Job search behavior explained through perceived tolerance for workplace incivility, cynicism and income level: A moderated mediation model

Huda A. Megeirhi, Manuel Alector Ribeiro, Kyle Maurice Woosnam

Abstract

This study aims to propose and examine a research model that explores how income level can moderate the mediating relationship between organizational tolerance workplace incivility and job search behavior through employee cynicism within the hotel industry. As such, the theoretical framework and non-western study context are each a novel consideration. Data were collected from 331 employees of 5-star hotels within Jordan, whereby structural equation modeling was adopted to test the relationships between constructs. The analysis revealed that when employees perceive a high level of organizational tolerance for workplace incivility, they reinforce cynical beliefs and increase their job search behavior. Results provide empirical support for income moderating the indirect relationships (via employee cynicism) between organization workplace incivility and job search behavior. This relationship is stronger among employees with lower levels of income. Practical implications concerning ways to improve managers’ knowledge of workplace incivility and more operational ways of handling conflict are discussed.

Keywords: Organizational tolerance, Workplace incivility, Job search behavior, Employee cynicism, Income, Jordan

1. Introduction

In an increasingly competitive global economy, it is now more evident than ever that the success of business firms stems from the human capital they possess (Friedman, 2005). This interest in human capital has continued to prompt organizational behavior research that identifies and develops positive assets while at the same time, explores and reduces negative outcomes in order to improve employees’ performance (French & Holden, 2012). One construct at the heart of this progressive research is workplace incivility.

Andersson (1996) has pointed out that workplace incivility, defined as employees’ lack of regard for one another (Pearson & Porath, 2005), can be a negative source of job stress. Such incivility is perceived as a low-intensity stress similar to day-to-day frustrations individuals experience (Lim & Lee, 2011). Despite the fact that workplace incivility has been recently integrated into an extensive narrative review (Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016), management’s responses to incivility is considered ‘spotty’ (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Pearson and Porath also revealed that managers often neglect to address incivility as they oversee daily activities among their employees. In fact, an earlier work by the same authors revealed that only 20% of employees perceive their organization’s response to workplace incivility (Pearson & Porath, 2004). As Sgoura, Bagozzi, Huy, Boss, and Boss (2016) stated:

Surprisingly, despite the spread of incivility and its negative consequences, we know very little about effective organizational responses to this phenomenon from a victim’s perspective … research has [only] proposed strategies to reduce workplace incivility relying on means such as zero-tolerance expectations, teaching about incivility and civility (p. 124).

Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2000) in their study found that 75% of employees who experienced incivility were not satisfied with how their top management was known to address such incivility, thus deciding not to levy an official complaint. Similarly, the impact of such blindness by leaders can also affect witnesses and coworkers who feel frustrated when their organization tolerates workplace incivility or is reluctant to deter instigators. Furthermore, Torres, van Nieker and Orlowski (2017) stated that when incivility is tolerated and considered a part of an organization’s culture, further forms of incivility are likely to follow through employee-to-customer relations. This may very well serve to explain how incivility spirals emerge (Andersson & Pearson,
Therefore, the current study seeks to shed light on workplace incivility from the perspective of responsive management reported among employees within the hotel industry. More specifically, it focuses on examining the concept of organizational tolerance to workplace incivility (OTWI) and its potential consequences. When the organization does not intervene to correct or deter uncivil behavior among its employees, various outcomes for the organization and employees can be rather negative.

When incivility is tolerated in the workplace, employees perceive it as acceptable behavior, and this in turn has an impact on workplace attitudes and resulting behaviors. While the literature on workplace incivility is currently advancing, little research has examined the OTWI as an antecedent variable contributing to outcome measures. The work by Loi, Loh, and Hine (2015) within the Australian public sector is one exception to this. Work that examines workplace incivility is sorely needed within a non-western cultural context. Therefore, exploring the extent to which the OTWI serves as a significant predictor of additional outcomes for businesses is needed. With such knowledge, business leaders may be in a better position to respond to and allay negative attitudes and behavior within the workplace (Megeirhi, Klici, Avci, Afsar, & Abubakar, 2018).

Workplace incivility may potentially explain two negative outcome variables: employee cynicism (EC) and job search behavior (JSB). As scholars have found, workplace incivility and its effects have been identified as progressive and change over time (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Taylor, Bedeian, Cole, & Zhang, 2017). According to Anderson (1996), cynicism “is an attitude characterized by frustration, hopelessness and disillusionment, as well as contempt towards and distrust of business organizations, executives, and/or other objectives in the workplace” (p. 1395). Unfortunately, cynicism is prevalent in organizations of all shapes and sizes as individuals experience various degrees of burnout (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). As such, cynicism in organizations merits more thoughtful attention in considering how it may affect behaviors among employees. To date, cynicism has been found to influence withdrawal behavior (Schilpzand et al., 2016). As Schraeder, Jordan, Self, and Hoover (2016) contend, the sooner cynicism is detected, the better, as methods of intervention can be undertaken to mitigate or ideally, fully remove the potential for fallout.

Boswell, Zimmerman, and Swider (2012) referred to job search behavior as, “the behavior through which effort and time are expended to acquire information about labor market alternatives to generate employment opportunities” (p. 129). Employees’ job search behavior has implications for cost, time and financial outcomes of the organization as Peachey, Burton, and Wells (2014) revealed. A negative work climate fosters insecurity among employees and can encourage individuals to quit or seek new employment elsewhere (Taylor et al., 2017) According to Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2000) “the impact of incivility is reflected most vividly regarding turnover. In nearly half of cases reviewed, the uncivil treatment caused the target to contemplate changing jobs. In 12% of the cases, the target actually quit. Given the ambiguity […] even under the best circumstances, employee exit is expensive” (p.130).

Focusing on hotel industry employees provides an ideal population from which to study the proposed relationships concerning OTWI, EC, and JSB (Wang and Lee, 2009). Research has illustrated that employees in the hospitality industry are particularly affected by an aggressive workplace climate (Johns & Menzel, 1999; Sliter, Wolford, & McInerney, 2010) and limited ambitions of pursuing a long-lasting career in the industry (Jenkins, 2001). As Torres, van Nieker and Orlowski (2017) pointed out, “the hotel industry presents a unique scenario where attention to uncivil acts becomes even more critical” (p. 49).

Workplace incivility has even been shown to impact service quality offered by employees working within the industry (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Therefore, fully aware employees who can control their behavioral responses (e.g., anger) in the workplace setting can be creative and provide a better service quality (Porath, MacInnis, & Folkes, 2010).

Compound this with very high turnover rates among employees, and it is apparent managers should be addressing such negative outcomes (Li & Huang, 2017; Song & Chathoth, 2011). That being said however, the relationships among OTWI, EC and JSB are not always straightforward as factors such as employees’ level of income may influence OTWI and EC in relation to JSB. For instance, employees’ need for greater pay can affect employee cynicism and the will to quit or seek new employment (Boswell et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017). Income is an important factor that may interact with OTWI and EC in explaining JSB mainly when the level of income is low. Unfortunately, research that analyzes the influence of income on the indirect relationship of OTWI and JBS (through employee cynicism) is scant within the hospitality literature. Therefore, the current study aims to fill such a gap.

Through a moderated mediation model (Fig. 1), we propose that the mediating role of EC between OTWI and JSB varies, contingent on employees’ level of income. Because income is known to provide support for employee engagement, job satisfaction or increased expectancy in JSB (Boswell et al., 2012), employee cynicism and JSB is expected to be reduced when the level of income is high. Recent research has pointed out that measurement invariance and equivalence across cultures is questionable (Wernsing, 2014). Additionally, given this subjectivity and consequent uncertainty with measures of incivility, it is left up to recipients to determine which behaviors are considered uncivil (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009). Such subjectivity is compounded when taking cultural background into consideration (Lim & Lee, 2011). With this in mind, our study focuses on hotel industry employees within the Middle-Eastern country of Jordan to provide a novel perspective of incivility within a non-western context. As Chen (2010) contends, the hotel sector is influenced heavily by changes in political and business circumstances. The dynamic nature of politics and migration currently occurring within Jordan makes the country a viable context in which to measure the relationships between workplace incivility, employee cynicism, and job search behavior.

In doing so, this study uses the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) to achieve three purposes. First, this study tests the effect of organizational tolerance workplace incivility on employee cynicism. Second, the study investigates how tolerating incivility in the workplace might increase employees’ job search behavior. Finally, this study proposes level of income as a buffer that could reduce job search behavior and employee cynicism by using a moderated mediation model. By covering these significant topics, the present research not only extends the current investigation but also creates new understandings that companies can use to potentially mitigate the damaging effects of uncivil behavior and cynicism.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) states that people experience burnout (a general construct including various dimensions;
When incivility is tolerated in the workplace, employees perceive it as acceptable workplace behavior and this in turn has an impact on workplace attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, management might be seen as an instigator of incivility when inadverently tolerating or not responding to incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008). Pearson, Andersson, and Wegner (2001) reported that incivility results in an unhealthy organizational climate and unresponsive management can further damage this by silencing the target. Moreover, judgments of unfairness increase conflict and prevent co-operation (Tyler & Smith, 1997). Correspondingly, such a climate can make employees feel emotionally exhausted putting them at higher risk of experiencing burnout or cynicism (Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010). Organizational justice is one of the most significant dimensions that affect this organizational cynicism (Berneth, Armenakis, Feld, & Walker, 2007). Within the current study, OTWI is considered to be a form of organizational injustice. When the organization tolerates incivility, employees begin to perceive injustice and negative emotions can be experienced. Spector and Fox (2005a) claim that honesty, justice, trust, values and sincerity are renounced for self-benefits within the organization and at such a point, cynicism results.

Based on the preceding work, we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1.** Organizational tolerance workplace incivility is positively associated with employee cynicism.

**2.2. Organizational tolerance workplace incivility and job search behavior**

Job search behavior (JSB) is extremely important to consider for businesses given the noted implications it has for voluntary turnover (Blau, 1993), intention to quit and actual turnover (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001), as well as withdrawal behavior and decreased organizational commitment (Locke, 1976). JBS is influenced by two kinds of factors; push factors that are associated with the context of the organization and pull factors that are external to the organization (see Bretz, Boudreau, & Judge, 1994). The current study focuses on the former. Peachey et al. (2014) identified leaders, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job stress as examples of key push factors that contribute to an employee looking elsewhere for employment.

Based on COR theory, when employees face a stressor that they perceive as unfair, they will attempt to restore justice. The psychological contract reflects the employee’s idea of fairness and is the baseline against which all gains are assessed. When this contract is violated, negative outcomes result (Chiu & Peng, 2008), such as desire to leave and turnover (Geurts, Rutte, & Peeters, 1999), absenteeism (Geurts, Rutte and Peeters, 1994), and burnout (Taris, Schreurs, & Van Iersel-Van Silfhout, 2001). Mobiley (1977) explained that an employee’s dissatisfaction results in JSB and this leads to in intention to quit, which in turn can ultimately lead to an employee leaving her or his position. Some scholars have explored the link between incivility and employee withdrawal (Pearson, Andersson & Porath, 2000). Surveying employees who exited, Pearson et al. found that the link was neglected by top management for two reasons. First, when employees experienced un-civil conduct and decided to quit they took one month to a year to find a new job (i.e., job search behavior), thus, the organization unlikely perceived the link between the event and the outcome. Second, those who departed did not report incivility as a reason for leaving to avoid further backlash from instigators, to not be considered a trouble-maker, and ultimately, because they knew providing a reason would fall on managers’ deaf ears.

We theorize that OTWI leads to stress in the workplace and this increases the stress employees experience. When the stress is at its highest, employees try to reduce the stress by removing themselves from the job (i.e., the source of the stress) (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). Based on this reasoning, we purport that:

**Hypothesis 2.** Organizational tolerance workplace incivility is positively associated with job search behavior.

**2.3. Employee cynicism as a meditator**

Yet another reason why employees are concerned with injustice is based on the perceptions of the norms of an organization. The injustice leads to a skepticism among employees, and this in turn results in a feeling of normative disequilibria. As shown by Andersson (1996), cynicism refers to the attitude that is framed by disappointment and other negative feelings that one has for another person or an attitude that is related to not trusting another person or group in general. When coworkers are uncivil, it not only reduces co-worker satisfaction, but it can also lead to greater perceptions of inequity and injustice at work (Lim & Lee, 2011).

Cynicism is a defensive coping mechanism for escape (i.e., it results in either escaping or wanting to escape from a situation) (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). For instance, when a supervisor is aggressive, an employee feels insecure about her or his job and engages in job search behaviors that can also result in low levels of self-efficacy and organizational identification (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Saks and Ashforth (1997) carried out a longitudinal study and reported a significant association between the symptoms of stress and the desire to leave along with current turnover.

Based on the arguments above, it is posited that when organizations are unfair to their employees (i.e., tolerating incivility with regards to process, treatment or rewards), and employees get the impression that the company does not value or care about their loyalty and retention, this has the potential to lead to cynicism. As cynicism increases, the employee will develop a tendency to escape and so will the search for an alternate job to maintain valuable resources. Also, if employees continue to remain with the organization, they feel less obligated to follow the norms of the organization (e.g., tolerating incivility) and show a greater tendency to display JSB. Therefore, OTWI increases cynicism and this increased cynicism leads to JSB. It is therefore advanced that:

**Hypothesis 3.** Employee cynicism directly influences job search behavior.

Overall, the investigation and arguments discussed above suggest...
that the association between organizational tolerance workplace incivility and job search behavior will be mediated by employee cynicism (Taylor et al., 2017). In keeping with this line of thinking, we contend that there is an indirect relationship in the association between OTWI on JSB. Stated formally, we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 4.** The relationship between organizational tolerance workplace incivility and job search behavior is mediated by employee cynicism.

### 2.4. Moderating role of income

Previous research has explored how financial incentives may affect employees' behavior (e.g., Beus & Whitman, 2017; Jenkins, Mitra, Gupta, & Shaw, 1998). As Mok and De Cremer (2016) have noted, it is acceptable for managers to utilize monetary incentives to promote certain behaviors within organizations as well as to encourage the engagement of pro-social behaviors. This is largely due to the importance employees place on income and is seen as an acceptable level of income that has the potential to shape employees' behavior. According to Zhou, Vohs, and Baumeister (2009), employees experience greater feelings of empowerment when considering extrinsic motivations of income. These attitudes of course, may vary across cultures (Lynn, 1991); thus, the associated behaviors and perceptions can vary greatly as noted by Jiang, Chen, and Wyer (2014).

According to Polatcan and Titrek (2014), the causes of cynicism can be classified into two distinct categories, namely personal and organizational. Income has been identified as a personal factor and injustice as an organizational factor. Mirvis and Kanter (1992) indicated that blue-collar workers with lower incomes were more cynical than white collar workers with higher incomes. Thus, employees' income level may contribute to negative experiences by the employee resulting in corresponding levels of cynicism (Anderson, 1996). Similarly, Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, and Rupp (2001) reported that perceived income inequity for the same amount of work may affect the perception of distributive justice. These findings indicate the implications for increased cynicism among employees.

Much research has shown that income is an important factor of employee satisfaction, commitment and turnover (Hatton et al., 2001; Larson & Lakin, 1992; Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998). Thus, income can be a contributing reason why employees may seek employment elsewhere. In a similar vein, perceived financial need and financial situation were identified as antecedents of JSB (Boswell et al., 2012; Varekamp, Knijn, Bos, & van Wel, 2014; Varekamp, Knijn, van der Gaag, & Bos, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesized that if employees perceive that their level of income is high, they will be less cynical and thus job search behavior may not result. Second, the impact of workplace tolerance incivility on job search behavior (via employee cynicism) is less pronounced when the level of income for employees is high. Based on this reasoning, it is postulated that:

**Hypothesis 5.** The indirect effect of organizational tolerance workplace incivility on job search behavior (through the mediator, employee cynicism) will be moderated by employees' level of income, such that the indirect effect will be stronger when the employees' level of income is lower versus moderate or higher.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample and procedure

Considered hospitality employees, an on-site survey was distributed to employees in fourteen 5-star hotels in Jordan, following a convenience sampling strategy. Such an approach is commonly utilized within the hospitality literature (Karatepe, 2013; Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, 2015). The survey was designed in English and then translated to Arabic and back-translated into English by three professional translators. Afterwards, the translated version of the questionnaire was revised by three academics who are proficient in both Arabic and English and experts in hospitality and tourism to assure that the translated version reflected the content of the original instrument as suggested by Brislin (1970). A pilot survey with fifteen 5-star employees in five hotels in Jordan revealed that respondents had no difficulties answering the questions. A total of 398 questionnaires were distributed to each employee along with a cover letter from the researcher requesting their participation, as well as a brief explanation concerning the aim of the study and the approval of the hotel management. A total of 344 surveys were returned, resulting in an 86% response rate. Ultimately, 331 responses were used for data analysis due to missing data in 13 questionnaires.

#### 3.2. Measures

Scales used to measure the three constructs were borrowed from the existing literature. **Organizational tolerance workplace incivility (OTWI)** was measured using four items adapted from the literature concerning how to report uncivil and discomforting behaviors at the workplace (Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996; Martin & Hine, 2005). Moreover, this modern version of OTWI scale has been utilized by Loi et al. (2015) and Abubakar, Megeirhi, and Shneikat (2018) to measure an organization’s response to uncivil conduct reported by employees. Respondents were asked (for example) what would likely happen (i.e., management’s response) to them if they reported a formal complaint against a co-worker who was hostile toward them (e.g., spoke in an aggressive tone of voice, made snide remarks, rolled her or his eyes at them, etc.). These items were measured on a five-point Likert scale and response choices ranged from 1 = nothing to 5 = there would be very serious consequences.

**Employee cynicism** was measured via 11 items adopted from the work of Kim, Bateman, Gilbreath, and Anderson (2009). One such item that was utilized included, “I believe top management says one thing and does another”. Using a 5-point Likert scale, response choices ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. **Job search behavior** was measured using 10 items adapted from Blau (1994). Respondents were requested to specify how much time they had spent in the last four months on several preparatory and active job-search activities. A sample item included, “made inquiries/read about getting a job.” Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = no time at all to 5 = very much time. Finally, **income** was measured categorically using three levels: less than 400 Dinar of monthly income (1 JOD = 1.4096 USD); 400–599 Dinar of monthly income; and 600 or more Dinar of monthly income. Similar categorical income reporting has been used within the hospitality literature (Chi, 2011; Lu, Rahman, & Chi, 2017).

Several sociodemographic variables were incorporated within the questionnaire to better understand the sample. The average age of participants was approximately 35 years. A preponderance (63%) of the sample was comprised of men. Over 70% of employees surveyed had an associate’s degree or higher. Roughly 38% had been with their current hotel for between 4 and 6 years, followed by 30% between 1 and 3 years, and 20% who had been with the hotel for more than 6 years. In terms of monthly income, a slight majority (51%) earned between 400 and 599 Dinar, while 33% received more than 600 Dinar monthly, and 16% made less than 400 Dinar per month.

#### 3.3. Data analysis

SPSS and AMOS v.24 were used for data analysis. A two-step analytical approach (following Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was undertaken that included confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation. First, a measurement model was assessed by conducting CFA. Following this,


### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs and Indicators</th>
<th>Std. β</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>MSV</th>
<th>ASV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Tolerance for Workplace Incivility</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; (α = 0.90)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeatedly treated you in an overtly hostile manner</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeatedly invaded your privacy</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.45&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeatedly gossiped about you to other co-workers</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.81&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeatedly withheld important information relevant to your job and/or excluded you from key decisions</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.95&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>Employee Cynicism</strong>&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; (α = 0.94)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel irritated when I think about top management,</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel aggravated when I think about top management,</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.91&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I criticize top management’s practices and policies with others</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.23&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>When top management says it is going to do something, I wonder if it will really happen</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.92&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I experience anxiety when I think about top management,</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.19&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Top management expects one thing of its employees, but rewards another</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.20&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel tension when I think about top management</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.00&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Job Search Behavior</strong>&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt; (α = 0.91)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I sent out application letters/filled out job applications</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>I made inquiries to prospective employers</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.64&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>I went to a job interview</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.11&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>I spoke with friends and relatives about possible job leads</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.02&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I searched for jobs on the internet</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.69&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>I prepared/revised my CV</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.32&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</table>

Scales: <sup>a</sup> 1 = Nothing to 5 = There would be very serious consequences. <sup>b</sup> 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Note. **p < 0.001 level (one-tailed); CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

<sup>a</sup> In AMOS, one loading has to be fixed to 1; therefore, t-value cannot be calculated for this item.

SEM was carried out to examine the first three hypotheses. The fourth and fifth hypotheses was tested utilizing PROCESS macro for SPSS and SAS (Hayes, 2018a, 2018b, 2015), using a bootstrap method with a 10,000 resample technique.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Measurement model

Numerous goodness-of-fit indices were used to evaluate the quality of the measurement model. The results show that the model fit the data collected from hotel employees in Jordan well: χ² = 206.84; df = 105; p < 0.001; Normed-Fit Index (NFI) = 0.96; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.98; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.97; CFI = 0.98; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.055; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.045. As presented in Table 1, factor loadings for each construct ranged from 0.71 to 0.92 (higher than the acceptable critical value of 0.50) and were significant (p < 0.001). Moreover, the t-values ranged from 12.32 to 26.95 (exceeding the critical value of 1.96). Further, Composite reliability (CR) estimates ranged from 0.90 to 0.94 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.62 to 0.71, above the recommended threshold values of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. Together, these results offer support for convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square roots of the AVE for each factor with correlations between latent constructs in the model. As presented in Table 2, all square roots of the AVEs for each factor were higher than the correlations among model constructs, demonstrating discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Considered in tandem, the results reflect that the measurement model was equally valid and reliable.

#### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs and Indicators</th>
<th>Std. Estimates</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Tolerance Work Incivility (OTWI)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Cynicism (EC)</td>
<td>0.47&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search Behavior (JSB)</td>
<td>0.22&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC → JSB</td>
<td>0.50&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Prior to running the structural model, Harmon’s one-factor test was carried out to check whether the data was sensitive to common method bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The test allows the inclusion of all the items in a single exploratory factor analysis and the unrotated factor solution. The EFA test showed the existence of a multi-factor solution (i.e., three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1) with only 37.4% of the total variance accounted for by a single factor. This result showed that the common method variance was not a pervasive issue.

After the confirmation of reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model depicting the first three hypotheses were tested and evaluated. Results of structural model exhibited a good fit with the data (χ² = 206.84; df = 105; χ²/df = 1.97; p < 0.001; NFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.055; SRMR = 0.045) and the two constructs explained 41% of the variance in job search behavior.

As summarized on Table 3, Hypothesis 1, the relationship between organizational tolerance workplace incivility (OTWI) and employee cynicism (EC), was significant (β = 0.47, t = 7.76, p < 0.001). As predicted in Hypothesis 2, the relationship between workplace incivility and job search behavior, was also significant (β = 0.22, t = 3.77, p < 0.001). Finally, as predicted, employee cynicism influenced job search behavior (β = 0.50, t = 7.59, p < 0.001) providing additional support for Hypothesis 3. Further, Hypothesis 4 predicted that the effect of OTWI on JSB would be mediated by EC. Using PROCESS MODEL 4 (Hayes, 2018a), this hypothesis was tested. This significant indirect effect was measured by using a bootstrapping test with 10,000 resamples (β = 0.207, p < 0.001, 95% CI = [0.154, 0.269]).
The following phase of data analysis focused on the influence of income as a moderator in the indirect relationship (through EC) between OTWI and JSB, and such that the effect will be stronger when income was low. In support of Hypothesis 5, a moderated mediation analysis using PROCESS (model 14), a computational tool measuring moderation and mediation simultaneously (with 10,000 resample bootstrapping technique) was used to examine the moderating effect of employee income in the proposed mediating effect (Hayes, 2018a, 2018b; 2013). Moderated mediation infers the significance of the indirect effect between the predictor and outcome constructs via the mediator, at different values of the moderator (Hayes, 2018a; 2018b). Consistent with our rezoning, the indirect effect of OTWI (through employee cynicism) on JSB was significant and stronger (see Table 4) when employee income was lower (β = 0.244, p < 0.001, 95% CI = 0.181, 0.324), becomes low at moderate levels of employee income (β = 0.206, p < 0.001, 95% CI = 0.153, 0.273), and when the employee income is high, the indirect effect becomes even lower (β = 0.167, p < 0.001, 95% CI = 0.107, 0.241). Thus, the index of moderated mediation was positive and significant (β = 0.013, Boot(SE) = 0.006; 95% CI = 0.001 to 0.025). Since the index of the confidence interval does not contain zero, this indicates that the indirect effect (through EC) of OTWI on JSB are contingent upon the value of the employee’s level of income. Considered together, these results offer evidence in support of Hypothesis 5.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Income</th>
<th>Boots Indirect effect</th>
<th>Boot SE</th>
<th>Boot 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD</td>
<td>0.244</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.181, 0.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.206</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.153, 0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 SD</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.107, 0.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>SE (boot)</td>
<td>Boot 95% CI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of moderated mediation</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.001, 0.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coeff. = coefficient, SE = standard error, CI = confidence interval. –1 SD = one standard deviation below the mean value of employee income; Mean = mean value of employee income; +1 SD = one standard deviation above the mean value of employee income.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Theoretical implications

This study tested the antecedents of job search behavior (JSB) among 5-stars hotels employees in the hospitality industry in a non-western context - Jordan, concerning organizational tolerance workplace incivility (OTWI), employee cynicism (EC), and income. Retention of service personnel is considered a pressing issue as evidenced by the body of literature on the topic (see Bothma & Roodt, 2012; 2013). Despite a plethora of anecdotal support indicating that workplace incivility is widespread in contemporary organizations, empirical evidence of OTWI remains in a nascent stage. As such, this study sought to better understand why employees in the hospitality industry engage in JBS, as well as looking into possible contributions of OTWI in explaining cynicism. The primary contribution of our study is to offer a better understanding of how OTWI and employee cynicism may lead to greater JSB when entwined with the induced effect of income.

Our findings suggest that OTWI predicts employee cynicism, confirming the results found in previous incivility and mistreatment studies which have demonstrated a positive relationship between incivility and employee cynicism (e.g., Fox & Spector, 1999; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Though the data was collected in a non-western setting and the fact that workplace incivility had been measured differently in previous studies, the results of our hypothesis testing were similar to those found in studies undertaken in other settings. One plausible explanation for this result may be due to the fact that workplace incivility is a dynamic process that is expected to develop, change and evolve over time (Taylor et al., 2017). For this study, we asked individuals to provide responses concerning what would happen if they lodged a formal complaint to top management against a co-worker engaging in particular forms of uncivil behavior. Such an approach is unlike previous work that has measured the construct by asking individuals to respond to frequency of times they experienced uncivil behavior in the workplace from supervisor or coworker during the previous five years (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). Burnfield, Clark, Devendorf, and Jex (2004) developed a Multidimensional Incivility Scale, designed to include both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, active and passive forms of incivility, and direct and indirect behaviors. While others (see Reich & Hershcovis, 2015) have measured the construct in asking individuals how they felt about a person who may/may not have engaged in uncivile workplace behavior.

Findings from this study showed that OTWI predicts job search behavior. Such findings are in line with previous mistreatment and workplace bullying studies. For instance, Zelinski, Tepper, and Duffy (2002) showed that workplace incivility reduces organizational citizenship behavior, reduces presenteeism (Cascio, 2006), decreased workers’ commitment and satisfaction (Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2009) and increased employee withdrawal and JSB (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Our findings are also consistent with those of Hauge, Skogstad, and Einarsen (2010), which showed that when people are bullied at work, they have a stronger desire to leave their organization. Moreover, this study has focused on 5-star hotels which are an important segment of the hospitality industry, contributing to the largest share of the total hotel income and adding a great ratio to the GDP on account of their distinctive locations and high-capabilities (Rodríguez-Algeciras & Talón-Ballestero, 2017).

In addition, our study reveals that employee cynicism (EC) has a positive effect on job search behavior (JSB). This finding is consistent with the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). When organizations tolerate incivility, employees begin to perceive the workplace climate as dysfunctional or stressful. Consequently, this leads to cynicism and employees lose trust in the organization. Cynical employees tend to have a low level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement (Berneth et al., 2007). Therefore, Sari Mansour and Gabrielle Tremblay (2016) suggested that providing a positive, comfortable work atmosphere is essential to maintain qualified employees who might be more prone to think of leaving the hotel. Similarly, Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks, and Lomeli (2013) added that cynicism has the tendency to increase burnout and turnover intention, while lowering job performance. Considering the existing empirical evidence coupled with our findings, we provide further support of the role workplace cynicism may have on job search behavior within the hospitality industry. Moreover, the results demonstrated that employee cynicism mediated the relationship between OTWI and JSB, which offers a better understanding of the mechanism behind the association between workplace incivility and JSB.

Additionally, this study examined whether employees’ level of income would moderate the indirect relationship (via employee cynicism) between OTWI and JSB. The outcome suggests that income moderates this indirect relationship and strengthens the positive relationship between them. More specifically, the indirect impact of OTWI (via EC) on
JSB is stronger when employee's income is lower than when moderate or high. These results show that income is an important factor to reduce the likelihood of employees withdrawing as influenced by workplace incivility and cynicism. As uncivil behavior is perceived, employees' level of cynicism grows, which ultimately increases job search behavior among such individuals. Moreover, this mechanism is moderated by employees' level of income. When income is high, the effect of OTWI on Job Search Behavior via employee cynicism is attenuated. Contrary to this, when the level of income is low, employees tend to exhibit higher levels of cynicism which increases JSB. Below, we further discuss these findings, managerial implications, study limitations and potential avenues for future research.

5.2. Managerial implications

The current study, exploring how income level can moderate the mediating relationship between organizational tolerance workplace incivility and job search behavior through employee cynicism, yielded significant implications for practitioners and managers. Human resource professionals can play an important role in boosting the level of interaction among organizational leaders and employees that might increase the effectiveness of the hotels. Providing workshops that cover technical skill development by blending a cognitive and a behavioral problem-solving approach can also be used to minimize the potential for uncivil behaviors, as well as how to effectively report such behaviors should they present themselves. As Pearson, Anderson, and Porath (2000) suggested, encouraging employees to report incidents of incivility and providing evidence that managers and leaders give full and careful consideration to the reports may actually help to facilitate data collection on the matter.

Of course, one of the most effective means for encouraging civil behavior is for organizations to demand hotel managers model what appropriate behavior should look like. Ways in which this can be carried out is for the organization to host regular workshops for managers that enhance diversity awareness, including appropriate protocol and operative ways to address conflict positively and highlight the company's policy on zero tolerance for incivility. Such efforts will assist in creating culture that emphasizes respect among employees (Pearson et al., 2000).

Based on our findings, it is imperative to note the importance of organizations to demonstrate they value, care for and desire to retain current employees. To this end, retention programs can also be established that discourage job search behaviors among employees. For example, offering competitive salaries with non-comparable compensation and recognition can potentially curb valuable employees' motivations for looking for alternative employment. As such, emphasis should be focused on employees who have greatest seniority and experience as they are most likely to be approached by other employers.

As more organizations within the hospitality industry are contemplating wage cuts in efforts to lower production costs and thereby maximizing profits, managers need to consider that recruiting, hiring, and training new staff are directly linked to increased operating costs as a result of workplace incivility and employee cynicism (Abubakar et al., 2018). As such, we encourage hotel management to engage in open policy communication and the provision of explicit information to employees in efforts to minimize the potential for growing cynicism among staff (Megeirhi et al., 2018).

Milam, Spitzmueller, and Penney (2009) suggested that managers should pay more attention to various personality traits of employees which might affect perceiving or receiving uncivil behavior. For instance, managers may desire to lighten and deter behaviors that are consistent with low agreeableness (i.e., mistrustful, skeptical or cynical) or high neuroticism, as these behaviors might direct incivility toward the actor. Similarly, managers could focus on behaviors (i.e., high agreeableness) as a conflict resolution approach. As a result, such training would help the cynical and skeptical employees to avoid escaping (Lee & Ashforth, 1996) or violating organization norms by recruiting incivility behavior. Pearson, Andersson and Porath (2000) considered a number of corrective and protective arrangements that are available during work lifecycle that might reduce the incidence of uncivil experiences. Those actions run from “setting expectations, recruitment and selection, orientation, feedback, and exit strategies.”

From an increased operating-costs perspective, the impact of continuous turnover, recruiting, training and hiring is accrued over time, such that hotels may end up with an impoverished workforce as a direct consequence of constant waves of new employees entering the organization. According to Lutgen-Sandvik (2006), those first to leave tend to have higher occupational capital (e.g., skills, technical knowledge, and experience); the next set leaves when hope of change is lost, and the last set are the ‘laggards’ employees who quit after the recognition of negative dynamics. Ultimately, this phenomenon may jeopardize the potential workforce, since remaining employees are a less confident cadre of workers with less job preferences due to a lack of talent and skill set. In addition, managers might prevent employees’ desires to leave by having informal and confidential meetings to discuss workplace concerns (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2004; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2008; Sguera et al., 2016). This would afford employees opportunities to voice concerns and gain the sense that management cared about their perspectives. Furthermore, these meeting times may help reinforce how to identify uncivil and develop strategies that can mitigate the effect or prevent negative actions of incivility among workers (Torres, van Niekerk, & Orlowski, 2017).

Additionally, from the perspective of quality service provider-recipient relationships, hotel managers should adopt a policy that raises employees’ awareness about the future impacts of incivility on consumer’s negative judgments. For example, when an uncivil employee responds to a client by showing disrespectful reactions, this has the potential to reduce client retention and overall service quality (Walker, van Jaarsveld & Skarlicki, 2014). Porath and colleagues found that employee-to-customer training programs are essential in terms of their impact on potential consumers’ generalization about other entities of the firm (Porath et al., 2010).

5.3. Limitations and future recommendations

Though this study provides sound results, its not without limitations. One such issue is the lack of focus on either long-tenured and/or new employees. Intuitively, those who have been employed longer may be more prone to cynicism, as Cartwright and Holmes (2006) alluded to their work. Future work may potentially consider time in current position as a moderating variable in explaining the relationships between the constructs that we employed within our theoretical model.

Another limitation of our study was that it focused on one specific cultural context within the Middle East. It is essential to note that previous studies concerning the concept of workplace incivility were carried out mostly in Western settings. This suggestion is in line with that of Lim and Lee (2011) who stated that the functioning definition of workplace incivility is shaped by a certain culture.

As such, perspectives of incivility may be considered from a more traditional, male-dominated vantage point as opposed to what may be considered uncivil in a Western context. It stands to reason that employees within the latter context may deem more behavior as uncivil and less lenient in tolerating such actions. Further research should be undertaken that looks at employees from both western and non-western organizations to further determine what attitudes and behaviors participants deem to be uncivil versus civil. Such work could establish a frame of comparison between employees in each workplace context, and could potentially shed greater light on relationships between OTWI, cynicism, and job search behavior. In so doing, some potential theoretical frameworks that could help explain the role of culture and cultural values in relation to these constructs (most notably, OTWI) are selective incivility theory (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta,
Magley, 2013) and resilience theory (Richardson, 2002), Welbourne, Gangadharan, and Sarioł (2015) found each of these frameworks to be instrumental in explaining occurrence and impact of experienced workplace incivility among Hispanic and White, Non-Hispanic employees. Similar findings related to cultural differences were found in the study by Cortina et al. (2001) among USA and Scandinavian countries where each had different cultural norms and various interpretation of incivility behavior. As Ghosh (2017) stated, incivility can vary across countries. That said, Pearson et al. (2000) emphasized that “norms differ across organizations, industries, and cultures; in every workplace there exist norms of respect for fellow coworkers” (p. 126).

Beyond these points, future research may also consider extending our theoretical model to include additional outcome variables of job search behavior. In essence, what can job search behavior help to explain? First and foremost, it would make the greatest sense to see how JSB could explain actual departure from a position. Once that was established, further studies could see if such departure would contribute to our understanding of whether former employees would engage in sharing privileged information about or defaming previous employers (Abubakar et al., 2018). The inclusion of these constructs in the model would help us to understand the long-term consequences of uncivil behavior and cynicism on job search behavior. Of course, logistically, this would be most difficult to do, not only because it would require longitudinal data collection, but also because it would involve former employees who may be too disgruntled with their previous employer to participate.

Future studies can also analyze the antecedents of experienced uncivil behavior with the organization such as employees’ gender and race (Cortina, Price and Laschinger, 2013), socioeconomic status (i.e., those from less-affluent backgrounds), generational differences (Leiter, Price, & Laschinger, 2010), age (Lim & Lee, 2011), personality traits (Milam et al., 2009), position within organization (i.e., lower versus higher on organizational chart), ad, and favoritism (Schilpzand et al., 2016)—which all may shed greater light on why uncivil behavior is present within particular organizations. Researchers could also investigate how costumer incivility may be part of uncivil organization culture. It is plausible that social norms within services industries can be violated by both employee and customer. Research has revealed that in addition to experiencing incivility from supervisors or coworker, employees can also experience incivility from customers (Walker, van Jaarsveld & Skarlicki, 2013). This is particularly true in a service context where customer interactions are an important feature of the social context.

In addition, further investigation should test the factors that interfere in the influence of incivility – that is, mediators and moderators of the incivility – outcomes relationship. This analysis could test the impact of OTWI on outcomes variables (e.g., work withdrawal and intention to sabotage) by utilizing mediators and moderators (e.g., workplace empowerment) (Laschinger et al., 2009), job satisfaction (Schilpzand et al., 2016), emotions (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Magley, & Nelson, 2017) and gender (Cortina et al., 2017, 2013; Lim & Lee, 2011). Also, future research may examine the process of JSB occurring over a longer time frame and gather data at various points in time. Also, using the instruments of preparatory and active JSB separately might yield different results (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Additional opportunities for future research exist to investigate more potential factors strongly influencing an employee’s JSB process such as local economic climate, perception of the current labor market and job expectancy.

Given our study focuses exclusively on a non-western Arabic sample, some caution should be applied to generalizing findings to distictively unique cultures. Future research should examine measures of OTWI, WC, JSB in additional contexts to assess whether relationships between constructs are contrary to findings of the current study (i.e., if findings are divergent within a more liberally-progressive Western cultural context). Also, the cross-cultural analysis with data from Jordan and other western countries could be offered tentatively and merits future research. Overall, our study is the first attempt to examine the interactive relationships among aforementioned variables. Additional studies are needed to deeper comprehend the dynamics of these variables in subsequent theoretical models.

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Appendix

Organizational Tolerance for workplace Incivility Scale

What would likely happen if you made a formal complaint against a co-worker who engaged in the following behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original OTWI items</th>
<th>OTWI items Used in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly treated you in an overtly hostile manner</td>
<td>Repeatedly treated you in an overtly hostile manner (e.g., spoke to me in an aggressive tone of voice, made snide remarks to me, or rolled his or her eyes at me).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from your desk, or opened your desk drawers without your permission).</td>
<td>Repeatedly invaded your privacy (e.g. read communications addressed to me).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly gossiped about you to co-workers</td>
<td>Repeatedly gossiped about you to other co-workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly withheld important information relevant to your job and/or excluded you from key decisions.</td>
<td>Repeatedly withheld important information relevant to your job and/or excluded you from key decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The original scale is from Loi et al. (2015).

The scale is measured in a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 “Nothing” to 5 “There would be very serious consequences”.

References


