

Effect of Workplace Incivility on Job Satisfaction Among Nurses: Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion

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Abstract

Though job satisfaction is extensively researched issue, yet, lack of job satisfaction among nurses causes 1 million deaths each year. Thus, research frame is based on AET under explored job satisfaction with respect to workplace incivility was addressed to have negative effect on job satisfaction directly and indirectly through mediating role of emotional exhaustion, among 265 nurses in Sindh province of public hospitals were analyzed by Smart-PLS. Results revealed valuable outcomes as workplace incivility found insignificant in direct relation with job satisfaction and significantly related through emotional exhaustion with job satisfaction. whereas, emotional exhaustion also had negative effect on job satisfaction. this study expands AET and directs further exploration on job satisfaction, which are efficient, effective and feasible for HR and stake holders to implement corrective measures.

Keywords: Workplace incivility, Emotional exhaustion; Job satisfaction; Public hospitals; Nurses; Pakistan.



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1. Introduction

Organizations now a day have become evolved to deliver targeted services, which demands competent workforce, aiming growth and development of employer, employee and wellbeing of stake holders. This overall wellbeing in healthcare sector was stressed by [Swayne et al. \(2012\)](#) as crucial factors any nations' strengthening any nation globally. Similarly, in the current period of global competence, job satisfaction among nurses not only gained importance in developed countries like USA ([Shiple, 2015](#)) but also in developing countries like Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, India, Ghana and Rwanda ([Atefi et al., 2016](#); [Hamid et al., 2014](#); [Mills, 2014](#)). Thus, over the past 10 years institutions and organizations have enforced to assemble ways to develop healthcare system that meets the population needs ([Mills, 2014](#)).

Sequentially, the contemporary health care with complexity, increasing work stress and pressure is causing numerous problems, including nurses' dissatisfaction with their job ([Bird, 2015](#)). Eventually, nurses run into high emotional fatigue and moral stress, reduced professional quality of life, lower satisfaction, and eventually job withdrawal ([Austin et al., 2017](#)).

Likewise, [AMN Healthcare \(2017\)](#) survey has reported mixed feeling among nurses and many of them considered quitting job for being mentally and physically deterioration. Moreover, international empirical studies show that nurses are dissatisfied with their job ([Aslan and Yildirim, 2017](#)). As well as in the Asian context, Particularly, in Sindh [Pahi et al. \(2016\)](#); [Malik O. F. et al. \(2017\)](#), ([Shah S. M. M. et al., 2018](#)), and [Tasneem et al. \(2018\)](#) stressed the severity of healthcare sector conditions and lower job satisfaction among nursing staff of public hospital nurses in Pakistan. This urges for feasible remedial efforts and urged by many scholars, particularly in the public health care sector of Pakistan that nurses are not satisfied with their jobs.

On the contrary, study by [Boafo \(2018\)](#) found qualified nurses from Ghana reported neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their job. Whereas, in Pakistan, for example, most of the nurses in Pakistan reported satisfied with their job and with existing working conditions in different findings ([Kanwal et al., 2017](#); [Nizami et al., 2006](#)). Thus, potential significance of the job satisfaction among nurses in the healthcare sector, has generated vivid importance in the developing economies like Pakistan as well [Mills \(2014\)](#). Additionally, reduced job satisfaction among nurses was also reported to have financial consequences for the healthcare sector as well. As per KPMG report ([Kerfoot, 2015](#)), in United States alone dissatisfied employees were counted for \$ 4.4 million financial loss to a 300-bed hospital on annual basis. Thus, nurses' job satisfaction worth investigation, particularly in the developing economies like Pakistan, where the situation is even worse ([Mills, 2014](#)).

As job satisfaction keeps changing over time, it is very important to assess and keep track of [Coomber and Barriball \(2007\)](#). Researchers such as [Chen et al. \(2016\)](#) argued that the satisfaction of the worker depends upon different factors, and it may cause to satisfy from the one part of the job and dissatisfy with the second part of the job. Thus, following scholarly recommendation aligned with predictors in assumed relations in this study, effecting job satisfaction among nurses in public hospitals of Pakistan are further investigated.

1.1. Workplace Incivility and Job Satisfaction

In an employee job satisfaction survey, it was reported that respectful treatment of all employees at all levels was rated as very important by 67% of employees in 2015, making it the top contributor to the overall employee job satisfaction (Mills, 2014). Thus, uncivil behaviors at workplace (incivility) hold a tremendous impact on job satisfaction which unfortunately is true among nurses, as found in the empirical study of Guidroz *et al.* (2010). Moreover, studies indicate chronic pattern associated with the experience of incivility that leads to lower employee job satisfaction (Cortina *et al.*, 2001); (Tepper *et al.*, 2004).

Accordingly, exposure to uncivil behaviors can have a negative influence on employees in terms of mood, cognitive distraction, fear, perceived injustice, damaged social identity, and anger (Barling *et al.*, 2001). Thus, incivility can trigger job dissatisfaction as a practical implication (Cortina and Magley, 2009), reduced commitment, job dissatisfaction and inclination to withdraw from the job among nurses in Pakistan (Laeque *et al.*, 2018).

H1: Workplace incivility experience has a negative influence on their job satisfaction.

1.2. Workplace Incivility and Emotional Exhaustion

According to Andersson and Pearson (1999), workplace incivility is distinguishable from other mistreatments and counterproductive behaviors at work through its low intention and ambiguous nature for detection. It covers negative events at work attempted by people that escalate towards emotional exhaustion among employees. Likewise, exposure to these uncivil behaviors can have a negative influence on employees in terms of mood, cognitive distraction, fear, perceived injustice, damaged social identity, and anger (Barling *et al.*, 2001; Cortina *et al.*, 2001). This depletion of emotional resources was associated with incivility by Laeque *et al.* (2018), grounding over Hobfoll (1989) COR theory, among Pakistani nurses in the healthcare sector.

H2: Workplace incivility is positively associated with emotional exhaustion.

1.3. Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction

Adding more to the typical scenario of the healthcare sector, (Brewer and Clippard, 2002) found support for the significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Emotional outcomes devastate the job dissatisfaction and had negative impact due to nurses' emotional exhaustion. Such that emotionally exhausted employees feel helpless at work (Moore, 2000), develop negative attitudes towards one's job (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993) and become dissatisfied with their jobs (Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Mahmood *et al.*, 2016). Whereas, in recent Pakistan public healthcare sector, with 42.2% of other medical staff in the hospital of Sindh, Pakistan reported experiencing emotional exhaustion (Zafar *et al.*, 2016) having a negative impact on job satisfaction (Khan *et al.*, 2016).

Accordingly, recent research highlighted the strong link between emotional exhaustion and low job satisfaction among nurses by Zhang *et al.* (2014). Followed by Lerner *et al.* (2015) that emotions play a key role in choices and decision making in the workplace. Similarly, the direct negative influence of emotions on job satisfaction was observed by Baeriswyl *et al.* (2016).

H3: Emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on their job satisfaction.

1.4. Emotional Exhaustion as Mediator

In past literature, scholars have carried several studies and emotional exhaustion keeps playing the role of mediator towards job satisfaction. For example, Whitman *et al.* (2014) found mediating role of emotional exhaustion among 560 nurses between abusive supervisor and feedback avoidance. Similarly, Hur *et al.* (2015) found significant mediating role of emotional exhaustion between coworker incivility and turnover, job performance and job satisfaction.

On the other hand, while, examining the mediating role of emotional exhaustion, (Khokhar *et al.*, 2016) revealed that various antecedent stressor variables were not significantly related to emotional exhaustion. Moreover, emotional exhaustion was also found to carry weak relations against hypothesized full mediation with between different exogenous and endogenous variables in different studies. For example, Aryee *et al.* (2008) results showed partial mediation, against full hypothesized mediation of emotional exhaustion between abusive supervisor and job dedication, urging for more cross-cultural research work. Followed by Knudsen *et al.* (2009) also observed a partial, arguing for leadership and other variable relations should be explored through the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion. Lastly, Tayfur *et al.* (2013) examined the same phenomenon and reported that emotional exhaustion weakly mediated between distributive justice and turnover intention, while recommending for further research in this regard. Thus, comprehensive, robust empirical studies based on relevant theoretical grounds are fewer to observe. Specifically, relationship of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and through mediation of emotional exhaustion, among nurses of Sindh in the context of the Pakistan public healthcare sector.

H4: Emotional exhaustion will mediate between the relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction.

As individual preferences towards factor that affect their level of job satisfaction keep changing over time (Malik M. E. and Naeem, 2013). So far, (Vroom, 1964) linked to job satisfaction with the individual's role in the workplace and defining job satisfaction as affective alignments from events on the part of individuals toward work roles that they are presently occupying. It is; therefore, the current research framework is underpinned by Affective Events Theory by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996). Where, events (workplace incivility) affect employee emotions

(emotional exhaustion) directly or which in turn carry further to diminish job satisfaction. Thus, AET theory spotlights the significant insight to view events that affect employee emotions with respect to job satisfaction.

2. Research Design

This study is exploratory, guiding the examination for unclear problems related job satisfaction and descriptive for precise answers to phenomenon using narrative measured relationships. Whereas, the hypothesis testing approach helps to infer causal relationship among workplace incivility, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

3. Population Sample size and Power Analysis

There are total 1630 registered nurses in 24 district public health care hospitals in Sindh (Sindh Bureau of Stats, 2017). These hospitals are divided into strata (large and medium), on the number of beds available in hospitals, making up one large stratum with 18 hospitals and second medium strata including 6 hospitals.

The sample is defined as the representative unit and extraction of total population (Khokhar *et al.*, 2016), (Lazarus and Cohen, 1977) recommended to determine sample size by power of statistical tests. Similarly, many prominent scholars (Lazarus and Cohen, 1977; Snijders, 2005) have emphasized that better the sample size greater will be the power of statistical tests. Power analysis is essential for determining the exact sample size for the research Bruin (2006).

Accordingly, G*power 3.0.10 software was utilized to determine exact sample size using priori power analysis technique (Faul *et al.*, 2008). For this purpose, analysis was grounded on parameters: power ($1-\beta$ err prob; 0.95); alpha significance (α err prob; 0.05); effect size (0.15) following Cohen and Daniel (1977) recommendations and a total of four predictors produced output of sample size for the current study.

Conclusively, the output of our priori analysis suggested 89 responses sample size, making only 5.5% of total population of 1630 registered nurses which critically low as an average response rate much higher than suggested priori sample size in Pakistan. Such that 56% in separate organizations (Shah N. *et al.*, 2017), and 72% from hospitals of health sector (Zehra *et al.*, 2017) which makes 64% average response rate, resulting to avail alternate sample determination and for more appropriate sample size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

4. Methodology

Thus, implying stratified random sampling, 484 questionnaires (at 64% response rate), were administered among sample of 310 respondents from a total population of 1630, following (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970), from medium and large size stratified hospitals with proportion based on total population of 1630 making it 100% allocation of registered nurses, which ensures equal chances of selection (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Similarly, data was collected, as a result, 315 useable questionnaires were received making up response rate of 65%, screened through SPSS and further analysis utilized Smart-PLS.

5. Data Analyses

Primarily SPSS was used to identify errors, missing values (using multiple imputation) and common method bias, the dataset left with 265 useable responses. Demographically, 64 male participants were 24.2% and 201 females were 75.8% of the total population. Mostly respondents were staff nurses (98.1%) below experience of 1 year (50.9%) holding diploma (90.6%) and under 20 to 30-year age group (40.4%) out of total population. Being singles source data is verifying common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Singles factor analyses was done by putting all constructs into component factor analysis for Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Variance achieved of 39.96% which is acceptable and was below 50% threshold (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Though data was slightly not normal, directing towards PLS application (Hair *et al.*, 2012). The Kurtosis and skewness values falling between -2 and +2 for normally distributed data (Chua, 2006a). Finally, we employed PLS for measurement model (validity and reliability) and structural model (testing hypothesized relationships) for final results.

6. Measurement

6.1. Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility (WI) is an uncivil act carrying ambiguous intention to harm, violating norms of mutual social interactional regard, by means of verbal or non-verbal display, escalating negative perception or experience throughout the organization. WI is measured through 7-items (7-point Likert, 1- not at all to 7- very much) developed by Cortina *et al.* (2001), with $\alpha = 0.89$ and recently used by Zurbrugg and Miner (2016) with $\alpha = 0.85$.

6.2. Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion (EE) refers to the interpersonal interaction or for any negative reason at work bringing individuals feeling of stressed, emotionally drained, depleted or exhausted that results in an overall feeling of contention regarding one's job. EE is measured with 9-items (7-point Likert, 1- never to 7- very often), scale was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), originally scale reported good reliability of scale ($\alpha = 0.89$). While recently used by Medler-Liraz and Seger-Guttmann (2018) with Cronbach's α (0.90).

6.3. Job Satisfaction

Denotes to the extent and level of an individual's overall positive affect and overall satisfaction towards his/her job (Warr *et al.*, 1979). The job satisfaction (JS) variable will be measured through 15-item scale (7-point Likert, 1-completely dissatisfied to 7-completely satisfied) developed by Warr *et al.* (1979), with original alpha= 0.85, recently used by Koon and Pun (2017) with alpha= .892. The scale comprises of questions that require respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with their job.

7. Measurement Model

For measurement model assessment convergent and discriminant validity were tested as following:

7.1. Convergent Validity

According to Hair *et al.* (2016), Basheer *et al.* (2018), and Hameed *et al.* (2018) convergent validity is the degree of items to represent the intended latent variables and also correlate with other measures of the same latent variable. Based on the suggestion of Fornell and Larcker (1981), average variance extracted (AVE) was used for each of the latent variable to assess the convergent validity of items. Whereas, Chin (1998) recommended that AVE should at least be 0.50 or above for a particular construct. Accordingly, the AVE values for the intended latent variables of the current study (0.597– 0.711) have achieved adequate recommended threshold of 0.50 AVE values.

Table-1. Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Workplace incivility			0.597	0.912
	WI01	0.717		
	WI02	0.711		
	WI03	0.764		
	WI04	0.825		
	WI05	0.82		
	WI06	0.838		
Emotional exhaustion	WI07	0.724		
			0.711	0.957
	EE01	0.71		
	EE02	0.858		
	EE03	0.867		
	EE04	0.888		
	EE05	0.9		
	EE06	0.91		
	EE07	0.829		
EE08	0.831			
Job satisfaction	EE09	0.777		
			0.616	0.96
	JS01	0.75		
	JS02	0.827		
	JS03	0.742		
	JS04	0.807		
	JS05	0.778		
	JS06	0.799		
	JS07	0.814		
	JS08	0.791		
	JS09	0.798		
	JS10	0.792		
	JS11	0.752		
	JS12	0.782		
	JS13	0.807		
JS14	0.768			
JS15	0.761			

7.2. Discriminant Validity

According to Duarte and Raposo (2010) discriminant validity of a construct is the extent to which a specific latent construct is different from the other latent construct within the frame work. The discriminant validity used currently by scholars is based on Heterotriat-mono-Trait ratio of correlation (HTMT) based on multitrait-multimethod matrix suggested by Henseler *et al.* (2015) used by many scholars recently such that Rahman *et al.* (2017) was also deployed. As, the acceptable values must be below 0.90 (Gold and Arvind Malhotra, 2001), so were

the output values for current study were found acceptable ranging from 0.402 to 0.538 (see table 2). Further confidence interval values were below 1, which confirms the achievement of discriminant validity (Rahman *et al.*, 2017).

Table-2. Heterotriat-mono-Trait ratio of correlation (HTMT)

	EE	JS	WI
EE			
JS	0.553		
WI	0.538	0.402	

8. Structural Model

PLS regression is a multiple linear regression model. For assessing the (table 3, and fig. 1), R, standard beta, t-values via bootstrapping produced with 5000 resampling and the predictive relevance (Q) and the effect size (f) were examined following Hair *et al.* (2012).

Results for direct relationships between WI and JS ($\beta = -0.015, t = 0.195, CI [-0.131, 0.119], p > 0.05$) was not supported hypothesis 1. Accordingly, WI and EE ($\beta = -0.312, t = 4.416, CI [0.215, 0.324], p < 0.05$) was supported hypothesis 3. While, EE and JS ($\beta = 0.308, t = 3.582, CI [-0.359, -0.201], p < 0.05$) was supported hypothesis 4.

Technically, a variable plays mediating role when it meets the following conditions (Baron and Kenny, 1986): (1) variations in independent variable explain significantly for the variation in mediating variable (2) variation in mediating variable explains the variation in dependent variable and consequently, (3) the independent and dependent variable values change respectively. The direct relations thus must be significant if mediator is removed (Baron and Kenny, 1986), although this condition is not necessary (Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). As this was in case of direct relation between workplace incivility and job satisfaction, where relationship found insignificant which is supported by Mathieu and Taylor’s clarification.

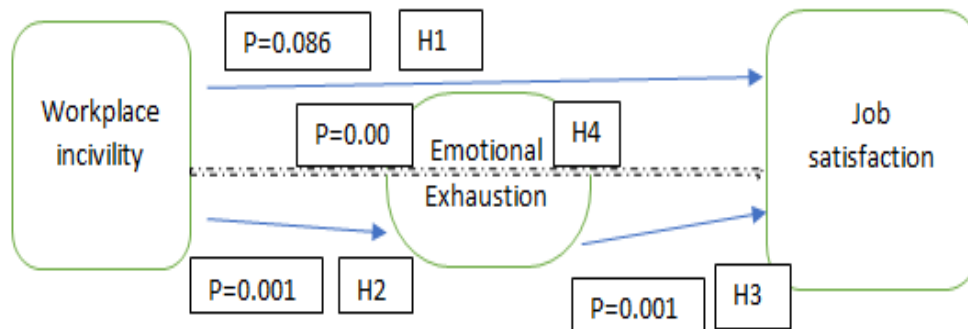
Further, bootstrapping was again deployed on 265 cases and 5000 samples (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) for assessing the mediating effect of EE on hypothesized relationships. Through PLS-SEM path modeling due to its superior estimation in comparison to regression mainly in the mediation examination and accurate mediating effects estimations (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Results found that EE fully mediated the relationship of WI ($\beta = -0.112, t = 3.407, CI [-0.197, -0.086] p < 0.05$) with JS.

Though, there is no exact rule of thumb to predict fixed R-square acceptable value for all as it varies with the complexity of the model (Hair *et al.*, 2012). For assessment R-square value of 0.10 is considered as acceptable (Falk and Miller, 1992). Similarly, Hair *et al.* (2012) suggested that R-square values of 0.25, 0.50 and 0.75 are low, reasonable and significant. Table 3 indicate that 30% of total variance in EE as a mediating variable is explained by the research model in terms of WI. Whereas, WI and EE collectively explained 32% of variance in job satisfaction. The cross-validated redundancy measure (Q2) was applied to assess the predictive relevance of the study (Hair *et al.*, 2012). According to Henseler *et al.* (2009) a research model with (Q 2) score above “zero” can be considered as sufficient predictive relevance. Where, (Q2) value 0.210 of model not only confirms the direct relationship predictive relevance of the model but also (Q2) value 0.239 confirms the indirect predictive relevance for the model relationships (see table 3).

Table-3. Structural model

Relationship	Beta	St. Error	T Value	L. L	U. L	P value	R ²	F ²	Q ²	VIF	Decision
WI->JS	-0.044	0.025	2.224	0.131	0.119	0.086	0.301	0.152		1.145	not Supported
WI->EE	0.212	0.023	2.052	0.152	0.324	0.001			0.145		Supported
EE->JS	0.308	0.027	3.354	-0.359	-0.201	0.001				1.163	Supported
WI->EE->JS	-0.326	0.034	3.415	-0.197	-0.086	0.000	0.321		0.188		Supported

Figure-1. Structural Model



9. Discussion

This section explains the relationships in the light of underpinning theory and past studies. This discussion section is based on the research questions of the study.

9.1. The Influence of Workplace Incivility on Job Satisfaction

This study hypothesized that workplace incivility to have a negative influence on job satisfaction and utilized PLS path modeling statistical testing for said relationship. Where, results did not support H1.

The reasons regarding insignificant relation between workplace incivility and job satisfaction is rightly supported by AET that postulated the environmental features may also affect the experience of individual perceptions and emotions associated with evaluation of their job satisfaction (Hersey, 1932; Herzberg *et al.*, 1959). Findings of current study are also parallel to cross-sectional survey by Walker (2014) based on Herzberg (2008) motivation-hygiene theory found that though 51.3% of nurse educators in the east region of the U.S.A, reported considering quitting job if they experienced incivility at their workplace, yet, statistical results proved this relationship non-significant.

Additionally, another empirical exploration by Cingöz and Kaplan (2015), while studying 123 administrative staff of industrial enterprises in Turkey, revealed that though, workplace incivility negatively influenced the job satisfaction, yet, statistical values (R-square value of 0.015 and $p > 0.05$) revealed a non-significant relation between workplace incivility and job satisfaction. Parallel to the findings of Walker (2014); and Cingöz and Kaplan findings, this study imitated similar findings as statistical values ($\beta = -0.015$ value and $p > 0.05$ i.e., $p = 0.0845$) for direct relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction among nurses the direct effect of workplace incivility there was no significant relationship of workplace incivility and job satisfaction of employees.

As stated earlier, this may be due to other factors such as a rise in salaries, economic opportunities provided to staff, priorities of employees, and employees may ignore the uncivil behaviors. Secondly, as workplace incivility is experienced and charges ones' feeling towards respective influence over their job satisfaction and such perception may vary from individual to individual. Thus, nurses are less likely to report workplace incivility affecting directly their job satisfaction. Rather, nurses experienced workplace incivility that induced emotional exhaustion which later reduced their job satisfaction. Given that working environment will sustain a high range of incivility (Phillips *et al.*, 2018) such that in a competitive, uncivil and power distant working environment incivility is common and persistent in healthcare sector such as in Pakistan which compels employees to consider incivility from patient, families, staff, coworker and doctors as part of their job (Akhtar and Shaukat, 2016).

9.2. The Influence of Workplace Incivility and Emotional Exhaustion

Workplace incivility constitutes being ignored by colleague, supervisor or patients at the hospital, excluded or not invited in an important meeting, rude or harsh words by others in a disrespectful manner (Lim and Cortina, 2005). Likewise, exposure to these uncivil behaviors can have a negative influence on employees in terms of mood, cognitive distraction, fear, perceived injustice, damaged social identity, and anger (Barling *et al.*, 2001; Cortina *et al.*, 2004). Thus, experience of workplace incivility as negative event may accumulate at emotional state of an employee. Emotional exhaustion is thus also important as it captures an individual's chronic as well as intensive work-related strain experiences at the workplace (Gaines and Jermier, 1983).

Accordingly, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) through AET theory guided that these uncivil (negative events) behaviors will appraise feelings of emotional exhaustion in individuals. It is; therefore, workplace incivility is a negative event at the workplace that depletes emotional resources and induces exhaustion (Spence *et al.*, 2009). Similar studies on 120 bank tellers by Sliter *et al.* (2010) also found that incivility is positively associated with emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, current study findings also support the notion of COR theory by Hobfoll (1989). It is among well-researched theories of stressors (Westman *et al.*, 2004). One of the basic assumptions of COR theory is conflict at work (negative event) will induce stress that will deplete one's resources. Similarly, uncivil behaviors as micro stressors at a workplace, which escalate over time depleting emotional and cognitive employee resources (Cortina *et al.*, 2001). These findings were reflected in empirical findings of this study.

Based on current study findings and based on past literature, these results reveal that incivility is persistent in the working environment and directly related to employee emotional exhaustion. Specifically, employees are sensitive towards workplace incivility that increases their emotional exhaustion of public healthcare hospitals in the context of Pakistan.

9.3. The Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion between Workplace Incivility and Job Satisfaction

The mediating role played by emotional exhaustion is inevitable, particularly with job satisfaction. Accordingly, (Brewer and Clippard, 2002) used surveys from 166 U.S student support services personnel and found support for the significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Further, in public healthcare sector nurses being frontline workforce are serving with lack of regard for nursing profession by society, facing disrespectful behavior even violence from patients, their relatives and family, employer, supervisor or co-workers (Badil *et al.*, 2017; Laeque *et al.*, 2018). Incivility experience in healthcare sector source from doctor, physician, coworker, patient and their family that leads emotional exhaustion among nurses (Guidroz *et al.*, 2010) which results in reduced job satisfaction (Schilpzand *et al.*, 2016).

Moreover, emotional exhaustion playing the mediating role between workplace incivility and job satisfaction. Whereas, Khokhar *et al.* (2016) revealed that various stressor (negative event) variables were not significantly related to emotional exhaustion. Thus, leaving untapped exploration of the research gap that was captured in the current study as hypothesis 4= emotional exhaustion plays a mediating role between workplace incivility and job

satisfaction. The results for hypothesis 6 ($\beta = -0.107$, $t = 3.441$, $P = 0.001$), supported that emotional exhaustion plays the mediating role between workplace incivility, despotic leadership and job satisfaction among public hospital nurses. These results are thus an affirmation of previous studies and further exploration of [Khokhar et al. \(2016\)](#) that workplace incivility as negative events have a significant relationship with emotional exhaustion and emotional exhaustion mediated this influence on job satisfaction negatively. This argument is well supported by AET, LMX and COR theories and connects previous studies ([Aryee et al., 2008](#); [De and Den, 2008](#); [Harms et al., 2017](#); [Mulki et al., 2006](#); [Naseer et al., 2016](#); [Whitman et al., 2014](#)).

10. Theoretical Implications

AET assumptions were tested and tried empirically later by many scholars and found truthful and useful such as ([Wegge et al., 2006](#)) complimented AET as ‘a fruitful framework for explaining why and how specific management strategies used for designing work features influence important organizational attitudes and well-being of employees’ (p. 1).

The conceptual framework in the present study was based on prior empirical evidence and theoretical gaps discussed in critical literature review. In accordance, it was also supported and explained based on the perspectives of Affective Events Theory ([Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996](#)). The current study is a promising extension of AET theory helping improve our understanding of AET assumptions on job satisfaction through effects of workplace incivility and emotional exhaustion.

At the core of Affective Events Theory, it revolves around the fundamental factors in terms of events that are experienced by people at workplaces. Based on these experiences people gather a momentum of events and translate those events in terms of emotions. Further, those emotional responses, reactions or interpretations of events produce outcome or response that ultimately fall on job performance and job satisfaction ([Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996](#)).

As presented by theory, that there is not enough known about the events that affect the experience of employees at the workplace and emotional reaction that affect job satisfaction ([Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996](#)). This study covers the literature shortcomings regarding workplace incivility and job satisfaction through mediation of emotional exhaustion. Moreover, empirical evidence based on responses of nurses in the current study explained a significant influence that workplace incivility has over emotional exhaustion and mediated on job satisfaction that help filling knowledge gap and expanded AET assumptions as recommended by [Wegge et al. \(2006\)](#).

It is though, very significant to say that current piece of empirical evidence helps to address the unaddressed, yet, adds to vast ocean of literature with respect to testing AET assumptions by means providing resourceful empirical evidences in terms of emotional exhaustion successful mediation between relationship of workplace incivility and job satisfaction among nurses of public hospitals in context of Sindh Pakistan.

11. Practical Implications

Current study provides contributory framework regarding job satisfaction of nurses in the healthcare sector. Specifically, related to workplace incivility and despotic leadership behavior of supervisor nurses towards their staff nurses. Such that, it helps in focusing key elements that are causing a reduction in job satisfaction among nurses not only in Pakistan ([Atefi et al., 2016](#)) but also globally ([Shiple, 2015](#)).

As for as practicality of this study is concerned, the author argues to for this study to have potential to not only deal job satisfaction of nurses precisely but also HR policy makers may introduce new tools for example application or whistle blow policies for nurses on experiencing any misbehave from any source at hospital. HR gurus may also devise methods that help improve quality of civilized aspects and re-emphasize protocols of respect must be followed to avoid any uncivil conduct at hospitals.

HR team in top management could also foster policies that minimize the negative effect of these factor towards emotional exhaustion among nurses. Critically, the emotionally exhausted employee is found to display more severe negative reaction towards other in reaction. This could further intoxicate the environment and affect job satisfaction of colleagues. Thus, emotional exhaustion must also be tackled precisely. So, development and implementations not only improve the overall working environment but also reduce emotional exhaustion among nurses ensuring higher job satisfaction achievement at public hospitals in developing countries like Pakistan. Thus, it is critical to pay attention towards factors to foster better job satisfaction among nurses in Pakistan.

12. Limitations and Future Directions

Initially, even though, this research design was cross-sectional, in such a way it is difficult to bring on the generalized statement or reach a conclusion, thus casual inferences from the population were not possible. Thus, future research may consider longitudinal design to test the theoretical body of the construct. Secondly, self-reporting was implied which can also be considered a limiting of the study, inflating the relationships among the exogenous and endogenous variables regarding the respondents being influenced by behavior, feelings, and attitude of the randomly selected participants, therefore, there are chances of social disability and/or CMV ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)).

Third, it also important to mention that current study data is subjective in nature. Although, subjective data is reliable and valid to assess job satisfaction, yet, researchers argue that subjective may be biased by many types of judgmental errors ([Dunlop and Lee, 2004](#)). However, the objective measure would have strengthened the results. Thus, future research is required to ascertain the objective for the findings of the current study.

Finally, the study provides a potential for emotional exhaustion as it mediated the negative effect of workplace incivility on job satisfaction. Though direct relation between workplace incivility and job satisfaction was insignificant, it provides another opportunity for future research to further explore the arena of direct relations between workplace incivility and job satisfaction and role of mediator or moderators.

13. Conclusion

Despite some limitations, results of the study answer to all the research questions and achieved the set objectives. Whilst, in the past, though studies tracing and tracking workplace incivility and regarding job satisfaction issues among nurses. This study provides successful evidence for the existence of workplace incivility affecting job satisfaction indirectly. This study furthers this ignored, yet, influencing factor and brings into notice its existence in healthcare sector globally as well as in the local context of Pakistan.

Extending AET in the simplest manner that can be achieved shortly yet overcome job satisfaction issues efficiently by management and HR department of public hospitals in Pakistan. Moreover, emotional exhaustion had weaker mediating relations with antecedents as well with consequent variables. This study reveals strong mediating relations and paved encouraging gateway towards future scholarly work drawing upon limitations and future recommendations.

HR department and top management in any organization prefer the precise identification of issues, their efficient ways to solve the problems by suggesting practical and feasible ways that help collaborate and make a workplace more collaborative, pleasant and provides satisfaction to the employees. Finally, emotional exhaustion will be handled in more efficient ways after controlling mentioned two factors. With keeping beforehand, all these positive implications are easy to achieve, practical in approach and efficient which will not only manifest to improve nurses' job satisfaction but also safe and productive healthcare hospital environment.

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