and its behaviors. Organizations, for example, should present typical cases of supervisor incivility to make supervisors aware of the negative consequences of their uncivilized behavior on employees, strengthen supervisors' communication skills and conduct management assessments, such as dynamically evaluating their management behaviors and even dismissing superiors with severe incivility behaviors. Furthermore, the organization should establish employee feedback channels and use a third-party evaluation mechanism to monitor whether managers engage in unethical behavior. Besides, supervisors should be mindful of how they communicate and express themselves to their employees, as this may reduce the occurrence of supervisor incivility.

Given the positive effect of employee ego depletion on turnover intention, organizations may be able to solve this problem by reducing employee resource depletion. For example, enhancing self-control training may reduce employee resource depletion, provide more "employee-supervisor-enterprise" communication channels, create a low-pressure work environment, maintain a proper pace of work and recharge employees' energy by taking breaks and eating desserts, all of which may relieve pressure and negative emotions. Additionally, organizations should establish channels of interaction among employees, which may help alleviate employees' negative emotions and psychological stress.

Furthermore, because moderation of organizational support reduces the negative impact of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave, this study suggests that organizations should reinforce their organizational support for employees who suffer the negative impact of supervisor incivility and pay more attention to employees' well-being. Organizations, for example, should be concerned with their employees' goals, value their opinions, provide timely assistance and forgive employees who admit to making mistakes honestly, all of which may reduce their employees' intention to leave. Moreover, developing close and effective coworker relationships, including supervisor relationships, should be more promising, as quality coworker relationships are essential (Albashiti *et al.*, 2021). As a result, organizations should not only foster a harmonious atmosphere among their employees but also educate them on the benefits of mutual support and train them on how to support one another.

5.4 Limitations and further research

Overall, because it is based on a cross-sectional design, this study may not reflect the current state of affairs in the real world. As a result, future studies may employ a longitudinal design to investigate causal relationships over long time periods. Response and information feedback channels are included in the PSR model. This study, on the other hand, concentrated on a single process, namely the transition from stress (supervisor incivility) to employee status (ego depletion) and its behavioral response (turnover intention). As such, the influence of the employees' turnover intention response on supervisor incivility and its effect on the entire process (e.g. incorporating mediation and moderation effects) would be a worthwhile topic for future research.

Furthermore, we argue that the influence of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave may differ between the East and the West. Employees in the East, for example, may express their appreciation for their boss due to the fear of dismissal (Cheng *et al.*, 2004); junior employees may have more regard for senior supervisors due to cultural factors (Sung, 2004), likely resulting in a different perception of supervisor incivility. As such, we contend that the influence of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave may differ between the East and the West. Furthermore, while the similarities and differences between the East and the West regarding incivility from clients and colleagues may be close, the similarities and differences regarding incivility from supervisors on employees' turnover intention may be less so. As a result, while the effect of client and colleague incivility on turnover intention has been studied previously, we argue that the influence of supervisor incivility on employees' intention to leave, particularly when comparing the similarities and differences between the East and the West, should be investigated further.

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